

 Cornell University

[Search Cornell](#)

CHRONICLE ONLINE

Oct. 10, 2008

Weill Hall: A visionary building becomes a reality through the vision of its leading donors

By Bryce T. Hoffman

It's no surprise that building and outfitting a facility like Weill Hall is almost prohibitively expensive.

But Weill Hall is here because Cornell had help from the state of New York and from philanthropists who backed the project with millions of dollars and their belief in its potential.

"Facilities of this type, because they are highly specialized and serve a range of disciplines, require lead donors who are visionary," said Stephen Kresovich, vice provost for the life sciences.

The state of New York was the first to come forward by delivering a commitment for \$25 million. Former state Senate majority leader Joseph Bruno was a pivotal player in securing its approval, said Stephen Philip Johnson, Cornell vice president for government and community relations.



Sandy Weill

Joan Weill

Public dollars helped to make the case for private support. As of today, a handful of lead donors have contributed nearly \$75 million toward the building's \$163 million cost. Among them:

- Sanford I. Weill '55 and Joan Weill extended their legacy among Cornell's most generous supporters in June 2007 with a historic commitment to the life sciences at Cornell's Ithaca campus and at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York City. In recognition, the building bears the couple's name as does the Weill Institute for Cell and Molecular Biology, the building's most prominent tenant, which will be housed on parts of three floors. "It's not just about money, it's about a passion and the brainpower to do something different," Sandy Weill declared when his gift was announced.
- Samuel C. Fleming '62 and Nancy M. Fleming made one of the first private gifts to the building to name a lecture hall, in addition to providing significant endowment support for the Weill Institute. Sam Fleming chairs Cornell's Life Sciences Advisory Board and is vice chair of the Cornell Board of Trustees.
- H. Laurance Fuller '60 and Nancy L. Fuller '62 made a commitment in support of the two-story learning center -- now the Fuller Learning Center -- that is the educational and outreach focal point of Weill Hall. Larry Fuller is a trustee emeritus, and Nancy Fuller served on the Cornell University Council for four years.
- Kevin M. McGovern '70 and his family, including children Jarrett '03 and Ashley '08, recently confirmed a gift to name the Kevin M. McGovern Family Center for Venture Development in the Life Sciences.
- John A. Swanson '61 provided a gift to name the biomedical engineering north laboratory suite on Weill Hall's third floor.
- David G. Pyle '56 and Jane W. Pyle '57 named the second-floor north break room in honor of their sons, Stuart G. Pyle '82 and Stephen F. Pyle '85.

[Search Chronicle Online](#)



Cornell Chronicle:

Susan Lang
(607) 255-3613
ssl4@cornell.edu

Media Contact:

Press Relations Office
(607) 255-6074
pressoffice@cornell.edu

Related Information:

[Weill Hall: a center for ideas, innovation, collaboration](#)

[Richard Meier interview](#)

[Weill Hall fosters collaborations](#)

[By going green, Weill Hall meets the gold standard](#)

[Photos of Weill Hall](#)

[Weill Institute for Cell and Molecular Biology](#)

[Department of Biomedical Engineering](#)

[Cornell collaborative culture](#)

[Far Above ... The Campaign for Cornell](#)

[Chronicle Online stories about the campaign](#)

Share:



Fundraising will continue for the facility and in support for other life sciences priorities, especially graduate fellowships and endowed professorships, said Jim Mazza '88, director the Campaign for Cornell.

Weill Hall has already become a focal point for attracting top scholars, Kresovich said.

"Once you come into Weill Hall, you realize the promise of life sciences is not a distant reality," he said. "It is here today."

Bryce T. Hoffman is a writer for Cornell's Alumni Affairs and Development.

##

| [October story index](#) | [Cornell Chronicle Online Home Page](#) |