Davis gift will support research at Ohio State

By Ruth Gerstner

A major gift to the Ohio State University Campaign from Dorothy M. Davis of Columbus will support basic research in human immunology and medical genetics at Ohio State.

President Jennings announced the gift, the amount of which was not disclosed at Davis’s request, May 29 during a program to mark the beginning of construction of an arthritis and geriatric center in the health sciences complex. The center will house laboratories and research programs that will be supported by the gift.

“Mrs. Davis has made her gift in honor and memory of her late husband, William H. Davis—a distinguished alumnus of this University and a major benefactor in his own right,” Jennings said during the program in Rhodes Hall Auditorium attended by friends and associates of the Davis family.

“In recognition of his strong interest in the health sciences and of his wife’s philanthropy, I will recommend to the University Board of Trustees that this new center bear the name, ‘The William H. Davis Medical Research Center.’”

Dorothy M. Davis, who recently was elected to the Board of Directors of the Ohio State University Foundation, is a partner in Davis Enterprises and vice president of William H. Davis & Son, Central Ohio real estate development companies founded by her husband.

Income from the Davis gift will support basic research into the cause, cure and prevention of disorders common during normal aging, such as arthritis, cancer, arteriosclerosis and immune dysfunction.

“I would like to express our deepest gratitude to Mrs. Davis for her generous support. We are very pleased to memorialize William H. Davis in a way that surely would be especially meaningful to him,” Jennings said.

Davis said she and her husband had discussed making a substantial contribution to medical research at Ohio State before his death in 1984. He had established the William H. Davis Chair in the American Free Enterprise System in the College of Business and a research fund in the the College of Medicine.

“This gift carries out one of Bill’s greatest wishes,” she said. “He was involved in many community activities. His interest in medical research and support of Ohio State were among his main projects.

“I don’t feel there is any way more appropriate to perpetuate his memory than by contributing to research on the most pressing health concerns of our times. The work being done by Ohio State immunologists and other medical researchers is very exciting, and I am happy to be able to be part of it in this way. I know Bill would be very pleased, too.”

The William H. Davis Medical Research Center is to be completed in the spring of 1986. It will be located at the corner of
9th Avenue and Cannon Drive and will be attached to Dodd Hall.

In addition to 15 research laboratories in human immunology and genetics, patient care and teaching facilities are included. The center is being constructed with a $6.5 million appropriation from the state of Ohio for a facility to conduct research related to arthritis and other diseases of the aging and $1.5 million in University funds. As part of the $350 million Ohio State University Campaign, private funds are being sought for endowed research chairs and research laboratories in the center.
MEDICAL RESEARCH AIMED AT ELDERLY

By Steve Benowitz, University Communications

Ohioans, like the rest of the country's populace, continue to age. Studies project that by the year 2000, the elderly will make up almost 13 percent of the state's residents. But while we live—and stay healthier—longer, diseases such as cancer and arthritis remain a scourge of advanced years.

As a result, 1986 has seen Ohio State University add to its medical focus on the needs of the elderly.

Earlier this year, an endowed faculty chair in the Cancer Research Institute was established by Leonard J. Immke Jr. and Charlotte L. Immke with a gift of $1.25 million.

It is the institute's first endowed chair for which full funding has been committed. As part of the University Campaign, funding is sought for five such chairs.

Meanwhile, the search continues for an institute director. Construction on the $54 million, 160-bed hospital and research center is scheduled for completion late next year.

The 12-floor institute, which, among its new patient and research facilities will include a new radiation therapy department, will be located east of Doan Hall.

The William H. Davis Medical Research Center, under construction in the southwest corner of the medical center, will be dedicated to research and treatment of arthritis and other diseases of aging.

A spring dedication ceremony marked the beginning of construction on the 43,000-square-foot facility, which will house 14 research laboratories, patient care and teaching facilities.

The two-story, $9 million building will be attached to Dodd Hall, permitting use of its rehabilitation facilities and programs.

According to its planners and directors, the center's proximity to Dodd Hall takes on even greater significance in light of recent changes in the nation's medical reim-
pursement system. These changes stress shorter hospital stays and increased convalescence at home.

With the increasing emphasis on outpatient treatment, Dodd Hall's occupational and physical therapy services enable impaired patients to learn—or relearn—how to perform daily living tasks.

The new center, in fact, will feature a model bedroom and bathroom for use in family and patient education. There will be meeting rooms where families, patients and health professionals can discuss medical care.

According to Ron Whisler, professor and director of immunology who was instrumental in planning the facility, the main mission of the center is to conduct basic and applied research into the human immune and genetic systems—both of which are at the heart of human diseases of aging.
New class offers insight on aging and the elderly

By Holly M. Sulek
Lantern staff writer

The elderly population segment is the fastest growing one in the United States, said Loretta Buffer, professor of aging, medicine and instructor of a new gerontology course at Ohio State.

Gerontology is defined as the science that deals with the phenomena of old age.

There are career opportunities in the field of aging and this new course explores and promotes awareness of them.

The course, Introduction to Gerontology: An Interdisciplinary Approach, is a group studies class in which graduate and undergraduate students learn the physiological, psychological, and sociological aspects of aging, and explore related career possibilities, Buffer said.

The class is open to all majors, but instructor approval is necessary.

Buffer said there are career opportunities dealing with the elderly in fields such as social work, education, human nutrition, housing, lobbying and law.

Buffer said the course focuses on the dynamics of the growing elderly segment and hopes to encourage students to pursue further gerontology education, besides introducing the student to career opportunities.

"We want students to have an overview of aging in the United States," she said.

Since this is the first quarter that the course has been offered, Buffer has not had any formal evaluation responses, but she said all the comments she has had so far are very positive.

The course consists of mostly lectures, she said, with movies, guest lecturers, and panel discussions.

In one recent class, a panel discussion was held on adjusting to retirement. It featured five retirees.

The panelists all described their retirement days with regard to how they personally adjusted to retirement and what they would recommend to others.

One panelist, Janet Clover Lafferty of Columbus, said a great way to adjust to retirement is to plan to retire with one or two good friends and spend a lot of time planning activities with them.

She said that if one lives life to its fullest before retirement, the transition to retirement is no problem.

"Your interest in the world just intensifies," Lafferty said.

Lafferty was the assistant to the dean of the College of Education at Ohio State before she retired in her 50's.

Another panelist, Dean Robb, 73, from Upper Arlington, retired after 34 years with the Western Electric Corporation.

Robb described his adjustment to retirement with a bit of humor.

He said on his last day of work, he got into his car to go home, lit a cigar, and by the time the 30-minute drive was over, he had adjusted to retirement.
Long life brings challenge to confront age with vigor

As technology lengthens the life span, it has inadvertently intensified the conditions associated with aging, such as chronic health problems.

A three-part program, "Technology and Aging," at Ohio State in April and May will seek answers to how to enhance the quality of life for older Americans.

In conferences and open forums, experts in gerontology, medicine, the social sciences, public policy, economics and applied technology will discuss the creation of a multi-disciplinary approach.

The series is sponsored by the Department of Industrial Design and the Division of Nursing Staff Development of University Hospitals.

All sessions will be held in the Fawcett Center for Tomorrow. The forums are scheduled for 8 p.m. and conferences will be held from 8:30 a.m.-3:45 p.m.

The first program on April 4 and 5 will provide an overview of a changing American society.

"The Graying of America" is the topic of the forum April 4. It features Jaunita Krops, Secretary of Commerce in the Carter administration and the first woman president of the New York Stock Exchange.

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On April 5, five presenters will consider longevity, life extension; "chronicity" or continuous health conditions; demography of aging populations; the economics of aging; and how families care for elders in a fragmenting society.

The second section on April 18 and 19 will provide information about public issues and the individual characteristics of older Americans.

Leading the forum April 18 on "Advocacy for a New Age" will be Maggie Kuhn. She is the founder of the Gray Panthers, an advocacy group for older Americans. She has written numerous publications including books on public policy as it affects the lives of the older population.

The final programs May 2 and 3 will be devoted to advances in technology that should enhance the lives of older people.

"Technological Innovations in an Aging America" is the topic May 2 with Dennis LaBuda. He is the director of the Technology Center for the Aged, the Stein Gerontological Institute and the Miami Jewish Home and Hospital for the Aged.

The conferences are limited to 350 persons each. With support from the Battelle Endowment for Technology and Human Affairs, the cost of the conferences is $60 for the series and $25 for each individual session.

The forums are free and open to the public.

For more information, call 292-8571.
Series to focus on advances to keep elderly independent

By Pat Hagen
Lantern staff writer

Society needs to build a supportive environment for the elderly by using technology, said Joseph A. Koncelik, chairman of the Department of Industrial Design at Ohio State.

His department and University Hospital’s Division of Nursing Staff Development will sponsor a three-part series entitled “Technology and Aging” during April and May.

The series will focus on how technology is addressing the needs of an aging population.

“Technology will help the elderly remain independent,” Koncelik said. “We can’t afford them not to be living independently. We don’t have the institutions available to put people in anyway.”

Karen Klarman, coordinator of Nursing Staff Development, warns against stereotyping the aged as poor, homeless or chronically ill.

“As the elderly population increases they will be more of a heterogeneous group,” she said.

New technology needs to recognize the elderly as a viable part of society Klarman continued.

“There are 80-year-olds out on the golf course everyday and some are traveling across the country,” she said. “Technology has pretty much ignored that portion of the elderly that does have income to spend.

“Technology is a double edged sword,” she said. “If it’s a world built for a 40-year old, what good is it going to be if I live to be 90?”

Mary Simpson, director of Nursing Staff Development, hopes the series will enable the participants to creatively deal with the needs of the aging.

“That is why we have invited people from business, health care and the social sciences to come,” she said. “We don’t want this to be a ‘let’s talk about the problems of old people conference.’”

Klarman said, “We want to focus on the predicament technology has put us in, but also how technology can get us out of that predicament.”

Each conference will be preceded the night before by a free forum open to the public.

Juanita Kreps, secretary of commerce in the Carter administration, will speak at the first forum, April 4 at 8 p.m., at the Fawcett Center for Tomorrow. The first conference is scheduled for April 5 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

Maggie Kuhn, founder of the Gray Panthers, will speak at the second forum, April 18 at 8 p.m. Her topic is “Advocacy for a New Age.” The second conference will be on the following day.

The third forum is scheduled for May 2 at 8 p.m. Dennis Labuda, chairman of the National Forum on Technology and Aging, will speak on “Technological Innovation in an Aging America.” The third and final conference will be held on May 3.

For registration information call OSU’s Department of Conferences and Institutes at 292-5671. A special student fee is available for the conferences for $5. The fee is $25 for each conference and $60 for all three.
Reforms for elderly discussed

By Pat Hagen
Lanternt staff writer

Soft bathtubs covered with a foamy substance and shoulder-level grab bars that keep the elderly from falling were two ideas discussed at Ohio State's Technology and Aging Conference on Tuesday.

This was the second part of a three-part series sponsored by Ohio State's Department of Industrial Design and University Hospital's Division of Nursing Staff Development.

One basic theme of the conference was the need to keep the elderly in mind when designing products.

"Gadgets that work for older people also work for younger people," said Mark Zitter, director of Ageway, Inc., a marketing firm that links older people with available resources.

Door levers are easier for arthritic hands to use than door knobs. Shiny, waxed floors look like skating rinks to an elderly person and need to be changed, Zitter said.

These new innovations are now a concern to the baby boomers, the generation born between 1946 and 1964, because they are rewriting the mythology of aging, Zitter said. As baby boomers watch their parents age they see the need to change everything from health care services to consumer products, he said.

Awareness of natural sensory changes as we age is the key to the future, said Leon A. Pastalan, a professor in the College of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Michigan. As more people are affected by a problem there will be more demand for a solution, Pastalan said.

The third part of the Technology and the Aging series, May 2 and 3 at the Fawcett Center, will discuss technological innovations available for the elderly, including the use of robotics.
Activist for elderly calls for national health care

By Steve Benowitz

Activist Maggie Kuhn wagged a gnarled, 82-year-old finger at the audience and decried a rich, powerful United States that has a population of 37 million elderly who don’t have adequate health insurance.

Kuhn, an author and founder of the Gray Panthers, called for a nationalized, locally-controlled system to provide free health care for every American.

She suggested such a system could be paid for out of “general revenues,” and by the elimination of government projects such as SDI or “Star Wars,” which she referred to as a “Reagan boondoggle.”

Kuhn was the keynote speaker April 18 for the second session of the Ohio State-sponsored conference, “Technology and Aging,” at the Fawcett Center for Tomorrow.

The three-part meeting brings together experts from a number of fields in health care, public policy and technology to discuss ways to improve the lives of older Americans.

Kuhn is soft-spoken, gracious, assertive and opinionated.

“Health care in the United States is essentially ‘sickness care,’” she said, and the health care system “in a sense is a deception.

“It doesn’t focus on prevention, wellness or nutrition, (which is) the type of care that allows people to remain at home and out of hospitals.”

The problem has been accentuated by the closing of public hospitals, Kuhn said, and by large hospital chains buying up the public, non-profit hospitals.

A “medical-industrial complex,” controlled by pharmaceutical companies, insurance companies, hospital chains and other groups, is partly responsible for the lack of a nationalized health system, she said.

“We pay 15 percent of our gross national product for health care, and it doesn’t serve enough people.

“Health care is a basic human right, not a privilege,” she said.

‘Boomers’ redefine old age adages

By Steve Benowitz

“Hell no, we won’t go” continues to be the rallying cry of the baby boom generation.

But rather than protesting the Vietnam War, these demonstrators are waging another battle. They’re refusing to age.

And growing old in America may never be the same.

According to Mark Zitter, director of Information Resources of AgeWay, Inc., a communications marketing firm in California, the post-World War II baby boom generation — 76 million strong — is redefining the way Americans age.

“They want to be the first group to take 100 years to reach 50,” Zitter said at an audience of experts in gerontology, health care, public policy and other fields attending a conference on “Technology and Aging” April 19 at the Fawcett Center for Tomorrow.

Zitter said they simply “refuse to age the same way their parents and grandparents did.”

They’ve opened health clubs, and have eschewed three-martini lunches for aerobics and jogging. They’ve embraced nutrition and Nautilus, hair replacement and liposuction.

“They don’t think of age in chronological years,” he said. “Rather, it’s in terms of the way they feel, look, think and act.”

The so-called linear life span — school, work, retirement — no longer holds true, he said. It’s giving way to a cyclic course in which education, work and leisure are interspersed throughout life.

The baby boomers include Americans born between 1946-64, years of relative prosperity in the United States. They make up roughly a third of the nation’s populace.

According to Zitter, what began as a demographic phenomenon became a cultural one of considerable influence.

“The boomers have always assumed that it was for them to redefine what’s right in America based on what’s right for them,” he said. That includes reworking the idea of what it means to be old.
Technology aids elderly lives
Implications of advances analyzed by professionals

By Pat Hagen
Lantern staff writer

"I'm not talking about them; I'm talking about you and me," said Dennis LaBuda, chairman of the National Technology and Aging Forum. "Aging does not begin at 65; it's a life-long process. Some of us are just further along than others," he said.

LaBuda was the keynote speaker for the final installment of a three-part series on aging and technology sponsored by Ohio State's Department of Industrial Design and University Hospitals' Nursing Staff Development.

The last part of the conference was held Monday and Tuesday at the Fawcett Center, and it focused on the advantages of technology.

"By the end of this century, robots will be common in all homes," LaBuda said. "They just won't all look like R2D2. We have robots in our homes right now — they're called microwave ovens."

A series on aging and technology allows professionals from various disciplines to be aware of the implications of technology, said Harvey Sterns, director of the Life Span Development and Gerontology Institute at the University of Akron.

Technology can promote independent living and enhance the lives of the elderly, Sterns said.

LaBuda said, "Life-sustaining technology will keep peoples' bodies alive for as long as we want." Who decides who receives the technology and who will pay for it must be determined, he said.

The advancements in technology will enable the elderly to wear sensory watches that keep track of pulse, body heat and blood pressure, LaBuda said. If medical help is needed, a buzzer on the watches would go off and neighbors and doctors would be automatically alerted.

"The house of the future will also have sensors on walls and floors to alert a neighbor if an elderly person falls down," he said. "Doors will also be programmed to lock automatically every evening," LaBuda said.

"Our houses won't just be shelters; they will be our friends," he said.

LaBuda said technology will also make lives of the elderly easier. He said visiting a library or video store will become unnecessary. The movie images will instead be transmitted over telephone lines to one's television set.

LaBuda also said he expects medical care to radically improve and that surgery will rarely be used in the future. Kidney stones are now being removed using sound waves and aqua therapy in experimental research. Techniques like these will become a part of the future, he said.

"Invasive surgery will be considered barbaric," LaBuda said.

Research to help astronauts also helps the elderly, LaBuda said. Elderly people, like the astronauts, often suffer from hypothermia, which causes them to become too cold. To combat the problem, the elderly will wear clothes that sense heat irregularities. The clothes will become hotter or colder as the body temperature oscillates, LaBuda said.

Collapsible graphite wheelchairs that can be taken onto airplanes and stored in the overhead compartments will be the wave of the future, enabling the elderly to travel more easily, LaBuda said.

In the future, eyeglasses for the hearing impaired will have sensors that read lips and transmit the message back to the eyeglass wearer, he said.