

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA COMMEMORATES THE NAMING OF THE STEPHEN A. WYNN INSTITUTE FOR VISION RESEARCH

October 18 Ceremony Celebrates Stephen A. Wynn's Commitment to the Institute's Mission of Curing Blinding Eye Diseases

IOWA CITY, IA, October 18, 2013 — [The University of Iowa](#) President Sally Mason today presided over the naming ceremony for the [UI Stephen A. Wynn Institute for Vision Research](#) on the campus of the UI, one of the nation's top public research universities. The institute was named in honor of Mr. Wynn's \$25 million gift commitment, which has significantly accelerated the organization's mission to prevent and cure blinding eye diseases that affect millions of people worldwide.

"The University of Iowa has the right team, combining interdisciplinary researchers across eight departments and four colleges, to make major progress toward curing blindness," said UI President Sally Mason. "Mr. Wynn's inspirational gift provides the resources that will help make finding treatments and cures a reality. We are proud that the Stephen A. Wynn Institute for Vision Research is an integral part of the UI."

Wynn, chairman and chief executive officer of [Wynn Resorts, Limited](#), said, "As a person who knows firsthand what it is like to lose vision from a rare inherited eye disease, I want to do everything I can to help others who are similarly affected keep the vision they have and eventually get back what they have lost. I am thrilled by the pace of the scientific progress that has occurred in the past few years and I feel that the prospect of finding a cure is possible and probable in the short term and certain in the long term."

"Philanthropic support, like Mr. Wynn's generous gift, is very important to all aspects of academic medicine, but it is absolutely essential for developing treatments for 'orphan' disorders that occur in a few hundred people or less in the entire country," said Dr. Edwin Stone, the Seamans-Hauser Chair of Molecular Ophthalmology and director of the UI Stephen A. Wynn Institute for Vision Research.

The dedication event also marked the naming of the Steven W. Dezii Translational Vision Research Facility, the only lab of its kind in the world completely dedicated to the production of gene- and cell-based therapeutics for the treatment of blinding eye diseases. The facility is named for Dezii, director of the Stephen A. Wynn Foundation, to honor his 30-year commitment to vision philanthropy.

“For three decades I have traveled the world to search out the most promising research on preventing, treating and curing blindness,” said Mr. Dezii. “What I found at the University of Iowa was unique -- both in the degree of focus on curing blindness and in the commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration with scientists all around the world.”

[UI Foundation](#) President and CEO Lynette Marshall said, “Mr. Wynn’s gift will benefit the lives of a tremendous number of people – the scientists who can now more fully concentrate on their critical task, and patients from around the world, who have renewed hope for a brighter future.”

About the UI Stephen A. Wynn Institute for Vision Research

The University of Iowa Stephen A. Wynn Institute for Vision Research was created to accelerate the eradication of heritable human blindness through interdisciplinary research, education and clinical care. The institute’s mission is to develop effective treatments for all forms of genetic blindness, ranging from very common conditions like Age-related Macular Degeneration and Glaucoma that affect millions of people worldwide, to individually rare but collectively common disorders like Retinitis Pigmentosa, Stargardt Disease, Best Disease, Usher Syndrome and Leber Congenital Amaurosis.

The UI Stephen A. Wynn Institute for Vision Research’s efforts are divided into three major areas: genetic testing, gene therapy and patient-derived stem cell research. Using a targeted research approach, and with sufficient resources, scientists of the institute are confident that many forms of heritable blindness will become treatable within the next 10 years, and that many patients who have lost vision from one of these disorders will be able to get some of it back.

About the University of Iowa Foundation

The University of Iowa Foundation’s mission is to advance the University of Iowa and fulfill the aspirations of those it serves. The university’s dedicated contributors fund a broad array of needs, from student scholarships, breakthrough research and life-changing health care to innovative facilities, community outreach and global education.

The UI and UI Foundation are conducting a historic, comprehensive \$1.7 billion fundraising campaign, [*For Iowa. Forever More: The Campaign for the University of Iowa*](#), which will secure the UI's status as a world-class institution for future generations.

The University of Iowa Foundation is the preferred channel for private contributions that benefit all areas of the University of Iowa. For more information about the foundation and the campaign, visit the foundation website at <http://www.uifoundation.org>.

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For a full press kit, images and access to b-roll, visit www.uifoundation.org/press.

For more information about the University of Iowa Stephen A. Wynn Institute for Vision Research, visit <http://www.wivr.uiowa.edu/>.