

Concert gala raises \$1 million for Norris cancer research

By Imelda Valenzuela

More than \$1 million was raised and 420 guests attended A Concert to Cure Cancer, a gala benefiting the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and the new USC Center for Molecular Pathways and Drug Discovery, making it one of the largest and most successful fundraising events in the Norris Cancer Center's history.

Held Sept. 26 at the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles, the event honored the work of Heinz-Josef Lenz and Michael Kahn, co-directors of the new USC research center. The Pasadena POPS orchestra, conducted by Rachael Worby, headlined the event.

Peter Tolan, an award-winning writer, director and producer, served as the evening's emcee. Tolan holds television credits that include "Murphy Brown," "The Larry Sanders Show" and most recently "Rescue Me," and also wrote the screenplays to motion pictures including "Analyze This" and "America's Sweethearts." Tolan and his wife, Leslie, were event chairs, initiating the event, as well



At the Concert to Cure Cancer, Heinz-Josef Lenz (left), associate director of clinical research at USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and Kathryn Balakrishnan Chair for Cancer Research, accepts a vial of a promising new cancer drug from Michael Kahn, professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, Provost's Professor of Medicine and Pharmacy. The two are co-directors of the USC Center for Molecular Pathways and Drug Discovery, which benefitted from the concert.

as underwriting the Pasadena POPS' performance on behalf of Leslie's childhood friend, Paul Anderson, who was a

patient of Lenz. Anderson died in March.

"I hope we're going to have a lot of laughter this evening,

because even though this is an event about cancer, more importantly it's about beating cancer." See **GALA**, page 3

"...This is an event about cancer, more importantly it's about beating cancer and it's about life."

—Peter Tolan, writer/director and emcee of the Sept. 26 Concert to Cure Cancer gala

Annual USC Health Fair to bring medical screenings to East LA

By Sara Reeve

Thanks to your support of the Good Neighbors Campaign, the 10th annual USC Community Health, Wellness and Safety Fair will be held on Saturday, Oct. 9, at the East Los Angeles Occupational Center.

The fair, a signature program of USC Neighborhood Outreach that is funded by the Good Neighbors Campaign, will feature medical screenings and information from more than 60 different community health organizations and is expected to attract 1,200 participants. More than 100 students from the Health Sciences Campus will volunteer as health screeners at the fair.

You can support programs such as the USC Commu-

nity Health, Wellness and Safety Fair by joining the Good Neighbors Campaign this month.

This campaign is an annual effort by university employees to show their support for the local community. The 2009 Good Neighbors Campaign raised \$1.2 million. Since 1995, USC employees have raised more than \$11 million, 100 percent of which goes to organizations to enhance the local community.

Cesar Armendariz, director of HSC Community Outreach, said the Oct. 9 event funded by the campaign, "is highly anticipated by the community in East Los Angeles and beyond. We have people coming

See **FAIR**, page 2

USC hospitals go smoke-free starting Oct. 1

By Tania Chatila

In a committed effort to promote health and wellness at the USC Health Sciences Campus, several partners in the USC clinical enterprise are going smoke-free beginning Oct. 1.

The initiative spans USC University Hospital, USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and Hospital, Doheny Eye Institute, Doheny Vision Research Center, Healthcare Consultation Centers I and II, and Parkview Medical Building.

Smoking is not allowed in any of these facilities, the parking structures or open spaces immediately surrounding these buildings. Additionally, the designated smoking areas outside of USC University Hospital and USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and Hospital have been closed. All other areas of the Health Sciences campus, including the Biggy Street parking structure, are unaffected by this initiative.

"The decision to support a smoke-free environment was really unanimous within the USC academic medical enterprise," said Sharon Lee, associate administrator of clinical ancillary services for the USC hospitals. Lee led and managed efforts to get the smoke-free initiative successfully implemented. "We support medical research. We heal patients. We fight cancer.

Going smoke-free just makes sense with who we are as a health care entity."

The idea to go smoke-free had been on the hospitals' radar for some time, but Lee got the ball rolling in February with the help of Michael McNulty, a USC Occupational Therapy doctoral resident with similar interests in getting such an initiative off the ground.

By April, the two had formed a committee of representatives from the hospitals, The

Doctors of USC and other key constituencies. What had initially

begun as a hospitals-based initiative snowballed into something much bigger and more far-reaching, with buy-in from several other partners in the clinical enterprise.

Then an aggressive plan commenced to implement the smoke-free policy by Oct. 1, with a multi-faceted campaign to inform employees, patients and visitors of

the initiative. The campaign included signage and other materials distributed throughout the campus and employee outreach and educational forums on smoking cessation resources offered by USC.

"We really have to recognize the tremendous effort of everyone involved in making this initiative happen," said hospitals Chief Operating Officer Scott Evans. "In particular,

See **SMOKE-FREE**, page 2



NIKIAS INAUGURATION COUNTDOWN: Did you know?

Rufus B. von KleinSmid, USC president from 1921 to 1947, engaged in sword fighting with actor Douglas Fairbanks. Go to <http://www.facebook.com/uscinatour> for trivia contests related to USC presidents. Login to win USC prizes and to learn more about the inauguration of C. L. Max Nikias as USC's 11th president on Oct. 15.

NCI awards CHLA \$11 million for neuroblastoma study

'To make real improvements in survival for newly diagnosed patients ... we need to develop new combination therapies.'

—Robert Seeger, principal investigator and director of the Cancer Research Program at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles

Investigators at The Saban Research Institute of Childrens Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA) have received notice of renewal for a program project grant of \$11 million.

The five-year grant from the National Cancer Institute will allow laboratory and clinical investigators working together to study the underlying biology of neuroblastoma and to develop new therapies that target the cellular processes driving high-risk neuroblastoma, a cancer that forms in nerve tissue.

Treatments developed by this group are tested, often for the first time in children, by the New Approaches to Neuroblastoma Therapy (NANT) consortium, which includes

15 major pediatric oncology institutions in North America and has its headquarters at CHLA.

In children, neuroblastoma is the most common solid tumor occurring outside the brain. Almost half of all patients have aggressive disease that has spread throughout the body at the time of diagnosis.

Over the past 20 years, long-term survival has steadily increased and is now 45 percent due to the use of increasing doses of non-specific cytotoxic chemotherapy, treating remaining disease with a vitamin-like drug (retinoic acid), and immune therapy.

The cytotoxic chemotherapy kills tumor cells but also kills healthy normal cells.

Because of this lack of specificity, clinicians have reached a maximum dose of cytotoxic therapy available for patients. Treatment with retinoic acid and immune therapy only works for some patients.

"We've maxed out using our current tools," explained Robert Seeger, principal investigator and director of the Cancer Research Program at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles and professor of pediatrics at the Keck School of Medicine. "In order to make real improvements in survival for newly diagnosed patients, in addition to patients with refractory or

recurrent disease, we need to develop new combination therapies that target critical pathways that promote the growth and spread of tumor cells. If we block those pathways, we block the ability of the tumor cells to grow and spread without sacrificing healthy normal cells."

The team of researchers from Childrens Hospital Los Angeles and the Keck School of Medicine will be collaborating with investigators from the University of California at San Francisco School of Medicine, as well as those from the 15 institutions in the NANT consortium.

FAIR: Good Neighbors Campaign funds key event

Continued from page 1
from as far away as the Inland Empire to take advantage of free flu shots and other medical services."

The flu shot has proven to be one of the more popular attractions at the fair, as well as diabetes and hypertension screenings. Other activities include screenings for dental health, cholesterol and osteoporosis; body fat analysis; and physical fitness demonstrations.

Aimy Vo, a Pharm.D. candidate in the USC School of Pharmacy, is coordinating

the student volunteer effort for the fair. "We choose to participate in these events because as pharmacy students and health care providers, our goal is to practice preventive medicine," said Vo. "We want to make sure that [attendees] are eating the right type of food and exercising so that they will be able to prevent common disease states like diabetes and hypertension. ... Our goal is to keep participants out of the hospital."

According to Armendariz, this year's health fair will

be a lively event, with live music and dancing. "We will have the Bravo High School Latin jazz band, the local YMCA will be providing fitness demos, and we're working to have a children's ballroom dancing troupe give a dance demonstration," he said. "We want people to understand that physical fitness can be fun and not something they have to fear."

For more information about the Good Neighbors Campaign, visit www.usc.edu/ext-relations/gnc/.

SMOKE-FREE: New policy aims to boost wellness

Continued from page 1
we must commend Sharon Lee's single-handed administrative effort to not only get this project off the ground, but also to see it through. This was a complex initiative that required involvement from multiple parties, foresight and a lot of behind-the-scenes work. Sharon's leadership played an integral role in the success of this project."

In going smoke free, the USC clinical enterprise joins countless other health care entities—

including more than 2,100 hospitals throughout the country—that have adopted smoke-free policies. In fact, guidelines regulating smoking in other areas such as the restaurant and airline industries have also been widely adopted in recent years.

Key officials involved in the initiative emphasized that this smoke-free policy does not require anyone to quit. It does, however, create an environment that serves the best interests of those visiting and working here, said Lee.

2010 Massry Prize winners to speak at HSC Oct. 21

James E. Rothman, the Fergus F. Wallace Professor of Biomedical Sciences at Yale University, and Randy Schekman, an investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, have been named the recipients of the 2010 Massry Prize.

The Massry Prize, which includes a substantial monetary award, recognizes outstanding contributions to the biomedical sciences and advancement of health. The recipients will give lectures on the Health Sciences Campus on Oct. 21. A reception will be held in the Hoyt Gallery at noon. Lectures will follow in the Mayer Auditorium at 12:30.

Rothman, who is also chairman of the Department of

Cell Biology at Yale University Medical School, will speak on "Mechanism and Regulation of Membrane Fusion."



James E. Rothman

a professor of cell and developmental biology in the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology at the University of California at Berkeley, will lecture on "Membrane Transport Vesicles and Human Disease."



Randy Schekman

The Meira and Shaul G. Massry Foundation established the Massry Prize in 1996. Shaul Massry, professor emeritus of medicine at USC, founded the non-

profit organization. To date, nine previous recipients of the Massry Prize have gone on to win the Nobel Prize.

Neurological Assn. honors W. King Engel

The American Neurological Association recently bestowed honorary membership in the organization to W. King Engel, professor of neurology and pathology at the Keck School of Medicine and the director of the USC Neuromuscular Center.

The award, the association's highest honor, recognizes individuals who have made unique contributions to neurology and neurological science and demonstrated excellence as investigators and teachers on a national or international level.



W. King Engel

Engel has described a number of new neuromuscular diseases, a number of new, currently widely used treatments, and many new histochemical findings and special stains. Engel's trichrome stain, along with his profile of other histochemical stains, are used worldwide for essentially every histochemical-diagnostic muscle biopsy analysis, and his trichrome is pictured or described in virtually every diagnostic histochemical muscle-biopsy report in the literature.

Engel, considered the "father of muscle-biopsy diagnostic histochemistry," has trained over 250 fellows, many of whom are now nationally and internationally recognized clinical investigators and academic leaders.

Engel received the honor at the association's Sept. 14 meeting in San Francisco.

The Weekly

Next Issue: October 8

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USC hospital employees' survey underscores high quality of care

By Tania Chatila

Employees of USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital have a strong sense of belief in the organization and the care provided by the hospitals, according to a recent survey.

The Employee Partnership Survey—conducted by Press Ganey Associates Inc.—was distributed in mid-March. It was made up of nearly 50 questions on a range of topics including employee satisfaction, direct management, teamwork in the workplace and organizational beliefs.

Survey results demonstrated several areas of strength within the organization, as well as opportunities for improvement.

“I want our employees to know that we care enough to ask them what they think in a survey,” said hospitals CEO Mitch Creem. “We appreciate all that our employees do here each day, and we want to support them and make them successful.”

Among the areas of strength represented in the survey results was a strong belief in

the values and services of the organization as a whole. For example, 92 percent of surveyed employees said they believe the quality of care at the USC hospitals is excellent, and 93 percent of those surveyed said they would recommend USC health care services to others.

Additionally, 96 percent of the responding employees said they believe the organization is highly regarded in the community.

Other strengths noted include employees' individual beliefs about their work and the work of the organization. Nearly 90 percent of employees surveyed said they believe their colleagues do everything they can to provide the best level of service to patients and visitors. Additionally, 97 percent of those surveyed said their work is meaningful.

Opportunities identified for improvement include enhanced communication between employees and managers and managerial support of employees'

suggestions and input.

“There has been a lot of change in our organization in the last 15 months, and we recognize the challenges that have come with those changes,” Chief Human Resources Officer Matt McElrath said. “We are excited about some new initiatives coming this fall to offer our managers and directors additional guidance and support so that they can strengthen their relationships with employees.”

In an effort to encourage continued discussion about the work environment and working relationships among staff, Human Resources featured the results of the survey at three open forums for employees. During the forums, personnel shared their ideas on ways to improve the workplace.

“The feedback was very positive, and we received a lot of good ideas about what we can do to increase participation in next year's survey,” said Sue Whitfield, employee relations generalist for the USC hospitals. “We're very pleased.”

‘We appreciate all that our employees do here each day, and we want to support them and make them successful.’

—USC hospitals CEO Mitch Creem

GALA: ‘A Concert to Cure Cancer’ raises more than \$1.3 million for USC Norris

Continued from page 1

cancer and it's about life,” said Tolan in his opening remarks.

“The funds raised tonight will allow the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center to make huge advances; it's going to take cancer treatment to a different level, and I ask you to remember that when I'm hitting you up for money,” said Tolan, drawing laughter and applause from the audience.

The program began with a video featuring Lenz and Kahn discussing PRI-724, a promising drug treatment for cancer that will go into clinical trials this fall.

Applications for the drug are expected to extend beyond cancer and to help a multitude of diseases including Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis, degenerative diseases, Alzheimer's, cardiac disease and osteoporosis, according to Lenz and Kahn.

“We are so excited about this drug because it not only has no side effects, but it also has incredibly good effects,” said Lenz in the video. “We never give up; we want to find treatments that can change the lives of cancer patients. Our goal has to be the cure. This is my life: my life is to work here at Norris to find a cure.”

Holding up a vial of PRI-724 while on stage at the gala, Kahn said, “This represents the last 10 years of my life. We are excited about the promise of our research. I think it's important because we are going to do some really good things, and I hope the next time we're handing off vials, research is sped



Left, event chairs for A Concert to Cure Cancer (from left) Michael Wimer, Marc Appleton, Joanna Kerns, Peter Tolan and Leslie Tolan applaud Rachael Worby, who made her final appearance as conductor of the Pasadena POPS at the gala.

up and we can do it in far less than 10 years.”

The video also showed several of Lenz's patients and focused on Annette Cook, a 45-year-old businesswoman, wife and mother of three sons under the age of 12.

Cook has stage 4 liver cancer and has undergone two surgeries and multiple rounds of chemotherapy only to see the cancer return each time.

“That vial can save my life,” said Cook, referring to the drug Kahn held during his speech. “For me the choices

have become really slim. I've got two surgeries under my belt and I don't want to go through a third surgery only to end up with a recurrence of this cancer. I have three little boys, and they need their mommy.” Cook plans to join the clinical trial when PRI-724 becomes available.

She expressed gratitude for being under the care of Lenz and for having access to Lenz and Kahn's research. “I'm just so thankful to be at USC. Dr. Lenz and Dr. Kahn are passionate, dedicated professionals. They are



From left, Lisa Holmes, Annette Cook, Stan Cook, Becca Hartmeier, and Brian Holmes check out a Smart Car tagged with USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center logos that was auctioned at the event. Hartmeier's bid won the car.

scientifically brilliant and they have so much compassion for people like me who benefit from their extraordinary research,” she said. “Dr. Lenz says, ‘I don't give up unless you do,’ which tells you right there his sense of dedication. They are so confident in this drug, and their confidence gives me comfort and hope.”

The evening activities included a live auction, hosted by Tolan, which included a seven-day stay at a historic Massachusetts manor built in 1799, a luxury Italian vacation including first-class roundtrip air fare for two, and a convertible Smart car whose glove compartment was signed by celebrities including Tom Hanks, Rita Wilson, Taylor Swift and Steven Spielberg. The auction netted \$82,000 for the benefit.

The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

A Sept. 22 *Los Angeles Times* article quoted professor of clinical surgery and chief of the division of surgical oncology at USC Norris **Stephen Sener** about a new study on the value of routine mammography in detecting cancer.

On Sept. 22, KPCC-FM's “AirTalk” interviewed associate professor of research in preventive medicine **Michael Cousineau** about provisions of the health care reform bill, some of which went into effect

Sept. 23. KTTV Fox 11 also interviewed Cousineau about the health care reform provisions.

A Sept. 20 WebMD article featured research by professor of preventive medicine **Simon Gayther** and colleagues, who found that the same genetic region plays a role in both breast cancer and ovarian cancer, suggesting that the same faulty pathway can cause both diseases. MSNBC.com and Asian News International also featured Gayther's research.

A Sept. 19 *La Opinion* article featured assistant professor of neurology **Lilyana Amezcua** and her research on multiple sclerosis in minority communities.

On Sept. 15, KABC-TV featured research by assistant professor of pediatrics at CHLA **Steven Mittelman**, whose study found a link between obesity and acute lymphoblastic leukemia.

Calendar of Events

This Calendar of events is also online at www.usc.edu/hscalendar for the Health Sciences Campus community

Wednesday, Oct. 6

10 a.m. Pharmacology and Pharmaceutical Sciences Seminar. "Discovery and Development of Small-molecules Targeting Ezrin Protein as Antimetastatic Agents," Aykut Üren, Georgetown. PSC 104. Info: (323) 442-2341

7 p.m. Global Health Lecture Series. "Pushing the Elephant," movie screening and lecture. Speakers: Rose Mapendo, Beth Davenport and Elizabeth Mandel. UPC: SCA 112. RSVP to global.health@usc.edu or call (323) 865-0419

7:30 p.m. USC Spectrum and USC Office of Religious Life Presentation. "Walking Wisdom," Gotham and Deepak Chopra, USC. UPC Bovard Aud. Info: (213) 740-2167

Friday, Oct. 8

8:30 a.m. Surgery Grand Rounds. "Current State of Pancreas Transplantation," Kiran Dhanireddy, USC. DOH 100. Info: (323) 442-2506

Thursday, Oct. 14

4 p.m. CER Workshop. "Writing Persuasive Proposals," Bonnie Kilgore-Lund, USC. Three-session series, Oct. 14, 21, 28. NML East Conference Rm. Info: (213) 740-6709

Friday, Oct. 15

11:30 a.m. Physical Sciences in Oncology Seminar. "Game Theory and the Evolutionary Ecology of Cancer," Joel Brown, Univ. of Illinois. NRT Aresty Aud. Info: (323) 442-3849

Monday, Oct. 18

3:15 p.m. Primary Care Week Opening Reception. "The Heart of Community Medicine," Robert Ross, California Endowment. NRT Aresty Auditorium. Info: (323) 442-1678

Tuesday, Oct. 19

10:30 a.m. USC Hospital Guild Speaker Series. "Answering the Call to Action," Henri Ford, USC. DEI 3rd Floor Auditorium. Speaker series is complimentary, optional lunch \$25. Info: (323) 254-0600

Noon. "New Models of Primary Care," Joe Scherger, USC. NRT Aresty Auditorium. Info: (323) 442-1678

Wednesday, Oct. 20

Noon. "Primary Care in Health Care Reform," Various speakers. NRT Aresty Auditorium. Info: (323) 442-1678

5 p.m. Global Health Lecture Series. "Health Technologies and Women's Health Needs in Developing Countries," Jaqueline Sherrie, PATH, UPC: Davidson Conference Center. RSVP to global.health@usc.edu or call (323) 865-0419

Thursday, Oct. 21

Noon. "Paying for a Career in Primary Care," Alumni Speaker Panel. NRT Aresty Auditorium. Info: (323) 442-1678

Friday, Oct. 22

8:30 a.m. Surgery Grand Rounds. "Controversies in Surgical Management of Breast Cancer: Does Everyone with Breast Cancer Need a MRI Study? When Should Patients Having Neoadjuvant Chemotherapy Have a Sentinel Node Biopsy? Should We Stop Doing Auxiliary Dissections for Node-positive Invasive Breast Cancers?" Stephen Sener, USC. DOH 100. Info: (323) 442-2506

Tuesday, Nov. 2

5 p.m. Global Health Lecture Series. "Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases: Global Dimensions and Determinants," Srinath Reddy, Public Health Foundation of India. NRT Aresty Aud. RSVP to global.health@usc.edu or call (323) 865-0419

Notice: Deadline for calendar submission is 4 p.m. Monday to be considered for that week's issue—although three weeks' advance notice of events is recommended. Please note that timely submission does not guarantee an item will be printed. Send calendar items to *The Weekly*, KAM 400 or fax to (323) 442-2832, or e-mail to ebalauw@usc.edu. Entries must include day, date, time, title of talk, first and last name of speaker, affiliation of speaker, location, and a phone number for information.

New building on Soto Street to feature fitness center

By Sara Reeve

As educational, patient care and research programs have expanded on the Health Sciences campus, a lack of space and services has become an issue. But the addition of a new mixed-use building will bring more room and new amenities, including a state-of-the-art fitness center.

The Health Sciences campus will expand northward in November 2011 when the new L-shaped building, currently called the Soto Street Building, opens, featuring 120,000 square feet of highly flexible office, classroom and research space, a fitness center and outdoor café.

"It's a reality that we have limited space on the Health Sciences campus," said Robert Cooper, vice provost for planning and budget. "With the acquisition of the two hospitals and growth of the Keck School and other schools, we really need some quick space solutions. The Alhambra campus is appropriate for some departments, but not for others. The university owns this land, so it makes sense to use it."

Groundbreaking for the site was held on July 22. The main structure is scheduled to be erected by April 2011 and enclosed June 2011. Final space allocations are still to be decided, but units from both

Grand Challenge Summit to focus on science, engineering

A remarkable lineup of innovators will gather in Doheny Auditorium at the University Park campus Oct. 7-8 at the National Grand Challenge Summit to talk about science and engineering's impact on society.

Medical technology will be a major focus at the summit, with speakers including private sector executives like John Martin of Gilead Sciences, UC Berkeley bioengineering chair Matthew Tirrell and Duke University tissue engineering chair William "Monty" Reichert. Artificial retina maker Mark Humayun of USC will also present.

For more information, visit <http://naegrandschallengesummit2010.org>.

USC faculty can attend free of charge by registering at <http://tinyurl.com/29s57nn> and using code "USCF" at checkout. Free registration ends at 6 p.m. Oct. 1.



Above, an architectural rendering shows the Soto Street Building, expected to be completed in late 2011.

the Keck School of Medicine and the USC hospitals will be located in the building. Shuttle service will be provided between the new building and the main Health Sciences campus.

The fitness center, a facility that has long been requested by faculty, staff and students, will feature an outdoor basketball court; cardiovascular equipment, such as stationary bicycles, treadmills and elliptical trainers; free weights and strength equipment. The center will also house an exercise classroom, locker rooms and showers.

"We are excited to be bringing a well-equipped fitness center to the Health Sciences campus," said Kristina Raspe, associate senior vice president of real estate and asset management. "When the center opens next year, faculty, staff and students will be able to take advantage of the great features included."

The site, which formerly housed a printing facility, is being developed by the Trammell Crow Company and built by Hathaway Dinwiddie. The firm leading the design of the building is AECOM.

"We wanted to design a building that would be suitable for the long-term needs

of the university," said Greg Ames, principal, of Trammell Crow. "That means we wanted to build in flexibility so that the space doesn't just meet the needs of today, but those of the future, as well."

The building has been designed to meet or exceed LEED certification standards for green buildings. Constructed with cast-in-place concrete, rather than the standard structural steel, the new building will feature high ceilings and open floor plans that can be individualized for departmental needs.

"This will be a mini-campus with a firm connection, both visually and culturally, with the Health Sciences campus and Downtown Los Angeles," said Ames.

The university worked with Trammell Crow to pioneer an innovative procurement process for this building. Trammell Crow and partners secured highly favorable bond financing, allowing the building to commence while minimizing the initial outlay of capital for the university. While USC owns the land, it will lease the building from Trammell Crow for 20 years, at which time the ownership of the building will revert to the university.

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