

2019 LARGEST CHARITABLE GIFTS

\$227M Total, 61 Gifts; OC Steps Up

Total, Average, Donor Count, No. 1: All Rise

By PAUL HUGHES

Some say “Give Till It Helps,” while others use the old school cry “Give Till It Hurts.”

Orange County donors simplified that a lot last year.

“Just Give.”

The Business Journal’s list of the biggest giving last year is higher than year-ago levels by every metric:

- Total giving: \$227 million, up 54%
 - Average gift: \$3.7 million, up 9%
 - Total gifts topping \$1 million: 61, up 42%
- And the most important measurement: more people helped.

Recipients of OCers’ largest largesse spanned hospitals to housing, education to the arts.

Most of the biggest giving last year went to big recipients: three hospitals and two schools:

- \$45.5 million on 16 gifts to **University of California-Irvine**
- \$35.4 million on nine gifts to **Chapman University**

■ \$25.1 million on three gifts to **Hoag Hospital Foundation**

■ \$20.4 million on 10 gifts to **CHOC Children’s Foundation**

■ \$17.8 million on seven gifts to **St. Joseph Hospital-Orange**

The cumulative \$144.2 million from those 45 gifts were 63% and 75% of the list’s totals, respectively.



Gross Family Foundation: during event in 2019

Big Deals

Then it gets even more interesting.

The largest single gift this year was an outlier in both amount and recipient: a \$50 million donation from **Frank and Joann Randall** to **Banning Ranch Conservatory**, to help preserve county coastal areas (see story, page 1).

It’s twice as high as last year’s No. 1—a gift by **Bill and Judi Leonard** to **Mission Hospital Mission Viejo** estimated at \$25 million—given to a group that doesn’t necessarily see the most-publicized donations.

Frank Randall’s résumé is relatively common, investments and real estate, and the couple’s OC giving has been on the quiet side for years. Banning Ranch was his biggest splash so far, but not his first.

Shelley Hoss, president of **Orange County Community Foundation** in Newport Beach said such silence is common in OC (see related story, page 83).

“Something I truly appreciate” about local

giving, she said, is “we’re a first-generation wealth creator.” The Randall approach to giving is common of the area philanthropists in that OC “tends to the lowkey. People are surprised when they come out with these whoppers. I find it delightful; it shows pure intent.”

The top five gifts last year were all in the eight figures and include:

- \$16.6 million by **Beall Family Foundation** to UCI (see story, page 30)
- \$12 million from **John Whelan** for Hoag
- \$10 million from an anonymous donor to Chapman
- \$10 million from **Argyros Family Foundation**, also to Chapman.

Hoss said local donors are often doers; the Randalls and others “want to see stuff that matters to them get done—and in their lifetime.”

Give, Give, Give

The Argyros family, like other OC philanthropists, gives outside OC as well. Last year’s donations from the family foundation

included \$10 million for scholarships to Horatio Alger Association and \$1 million apiece to St. Luke’s Hospital in Ketchum, Idaho, and the Argyros Performing Arts Center in Sun Valley.

Another notable listee—also a certified under-the-radar giver—is **Dean and Gerda Koontz**, with \$9.1 million to Hoag.

Dean Koontz is the global mega-best-selling horror-thriller novelist known for setting several of his stories in OC. The Koontz’s gift was No. 6 by total amount last year and starts the “seven-figure section” of the list.

Some 80% of the list are for gifts of \$5 million or below; one-fourth are exactly \$1 million, the minimum amount for inclusion here.

This year’s growth comes after 2018 giving gains when the total—\$148 million—also rose, excluding outliers from the year before.

Remember 2017?

That was the year that saw **Henry and Susan Samuelli** pledge \$200 million to UCI, a \$120 million campaign for **St. Michael’s Abbey** in Silverado with countywide support and strong participation by **Paul and Marybelle Musco**; as well as **Dale and Sarah Ann Fowler** backing Chapman with their second eight-figure pledge: \$45 million for a new engineering school, atop a previous \$55 million for the law school; both schools bear the family name.

Chapman and Hoag that year picked up another \$56 million combined on four other gifts.

The total across the three years of the list, based on Business Journal research: \$875 million on 140 gifts, an average of \$6.25 million in that time. ■

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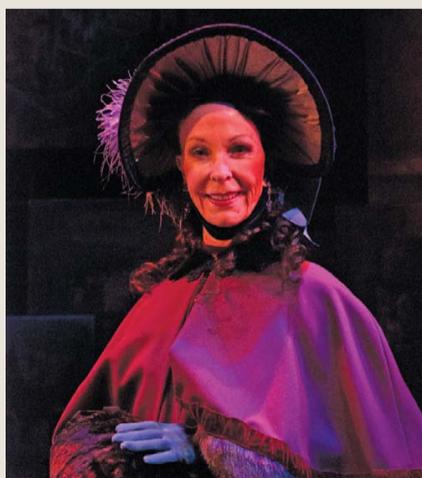
GERDA AND DEAN KOONTZ



FOUNDATION OF CARING FUND



GARY FUDGE



JULIA ARGYROS



LEYLA MILANI AND MANNY KHOSHBIN



SANDI AND RON SIMON