On Campus

Roy and Diana Vagelos Make $400 Million Gift

Winter 2024-25

Courtesy of CUIMC

Columbia benefactors P. Roy Vagelos ’54VPS and Diana Vagelos ’55BC recently donated $400 million to the medical school for biomedical-science research and education. The gift is the single largest ever to the school and, taken together with their previous giving, establishes the Vageloses as the most generous donors in the history of the University.

A significant portion of the gift will expand the mission of the Vagelos-funded Institute for Basic Biomedical Science, created last year to foster cutting-edge

research bridging fundamental biology and clinical practice. The institute will now play a pivotal role in uniting Columbia's research efforts across basic sciences, clinical departments, and medical and graduate education programs, expanding University collaborations that harness recent breakthroughs and new technologies.

The donation also supports the ongoing construction of the Vagelos Innovation Laboratories, an eight-story biomedical-research facility rising on Columbia's medical campus in Washington Heights. In addition, the gift will advance the medical school's pioneering efforts in cell engineering and gene therapy — fields with the potential to revolutionize treatments for blood, immune, and metabolic disorders, as well as cancer and neurological, inflammatory, and cardiovascular diseases.

"It is truly awe-inspiring to envision the discoveries and new knowledge this gift will enable, in world-class laboratories bolstered by the resources and innovative structure of the Vagelos Institute," wrote interim Columbia president Katrina Armstrong and interim medical-school dean James McKiernan '93VPS in a joint statement.

The Vageloses' long-standing support has already had a profound impact. Their 2017 gift of $250 million, which included $150 million earmarked for scholarships, allowed Columbia's medical school to become the first in the United States to offer debt-free education, inspiring a national movement to eliminate medical-school debt. In recognition of their contributions, the school was renamed the Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons that year.

Guide to school abbreviations

All categories >