

UC SANTA BARBARA

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Schwab Gives \$1 Million for Catholic Studies at UCSB

Charles R. Schwab, founder and chairman of Charles Schwab & Co., Inc., has pledged \$1 million to support Catholic Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

His leadership gift and those of other donors have established the Virgil Cordano Endowment in Catholic Studies in UCSB's Department of Religious Studies.

The endowment honors Father Cordano, a Franciscan Friar and pastor of the St. Barbara Parish at the Santa Barbara Mission who has devoted his life to promoting greater understanding of all religions and increased dialogue among them.

"This important gift will strengthen and enhance interdisciplinary teaching, research, and public programming in Catholic Studies at UCSB's distinguished Religious Studies Department," said UCSB Chancellor Henry T. Yang.

"Charles Schwab's generous tribute to Father Cordano, who is revered for his commitment to building bridges among all religions, will undoubtedly motivate others to follow his inspiring example."

Schwab's gift along with other contributions were celebrated last night at a special event at the Santa Barbara Mission. To date, \$1.7 million has been pledged for the Catholic Studies endowment at UCSB.

A total of \$5 million in private philanthropy is being sought for an endowed chair and programmatic support through a joint university and community fund-raising effort.

Schwab made the recent gift in memory of his parents, Bettie A. Schwab and Robert H. Schwab, and to honor Father Cordano, a close family friend and frequent visitor to the Schwab home in Santa Barbara where Charles Schwab grew up.

"This endowment is a fitting tribute to Father Virgil that celebrates his presence, spirit, and energetic commitment to the pursuit of knowledge about all religions," said Schwab.

He said he hoped his gift would challenge others to step forward and add their support to the project.

Father Cordano, who has a doctorate in sacred scripture, was instrumental in shaping community sentiment that encouraged the establishment of a Department of Religious Studies at UCSB more than 40 years ago.

Today, the department is widely considered one of the major centers in North America for the study of religions. UCSB is the only campus in the UC system that offers a comprehensive undergraduate program in religious studies as well as advanced degrees, including the Ph.D.

The National Research Council ranks UCSB's program ninth in the nation and second among all public universities.

Bishop Thomas J. Curry of the Santa Barbara Pastoral Region called the Schwab gift "an extraordinary act of generosity.

This donation will help establish an important legacy and will also inspire others to support what will become a major center for the study of the Catholic tradition."

Father Cordano said he was touched that the endowment has been named in his honor and expressed great enthusiasm for the new Catholic Studies program.

"The program's aim will be to foster exploration of the historical, cultural, and sociological backgrounds of Catholicism in order to promote mutual understanding among people of different beliefs and cultures," he said.

Wade Clark Roof, chair of the Department of Religious Studies and Rowney Professor of Religion and Society at UCSB, called the Schwab gift "an enormous boost to Catholic Studies at UCSB.

It, along with the gifts of others, will allow the department to offer more courses at the university and to expand programs within the community.

We are very much indebted to Mr. Schwab."

Scholars in UCSB's Department of Religious Studies teach about the religions of the world and the complex relationships between religion and society, politics, war, morality, the arts, and everyday life.

They also address critical issues relating to the subject of religion in its many facets: historical, cultural, literary, aesthetic, sociological, experiential, and philosophical.

The department also offers courses in classical languages including Hebrew, Aramaic, Coptic, Arabic, Sanskrit, Pali, Hindi, and Tibetan, helping students to develop the language and research skills necessary for serious textual study.

The department's 16 faculty members count among their colleagues 15 affiliated faculty members from other departments.

The department serves approximately 80 graduate students, 160 undergraduate majors, and hundreds of other students who enroll in religious studies courses every quarter.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.