

OBERLIN

CRAIN'S CLEVELAND BUSINESS

November 1, 2007

Oberlin College Gains \$12M in Gifts

By Scott Suttell

Oberlin College has received three separate gifts totaling \$12 million that will be used to advance environmental stewardship and to help finance construction of a new home for jazz studies.

The three gifts were for \$4 million each.

“Oberlin is a place where solutions to environmental issues are explored, and where the frontiers of music are expanded,” president Marvin Krislov said in a statement. “These gifts celebrate the leadership, creativity and innovative spirit found throughout Oberlin College.”

A Cleveland-area family, which wishes to remain anonymous, committed \$2.5 million of its \$4 million gift for an endowed chair in environmental studies. Oberlin has agreed to match this gift with a second endowed chair. The college's Environmental Studies Program currently has one endowed chair, the Paul Sears Professorship held by David Orr.

An additional \$1 million of the \$4 million gift will be dedicated to technological upgrades within the Adam Joseph Lewis Center for Environmental Studies. The remaining \$500,000 will be earmarked for environmental planning grants to be shared by

the College and the city of Oberlin.

The two other gifts will be applied toward construction of the Phyllis Litoff Building, the new home for jazz studies. The Litoff Building is intended to be the first music facility in the world to attain a gold LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating. Clyde McGregor of Chicago, a 1974 Oberlin graduate, pledged \$4 million to the Litoff Building in honor of his mother, Lilly Marie Smith '43. Another Oberlin grad (1957) from Chicago, Joseph Clonick, pledged \$4 million to support a recording studio and performance space for the project. Mr. Clonick previously pledged \$1 million to support construction of the Litoff Building. Both \$4 million gifts will augment the commitment by Cleveland businessman Stewart Kohl, a 1977 Oberlin grad, and his wife, Donna, who launched the Litoff Building project in 2005 with a lead gift of \$5 million — the largest private gift in support of jazz education at a U.S. college.