

Marquette University: President Lovell announces major gift from Fotsch Family Foundation to grow innovation leadership development

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MILWAUKEE — In his eighth Presidential Address, Marquette University President Michael R. Lovell announced a major gift from the Fotsch Family Foundation that will sustain the university's efforts "to grow the next generation of Jesuit-educated leaders across the state, region and world."

Building on the Opus College of Engineering's nationally recognized, award-winning leadership development program called Excellence in Leadership (E-Lead), this major gift will establish a new endowed leadership center and director position in the college. It will also fund people and programs within Innovation Alley, an effort between the Opus College of Engineering and the College of Business Administration to foster innovation in our business region.

"We are so grateful to Nana Fotsch and the entire Fotsch family for this gift that will amplify our innovation leadership development efforts," said Opus Dean of Engineering Dr. Kristina Ropella. "For nearly a decade, through E-Lead, we've intentionally focused on developing leaders to grow in their self-awareness, commit to core values and inspire others."

Launched by Ropella in 2014, Marquette's E-Lead program develops an annual cohort of 40 students over a three-year period and cultivates their leadership capacity and confidence through the lens of the university's Catholic, Jesuit mission. Students learn how to lead oneself, lead with others and develop the mindset and skillset to lead innovation. In 2019, the program expanded beyond the Opus College

of Engineering to include students from across the university.

The gift, President Lovell said, continues to grow momentum in the university's Time to Rise campaign, which has now surpassed \$566 million in funds raised by more than 53,000 donors. The Fotsch Family Foundation has now surpassed \$14 million in Time to Rise gifts. Previous gifts have been dedicated to scholarships, the Grotto to the Blessed Virgin Mary behind St. Joan of Arc Chapel, and [the new home for Marquette Business and innovation leadership programs at 16th Street and Wisconsin](#).

"I truly believe that I must share all the blessings that the Good Lord has showered on me and my entire family," said Geraldine "Nana" Fotsch. In her latest gift, Nana Fotsch has been closely involved with strategic discussions to grow the pipeline of innovation leaders, underscoring the importance of continued close collaboration between the Opus College of Engineering and the College of Business Administration. This collaboration will continue to grow in the new facility as a portion of the top floor will house flexible, open space for the E-Lead program overlooking Wisconsin Avenue.

"The Fotsch family is among the most generous benefactors in Marquette University history, and they have always given back with a humble desire to shape the lives of our students," said Vice President for University Advancement Tim McMahon.

Honoring the Fotsch Family through named and endowed center and directorship In recognition of their generosity, President Lovell shared that the university will honor the Fotsch Family legacy by naming a newly established center for them. The Fotsch Innovation and Engineering Leadership Development Center (FIELD Center) will serve as the home for the E-Lead Program and other innovation leadership development offerings. Further, the directorship will be named the Nana Fotsch Director for the FIELD Center.

Kate Trevey, current director of engineering and innovation leadership development, will serve as the first Nana Fotsch Director for the FIELD Center. Trevey, who developed the original E-Lead curriculum as the founding director, was named among the Milwaukee Business Journal's 2019 Women of Influence. She graduated from Marquette's College of Business Administration in 2004.

"We have such a deep appreciation for Nana Fotsch and the entire Fotsch family for their steadfast belief and immense support that has spanned many years," Trevey

said. “Leadership starts with people, and this significant gift will allow us to ethically form far more future leaders who will push the boundaries of innovative thinking.”

Ropella reflected on the immense impact the Fotsch family has had, along with their enduring legacy. “To know Nana Fotsch is to experience love, positivity, acceptance and a belief that when you put your mind to it, anything is possible,” Ropella said. “She embodies the spirit of innovation and it is a deep honor to extend the impact of her incredible legacy to our students for many, many years to come.”

Time to Rise: The Marquette Promise to Be The Difference

Marquette’s \$750 million comprehensive fundraising campaign, which is the most ambitious in Marquette’s 140-year history, is elevating resources to advance the university’s mission and pillars of excellence, leadership, faith and service. The university has raised more than \$566 million to date, amounting to 75% of its goal. More than 53,000 donors have already supported Time to Rise, including 44% of donors making their first ever gift to the university. Throughout the campaign, 112 donors have committed to gifts of \$1 million or more.