Lloyd Greif's gift is the largest to USC by an individual in his 40s.
Life at the Top

USC Marshall’s Lloyd Greif Center for Entrepreneurial Studies unveils its new home—at the top of Fertitta Hall

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Even on a cloudy day, Lloyd Greif can step onto the balcony of the new Lloyd Greif Center for Entrepreneurial Studies headquarters and see his downtown L.A. office in the US Bank Tower. On Tuesday, Oct. 25, friends and associates of the Greif Center gathered for the official ribbon-cutting ceremony, celebrating the Center’s new home on the fourth and fifth floors of Jill and Frank Fertitta Hall, USC Marshall’s new 104,000-square-foot undergraduate facility.

“Lloyd Greif had a vision for this floor, and he made it happen,” said James G. Ellis, dean of USC Marshall. “This ceremony is a thank you to Lloyd and Renée for all they’ve done for us and the Center.”

Guests of honor included Lloyd and Renée Greif and their adult children Nick, Lauren and Ben, senior leadership from Marshall and the University, faculty members and business leaders with a connection to the Greif Center including Don Friese, Tony Pritzker, Jim Hart, Mike Singer and Anthony Geisler, all inductees into the Entrepreneurs Hall of Fame located on the first floor of Fertitta Hall.

World Class

With floor-to-ceiling windows facing west toward Santa Monica and north toward downtown Los Angeles, the suite houses the Greif Center’s faculty and administrative offices. It features light-filled conference rooms, touch-screen technology highlighting successful alumni and the winners of its annual Entrepreneur-of-the-Year award, as well as enviable balconies with sweeping views and space for meetings and receptions. The fourth floor houses classrooms for the Center.

“Welcome to our no-longer-humble abode. We were basement dwellers for 45 years,” said Greif with a smile, referring to the Center’s long tenure in the basement of Bridge Hall. “So now, let there be light! The Entrepreneur Center has assumed its rightful place in the pantheon of the Marshall School.”
The Lloyd Greif Center for Entrepreneurial Studies is the grandfather of USC’s entrepreneurial eco-system. Its faculty taught 85 course sections in the 2014-15 academic year, with more than 2,700 students taking at least one entrepreneurship class last year. The faculty has grown to 13 full-time and 22 part-time professors, including a number of high-profile hires from Harvard Business School, Stanford and NYU’s Stern. It was ranked #3 in the country in 2016 by U.S News & World Report.

When it began in 1971, it was known simply as the Entrepreneur Program. Bill Lennartz, who attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony and was one of the original eight members of the Los Angeles chapter of the Young Presidents Organization that envisioned and co-founded, with faculty, the Entrepreneur Program at USC, praised the new space. "Think of the number of students it will benefit over the ensuing decades, and the future great entrepreneurs it will spawn," he said.

Greif, MBA ’79 who was a member of the entrepreneur program’s seventh class in 1978 and went on to a successful career at his own investment banking firm, Greif & Co., made his naming gift in 1997 and has been active in growing the Center’s reputation ever since.

“It is entirely fitting that the oldest entrepreneur program in the country now occupies the fifth-floor penthouse of the preeminent business school building on the USC campus,” said Greif.

O’Malia Honored

In many ways, the evening was a tribute to Director Emeritus Thomas J. O’Malia, who taught entrepreneurship from 1981 until his retirement in 2013. He was the Center’s director when Greif made his naming gift, and he was a friend and mentor to many.

While O’Malia, who suffers from health issues, could not attend the ceremony, his extended family was present, including a clutch of grandchildren.

To honor O’Malia’s outsized influence on student entrepreneurs, Greif christened the penthouse suite, “O’Malia Commons.”

Attendees agreed it was a fitting tribute.

“Knowing Tom O’Malia as well as I did, I know he’d be both proud and inspired that so many people came together to make this happen,” said Jim Hart, CEO of Senn Delaney Leadership Consulting Group and an alumnus of the Center. “But I also know he’d be subdued and not take any credit. He was the engine underneath the inspiration for the Greif Center, but always incredibly humble about his influence.”

About the USC Marshall School of Business

Consistently ranked among the nation's premier schools, USC Marshall is internationally recognized for its emphasis on entrepreneurship and innovation, social responsibility and path-breaking research. Located in the heart of Los Angeles, one of the world's leading business centers and the U.S. gateway to the Pacific Rim, Marshall offers its 5,700-plus undergraduate and graduate students a unique world view and impressive global experiential opportunities. With an alumni community spanning 123 countries, USC Marshall students join a worldwide community of thought leaders who are redefining the way business works.