

A LEGACY OF GIVING

WORLD-RENOWNED PHILANTHROPISTS WALTER AND LEONORE ANNEBERG
HELPED FUND A WEALTH OF ORGANIZATIONS AND CREATED MANY OF THEIR OWN

Second in an eight-part series

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A CASUAL DRIVE THROUGH THE COACHELLA VALLEY REVEALS

the wide-spanning and enduring impact that Walter and Leonore Annenberg had on the desert communities. The Annenberg Theater at Palm Springs Art Museum, Annenberg Center for Health Sciences and Walter and Leonore Annenberg Pavilion (both on the Eisenhower Medical Center campus in Rancho Mirage), and the forthcoming Annenberg Center at Sunnylands represent a large portion of their legacy in the desert. And the seed money they gave to so many other local entities, including the Children's Discovery Museum of the Desert, spans organizations of many sizes and meaningful missions.

"The Annenbergs lived their lives to give back," says Geoffrey Cowan, president of The Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands, the entity created in 2001 with a transfer of assets from the Annenberg Foundation. "Through the parameters of this trust, we plan to keep that commitment alive."

Whether the high-profile couple's commitment was to healthcare, arts and culture, communication, or politics, they often viewed education as the means to an end. Kathleen Hall Jamieson, director of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center, said in her memorial statement about the man who hired her, "In the realm of philanthropy, Walter Annenberg was to public education what Andrew Carnegie was to libraries."

While he lived a privileged life replete with baronial estates, a full-time butler, and household staff, Walter Annenberg seemed to view philanthropy as the great equalizer — a way to level the playing field between Republicans and Democrats, men and women, Jews and Protestants, and public and private schools. Recruited by Annenberg in 1989 to be dean of the Annenberg School for Communication in Philadelphia, Jamieson says he was untroubled by her staunch feminism, having been surrounded by strong women all his life, and that he exhibited this same open-mindedness throughout his career. He funded the presidential libraries of Reagan, Ford, Nixon, and Carter. In 1944, when women were seldom seen in boardrooms, he hired a female editor and publisher to run his wildly successful *Seventeen* magazine. Born into the Jewish faith and educated at private schools, he kept Philadelphia's urban Catholic schools open when they needed support and later offered millions in aid to cash-strapped public schools nationwide. "He believed that educational opportunity made a democracy function," Jamieson says.



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Leonore Annenberg viewed the main lobby of an addition and renovation of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania shortly after the work was completed in 1986.



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Top: Walter Annenberg (right) shakes hands with Christopher Edley, president of the United Negro College Fund at Sunnylands on March 4, 1990, after the ambassador announced a \$50 million gift to the fund. To Annenberg's right is President George W. Bush, who, with his wife Barbara, was a weekend guest at Sunnylands. Above: Walter Annenberg and President Bush view a quilt with the crests of UNCF member colleges. Presented to Annenberg in recognition of his contribution to the fund, the quilt was hung in the ambassador's office in Radnor, Pa.

DIVERSITY IN ACTION

The Annenbergs' philanthropic reach extends far beyond the Coachella Valley. In 1990, Christopher Edley, president of the United Negro College Fund, visited their Rancho Mirage estate, Sunnylands, to ask Walter Annenberg for a \$20 million gift to launch UNCF's capital campaign to support its 41 schools. Edley's son, Christopher Edley Jr., offers this account of his late father's request:

"For most private, historically black colleges and universities, there are chronic financial problems. My father made the case on the continuing importance of these institutions to the structure of opportunity in America, and he then delivered the 'ask,'" says Edley, dean of Berkeley Law at the University

of California. Annenberg made a counterproposal, pledging \$50 million if the UNCF could raise \$200 million on its own, which it did in seven years. "He wanted to make history. Dad always considered him among the most visionary people with whom he ever worked," Edley declares. "The Ambassador's gift was one of my father's proudest moments, and it secured the position of UNCF and minority higher education generally in the top tier of charitable causes for leading philanthropists."

Education was of paramount importance to Annenberg. Three years after the UNCF donation, he gave \$365 million in a single day to four schools: for communications programs at the universities of Pennsylvania and Southern California; to Harvard, in memory of his late son, Roger; and to his prep school alma mater, the Peddie School in New Jersey. Months later, President Bill Clinton announced the Annenbergs' \$500 million matching-funds program, the majority benefiting the Annenberg Challenge, which initiated reform in some of the nation's most troubled urban and rural public school districts.

Annenberg's generosity continued to make headlines. In 1997, *American Benefactor* magazine called him "the most beneficent philanthropist in the history of the world," reports Christopher Ogden in his book *Legacy: A Biography of Moses and Walter Annenberg*.



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Facing page: Leonore Annenberg at the groundbreaking for Palm Springs Desert Museum (now Palm Springs Art Museum). Above: The Annenbergs at home with President Bill Clinton.

Walter and Leonore were passionate philanthropic partners who funneled their support through the Annenberg

Foundation, established in 1989. Walter funded it with \$1 billion, roughly one-third of the proceeds from the sale of his company, Triangle Publications, to Rupert Murdoch. The precursor years that led to one of the largest transactions in publishing history tell the story of Walter's early life as a carefree playboy who began working for his father, Moses, in 1929. Moses came to America from Eastern Europe and "arrived a shoeless immigrant," Ogden writes. He built a successful newspaper empire that included *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Daily Racing Form*. But by 1940, a charge of tax evasion sent Moses to prison, and Walter inherited a debt-ridden company and the care of his mother and seven sisters when his father died two years later.

Walter added *TV Guide* to his stable of publications, which, according to Ogden, became the world's largest-selling weekly

with a billion copies a year sold at its peak in the 1970s. By adding television stations to his company's roster, Walter created a diversified conglomerate — and a legacy was born. "An Annenberg Foundation printout of his philanthropy from 1984, when the records were computerized, to 1998, totaled 80 pages," Ogden reports.

Though Walter often commanded the spotlight, Leonore echoed his endorsements, while consistently establishing her own. Teaching often rose to the top of her priorities. With guidance from six Supreme Court justices, The Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands and Leonore created award-winning work to teach high school students about the Constitution, Jamieson says. And after her husband's death in 2002, she continued to promote fair political discourse.

"Mrs. Annenberg was pleased with the bipartisan California delegation retreat that the trust sponsored just after the election of Governor [Arnold] Schwarzenegger," Jamieson says. "President Ford, Senators Feinstein and Boxer, and more than half of the state's members of Congress attended the 2003 event."



California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger spoke of the Annenbergs' philanthropy at the January 2007 groundbreaking for the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Pavilion at Eisenhower Medical Center in Rancho Mirage. Joining him on stage were Eisenhower Medical Center President/CEO G. Aubrey Serfling, Eisenhower Board of Directors Chairman Harry M. Goldstein, Leonore Annenberg, and former Secretary of State George P. Shultz.

COURTESY OF EISENHOWER MEDICAL CENTER

LOCAL SUPPORT

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO, PALM DESERT CAMPUS

"In 2001, the Annenbergs made a \$3 million donation toward the construction of the second building on the campus: the Indian Wells Center for Educational Excellence. In recognition, a portion of the building was named the Annenberg Wing for Education," says Dean Fred Jandt. "Mrs. Annenberg attended and spoke at the topping-out ceremony for the building, when the last beam was placed on the structure."

CHILDREN'S DISCOVERY MUSEUM OF THE DESERT

"The Ambassador and Mrs. Annenberg were instrumental in the past, present, and future of the museum by donating four acres in 1995 for the museum to build its campus at the Gerald Ford [Drive] address, then providing years of operational and special-event support, and finally donating an additional two-and-a-half acres in 2001 and a \$1 million lead gift for the museum's expansion project currently underway," says Lee Vanderbeck, executive director.

EISENHOWER MEDICAL CENTER

"From 2001 through 2010, in large part because of the momentum [the Annenbergs] generated with their eventual \$100 million philanthropy for Campaign Eisenhower, we raised more than \$380 million," says Michael Landes, Eisenhower Medical Center Foundation president. "So much of it was started by their incredible encouragement and their financial gifts, but also by allowing us to have events at their home, Sunnylands."

MCCALLUM THEATRE

"We needed to raise \$25 million to really turn the theater around and get it on solid footing in a five-year period when I came here," says Ted Giatas, president and CEO. "Lee came forward with the first lead gift of \$2.5 million that opened up a whole series of cash gifts. In fact, we raised over \$25 million in four years. The Annenbergs were extremely generous people who truly made a difference in the quality of life here in the desert."

PALM SPRINGS ART MUSEUM

"Leonore and Walter Annenberg have provided an extraordinary legacy to the museum, which helped make it a cultural cornerstone for the desert communities. Their unparalleled legacy of financial support over five decades transformed the museum's facilities and programs," says Harold Meyerman, chairman of the board of trustees. Mrs. Annenberg served as a trustee for 43 consecutive years. As board president from 1972 to 1976, she played a key role in the construction, interior design, and funding of the museum's landmark building designed by E. Stewart Williams.

RANCHO MIRAGE PUBLIC LIBRARY

"The Annenbergs purchased this property for the express purpose of giving it to the city for this library," says David Bryant, director. "Overall, the Annenbergs gave \$2.8 million to the Rancho Mirage Public Library; Mrs. Annenberg also made the first and single biggest gift of \$20,000 to purchase our 9-foot Steinway grand piano that we use for music programs. Every time we see that piano uncovered and the keyboard opened, we bless Mrs. Annenberg." The study area is called the Leonore and Walter H. Annenberg Reading Room, and in the Children's Library, a copper plaque is dedicated in their honor.

Fred Jandt, dean of the Palm Desert campus of California State University, San Bernardino, says Leonore established scholarships for students whom she hoped would stay and teach in the Coachella Valley. According to Jandt, her good friend Betty Barker hosted a tea for the six Annenberg scholarship students each year and would tell the story of the Annenbergs' history and their life experiences. "Betty would then take the resumes to Mrs. Annenberg and tell her about the students, their backgrounds, and their aspirations," Jandt says. "Even though she wasn't physically at the teas, she knew exactly what was going on."

In 2001, Leonore received the Andrew Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy in recognition of her lifetime of giving. When Walter died the following year, she succeeded him as chairman and president of the Annenberg Foundation until her death in 2009. The foundation's mission is to support nonprofit organizations in the United States and abroad and

"advance the public well-being through improved communication." Since their deaths, the couple's philanthropic reins have been handed to the next generations: Wallis Annenberg, Walter's daughter, is chairman, CEO, and president of the foundation board on which her three children — Lauren Bon, Gregory Annenberg Weingarten, and Charles Annenberg Weingarten — also serve. They continue to support Walter and Leonore's historic programs, while adding their own, including environmental stewardship, social justice, and animal welfare.

LOCAL STEWARDS

The Annenbergs made dreams come true in the Coachella Valley, according to Michael Landes, president of Eisenhower Medical Center Foundation. "Once they made a decision that they wanted to help any organization, you became part of their family," he says. "Besides being original founding funders of the hospital from the construction of the very first building, the Eisenhower Wing built in 1971, Walter and Lee made a large commitment to place

education at the very center of EMC." The Annenberg Center for Health Sciences will become the centerpiece of EMC's new teaching hospital. "It's a pinnacle for a hospital in the Coachella Valley to offer top-level academic graduate medical education for physicians coming from all over the United States," Landes says.

When seismic requirements were placed on Eisenhower Medical Center by the state 10 years ago, the couple once again stepped forward, making the first and largest commitment to help expand and rebuild the hospital. The capital campaign ended with the construction and opening of the 250,000-square-foot, four-story, state-of-the-art inpatient facility — the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Pavilion — in November 2010. "They were incredible stewards for Eisenhower Medical Center," Landes says.

"We at EMC feel a personal loss of the Annenbergs," Landes notes. "They came about as close to American royalty in the manner in which they supported us and this medical center. And they never asked for anything in return."

Walter and Leonore Annenberg's contributions to Eisenhower Medical Center resulted in the Annenberg Center for Health Sciences (below) and Walter and Leonore Annenberg Pavilion (below left). Leonore Annenberg celebrated the January 2007 groundbreaking of the pavilion with (from left) Sen. John Danforth, Eisenhower Medical Center President/CEO G. Aubrey Serfling, Eisenhower Board of Directors Chairman Harry M. Goldstein, former Secretary of State George P. Shultz, and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF EISENHOWER MEDICAL CENTER





PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO

andes recalls Walter bringing friends to the hospital for a personal tour. “He’d come unannounced in his big, broad-stitched hat and casual clothing ... and would walk in and start describing the paintings he’d personally selected to be put up here in the Annenberg Center for Health Sciences. He took pride in this, like it was his child. He was proud of what it had become and what we were all doing.”

That same stewardship can be seen at Palm Springs Art Museum, where the Annenberg Wing and Annenberg Theater were named to honor the couple for their contributions in excess of \$8 million to the museum during their lifetimes.

“The legacy of Leonore and Walter Annenberg to the Palm Springs Art Museum is enormous,” says Steven Nash, executive director. “Their wisdom, generosity, and strong belief in the museum’s importance to the Coachella Valley — especially to schoolchildren of all socioeconomic levels — never wavered. Annenberg Foundation grants supported

capital campaigns, innovative education programs, free bus transportation for school classes to visit the museum, exhibitions, theater programs, the annual gala, and numerous fundraising events hosted by museum councils.”

In 2001, the foundation pledged a \$3 million leadership gift to launch the museum’s Imagine the Possibilities capital campaign, followed five years later by a \$2 million grant from Leonore to complete the effort.

“The Annenbergs often stepped up and provided the lead gift,” says Janice Lyle, former executive director of the museum and current director of Sunnylands Museum and Gardens. “They wanted to be generous and to inspire others to be equally generous in their own capacity.”

“Walter always believed in quality, no matter what the effort was,” Lyle adds. “This may not have been Philadelphia or New York, or L.A., but he believed in encouraging that first-rate kind of approach to service.” That dedication, she says, turned Annenberg-supported organizations in the Coachella Valley into premier institutions.

ANNENBERG INITIATIVES AND INSTITUTIONS

- Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, University of Pennsylvania
- Annenberg Challenge for School Reform
- Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism, University of Southern California
- Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania
- Annenberg Public Policy Center, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.
- FactCheck.org
- The Annenberg Foundation, Los Angeles

TRUSTEE PROJECTS

- Alchemy
- American Academy of Dance in Paris
- Annenberg Community Beach House
- Annenberg Media/Learner.org
- Annenberg Space for Photography
- Explore
- Metabolic Studio
- PITCH:AFRICA
- The Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands
- Sunnylandsclassroom.org



Dedicated to education, Walter and Leonore Annenberg donated \$3 million toward the construction of the Indian Wells Center for Educational Excellence at California State University, San Bernardino in Palm Desert (facing page and above left). Above: Betty Barker, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, and CSUSB President Albert Karnig joined Mrs. Annenberg at the Annenberg Wing dedication.

Walter and Leonore Annenberg donated land and money for the Children's Discovery Museum of the Desert in Rancho Mirage. The groundbreaking was attended by former President Gerald Ford and former First Lady Betty Ford, who were good friends of the Annenbergs and frequent guests at Sunnylands.



MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE ANNEBERG SCHOOLS FOR COMMUNICATION & JOURNALISM:

Every human advancement or reversal can be understood through communication. The right to free communication carries with it the responsibility to respect the dignity of others, and this must be recognized as irreversible. Educating students to communicate this message effectively and to be of service to all people is the enduring mission of this school.

COMMITTED TO COMMUNICATION

Long before Walter became one of this country's great philanthropists, his convictions placed him head to head during the Cold War with Sen. Joseph McCarthy. According to Jamieson, Walter made this statement to newsman Edward R. Murrow in opposition to McCarthy's smear tactics during the 1950s: "We should guard against the abridgment of freedom in our country, especially the vulnerable freedoms of press and education."

Throughout his life, Walter helped guard those freedoms with the founding of the Annenberg schools (at the University of Pennsylvania in 1958 and University of Southern California in 1971) and initiatives like the Annenberg Public Policy Center. The center produces research to improve communications regarding adolescent health, media content analysis, and political civility.

"Even after parting with his newspapers, Annenberg kept an [Associated Press] ticker in his office. He remained an editor at heart," says Jamieson, who spoke with the ambassador once or twice a week.

Cowan, dean emeritus of the Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism

at USC, thinks Walter would be proud to know the schools he founded continue to inform our nation's electorate. "How do you create a common base of information in a democratic society when leadership and listenership is so scattered? How do we prevent the economics of the media from rewarding those with the shrillest voices?" Cowan posits. Helping provide answers are the Annenberg schools and the public policy center's FactCheck.org, which calls itself a "consumer advocate for voters."

One can only imagine the pride Walter and Leonore would feel at the grand opening of the Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands, which Lyle says will not only promote political discourse, but also will host lectures and activities targeting elderhostel groups, school groups, and families.

"The new center will be used as part of the retreats," she says, "but it is also the access point for the general public, for them to learn about the history of Sunnylands — its art, architecture, and important guests."

Just as they planned, Walter and Leonore Annenberg's philanthropy continues where they once lived a bountiful life, with education firmly planted as the means to achieving a greater good. ■



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARC GLASSMAN, COURTESY OF CHILDREN'S DISCOVERY MUSEUM OF THE DESERT