

Penn to get \$15 million for the arts

The gift from alumni Keith L. and Katherine Sachs will support a range of initiatives.

By Susan Snyder
STAFF WRITER

The University of Pennsylvania on Tuesday announced its largest gift targeted toward the arts across the campus — a \$15 million commitment from Keith L. and Katherine Sachs, longtime supporters of arts in the region.

The gift will be used to develop innovative programs in the arts — including new courses, workshops, and master classes — create artistic productions and public art spaces, and foster collaboration in the arts across Penn's West Philadelphia campus, the university said.

Artists in residence and faculty members also could be added, and an executive director will be hired to administer the initiative, called the Sachs Program for Arts Innovation. The program hub will be at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts.

"Creativity is the very soul of innovation, and what is art but creativity made manifest?" Penn president Amy Gutmann said in announcing the gift. "Keith and Kathy are among the undisputed patron saints of the arts at Penn, and their latest extraordinary generosity will transform how we understand, teach, and break new ground in the arts."

Keith Sachs, a 1967 Penn graduate, is the former CEO of Saxco International, a packaging company. He is also a trustee of the Philadelphia Museum

of Art. His wife, an adjunct curator at the Art Museum for many years, is a 1969 Penn grad and an emeritus member

of the university's board of trustees. The couple live in Rydal.

"We believe strongly that the arts are essential to the

core mission of education," Keith Sachs said.

The Sachses have supported the arts at Penn for more than
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a decade, including funding several professorships and a guest curator program at the Institute of Contemporary Art.

The latest gift targets Penn's effort over the last three years to infuse the arts in education across all 12 schools, no matter what major a student is in, provost Vincent Price said. Penn is rich in the arts; it is home to an Institute of Contemporary Art, department of history of art, department of fine arts, School of Design, the University of Pennsylvania Museum, and the Kelly Writers House, in addition to the performing arts center.

The university has developed freshman seminars that use art as a point of entry into discussion on many topics, Price said.

"The aim here is to advance our educational programs and to reach out to students across the campus, who might not ordinarily think of the arts as part of their educational program," he said.

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Keith L. and Katherine Sachs have long been supporters of the arts in the region. Both have ties to the Art Museum. AMANDA JAFFE