

Feb. 18, 2008

## University of Michigan gets stem cell study fund

BY GARY GOSSELIN

The University of Michigan Medical School and the Center for Stem Cell Biology have received a significant gift to launch a fund to seek broader opportunities for stem cell research at U-M.

The Robert and Marge Alpern Stem Cell Research Fund is designed to encourage both embryonic and tissue-specific (adult) stem cell research by offering researchers university wide an additional resource for studies in this field.

The Alperns said they want the fund to help U-M build on its core of stem cell scientists and attract others to the field of stem cell research, which holds promise for treatments for many conditions and diseases.

"Because we live in a democratic country with a long and proud history of openness and freedom, we wish to personally support the important research on stem cells in the face of the political restrictions placed on it by both the federal and state governments," they said in a statement.

The Alperns said they view the use of stem cells as one of the most important advances in the history of medicine.

"The fund established by the Alperns' generous gift will allow U-M scientists to continue to build on their significant research accomplishments and explore new questions in the rapidly advancing field of stem cell research," said James O. Woolliscroft, M.D., dean of the U-M Medical School, in a statement.

The school said the gift is "all the more impressive because it is not restricted by current politics. And is to promote the very best stem cell research regardless of whether it is on embryonic or adult stem cells.

For the new fund, a stem cell research committee will review projects proposed by U-M researchers each year and select the most meritorious for funding.

The Alperns, who live in Bloomfield Hills, have made other large gifts to the University for complementary and integrative medicine, and Matthaei Botanical Gardens. They are 1942 graduates of U-M's College of Literature, Science and the Arts.

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*Courtesy photo: Robert and Marge Alpern*