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MIT receives \$350 million gift from publishing guru

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — The founder of computer publishing giant International Data Group Inc. pledged a record \$350 million to MIT on Monday to establish an institute to study the mysteries of the mind.

The donation, to be given over 20 years, is the largest ever made to a university.

"Creation of the McGovern Institute for Brain Research will launch one of the most profound and important scientific ventures of the next century and what surely will be a cornerstone of MIT's scientific contributions in the decades ahead," said Charles Vest, president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The new institute, named for IDG founder and chairman Patrick J. McGovern Jr. and his wife, Lore Harp McGovern, will focus on human learning and communication.

It will take an interdisciplinary approach that includes neuroscience, molecular neurobiology, bioengineering, cognitive sciences, computation and genetics.

The McGovern said they decided to give to brain research because the discipline is on the cusp of major advances.

Patrick McGovern studied life sciences at MIT, where he received his undergraduate degree in 1959. Five years later, he founded IDG, publisher of Computerworld, The Industry Standard and PC World. He has launched more than 290 computer magazines and newspapers in 80 countries.

Lore Harp McGovern co-founded Vector Graphics, one of the earliest PC companies, in 1976 and is involved with numerous startup ventures in Silicon Valley.

"Within the next 20 years, as we move into the knowledge economy, we hope that the interdisciplinary research at the McGovern Institute will lead to improvements in receiving, analyzing, associating, storing, retrieving and communicating information," Patrick McGovern said. "These scientific advances will result in enhancements to the standard of living and quality of life around the world."

The McGovern Institute will be headed by Phillip A. Sharp, a molecular biologist who received the Nobel Prize in 1993 for his discovery of surplus DNA and his work with gene splicing.

The gift also allows for a team of 16 investigators, including 10 new faculty members, each of whom will hold a joint appointment in other departments, such as brain and cognitive science, biology or linguistics.

According to The Chronicle of Higher Education, the next largest gift to a university was \$300 million to Vanderbilt in 1998 from the Ingram Charitable Fund, created by E. Bronson Ingram and Martha Ingram.

Microsoft's Bill Gates has given more than \$1 billion to higher education, but most of the money went toward scholarships and was not given specifically to a university.

Chemical magnate Jon Huntsman has given \$151 million over the past five years to open a cancer institute at the University of Utah. And last year, the W.M. Keck Foundation, named for the founder of Superior Oil Co., gave \$110 million to the University of Southern California's medical school to support research.

The Associated Press

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Ventura totes many ideas to convention

By Frederic J. Frommer
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura urged President Clinton to increase funding for special education and questioned why the United States doesn't establish normal trade relations with Cuba during a visit to the White House Monday.

He also said Clinton commended him for having the "courage" to leave the Reform Party.

As usual, Ventura was the celebrity of the annual National Governors Association meeting, drawing a pack of journalists, admiring hellos from Secret Service officers and at least one request for a photograph.

And he did nothing to dampen his place in the spotlight.

"Washington is always receptive to Minnesota because we're really the leader of the country, when it comes to making decisions and electing rogue governors and taking chances and having courage and intestinal fortitude," he declared after the meeting with Clinton and other governors.

Ventura said Reform Party politics came up in a conversation with the president.

"He commended me for my courage in my decision to step away from the Reform Party," Ventura said. "He said that took a lot of guts,

but it was the right thing to do."

Ventura's most crucial message to the White House was to increase funding for special education.

"Quit dilly-dallying around with all the feel-good stuff; fund their mandate with special ed, and we in the states will have the best education systems we possibly can if they do that," he said.

Trade also came up at the meeting, and Ventura said he supports Clinton's efforts to allow China into the World Trade Organization.

"To me, in light of our world of technology, you can't build a wall around your country," he said. "You go out, and you compete."

But he called it a "bit of hypocrisy" to pursue normal trade relations with China while maintaining a trade embargo against Cuba. Several lawmakers from farm states like Minnesota have made similar arguments, seeing Cuba as a potential market for agriculture.

"I wanted a clearer message on why China and not Cuba," Ventura said. "They gave me a lot of reasons that didn't hold a lot of water."

At one point, the chairman of the governors association, Republican Gov. Mike Leavitt of Utah, had to literally move Ventura along.

"I've never been able to figure out how to move Jesse Ventura aside, but we have to report on the meeting," he said with a laugh.

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