

Nike Cofounder Phil Knight and Wife, Penny, Gift \$2B to University of Oregon Cancer Center

The Knights' donation is the largest single gift to a U.S. university and aims to transform cancer care.

August 20, 2025 By Laura Schmidt

Nike cofounder Phil Knight and his wife, Penny, have committed to donate \$2 billion to the Knight Cancer Institute (KCI) at Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU), the largest single donation to a university in the United States, according to a [university press release](#).

The donation will help transform cancer care by expanding and accelerating OHSU's diagnostic capabilities, ensuring access to [clinical trials](#) and simplifying the experience for patients and families.

The Knights have a long history with KCI, which was established in 1997 as one of the National Cancer Institute's Designated Cancer Centers and renamed in honor of the Knights in 2008 after a \$100 million donation. In 2013, the couple pledged an additional \$500 million to the university, which matched the sum within two years.

The philanthropists have a longstanding relationship with Brian Druker, MD, the chair of [leukemia](#) research at OHSU, who has led KCI since 2007.

The latest donation is the largest the Nike cofounder and his wife have ever made.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to invest in the next stage of the Druker-led revolutionary vision of cancer research, diagnosis, treatment, care and, someday, eradication," the Knights said in the release. "We couldn't be more excited about the transformational potential of this work for humanity. We are confident that establishing the Knight Cancer Institute as a self-governed entity within OHSU will help the Knight and OHSU reach these goals." (Druker will serve as the Knight

Cancer Institute's inaugural president.)

With the latest donation, every patient at KCI will have access to a wide range of [support](#) resources, such as [nutritional](#) support, symptom management, psychological and financial counseling, [survivorship](#) care and support and complementary therapies.

“Penny and Phil Knight have always challenged us to do what no one else is doing,” Druker said. “It can seem impossible to navigate the health care system after being diagnosed with cancer. We’re going to change that. We have revolutionized the way we detect and treat cancer. Now we are going to transform the way we care for patients while continuing to develop innovative treatments.”

Knight has long been recognized for his bold and competitive leadership. With an estimated net worth of \$35.4 billion, Knight, 87, is widely known for his philanthropy, especially to his alma maters.

Indeed, Knight attended the University of Oregon and ran track for the school. He is the school's famous booster, and several buildings are named in his family's honor, including the university's basketball arena, which is named after the Knights' son Matthew, who died in a scuba diving accident in 2004. In 2016, Knight pledged \$400 million to Stanford University, where he graduated from business school.

“This gift is an unprecedented investment in the millions of lives burdened with cancer, especially patients and families here in Oregon,” said OHSU president Shereef Elnahal, MD, MBA. “It is also a signal of trust in the superlative work that our clinicians, researchers and teammates at the Knight Cancer Institute do every day. Dr. Druker's vision around a multidisciplinary system of care—focused squarely on making the patient's experience seamless from the moment they receive a diagnosis—will now become reality.”

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