

Largest Gift in History of National Jewish Health

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DENVER — \$10 million gift to be used to advance preventive, personalized medicine and pioneer new approaches for the research and treatment of asthma in children

National Jewish Health has received the single largest gift in its history, approximately \$10 million, from the estate of fantasy author David Eddings. Eddings, the author of more than 25 books, passed away June 2, 2009 at his home in Carson City, Nevada at the age of 77. His wife, Leigh Eddings, co-author of his later books, died in February 2007.

The total Eddings estate is estimated at \$30 million. Mr. Eddings alma mater, Reed College, will receive two-thirds and National Jewish Health one-third. Consistent with their wishes, the Eddings's gift to National Jewish Health will be used to pioneer new approaches in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of childhood asthma.

The gift to National Jewish Health was inspired by Ms. Eddings. She suffered from asthma most of her life. According to her attorney and brother-in-law, she wanted to leave money to an institution that could make a difference in the fight against childhood asthma, and chose National Jewish Health. National Jewish Health has been recognized as a world leader in the research and treatment of asthma in children and adults. Earlier today it was named the nation's #1 respiratory hospital for the 12th consecutive year by *US News & World Report*.

"Asthma is the major chronic disease of childhood and a leading cause of childhood disability," said Michael Salem, MD, National Jewish Health President and CEO. "We are extremely grateful for this generous bequest, which will fund important programs to diagnose, treat and prevent childhood asthma."

"Despite all the research and all the improvements in asthma care, emergency visits and hospitalizations for the disease have increased over the past 20 years," said Erwin Gelfand, MD, Professor and Chairman of the Department of Pediatrics at National Jewish Health. "Our goal is the eventual prevention of asthma. This gift will help countless children, not only at National Jewish Health, but throughout the world."

Dr. Salem explained that the Eddings gift will be utilized as a part of the "Fund to Cure Asthma," which will continue to advance the National Jewish Health preventive and personalized medicine program for asthma patients.

"We have moved beyond the reactive, trial-and-error method of treating disease," said Dr. Salem. "Taking advantage of advances in genetics, proteomics, advanced imaging, and disease biology, we can now develop a personal profile of each patient, which guides our physicians from initial assessment to customized treatment. Our entire strategy is coordinated, preventive care for our patients, which serves them best and will lead the country as healthcare reform is adopted."

Eddings was born in Spokane in 1931, graduated from Reed College, and received a masters degree from Washington State University. He married Leigh Schell. The couple lived briefly in Denver, where David began work on his first novel, *High Hunt*. Eddings shifted to writing fantasy novels after picking up a copy of *Lord of the Rings* and noticing that it was in its 73rd printing. Eddings wrote more than 25 novels, most notably the Belgariad and Malloreon series. His wife, Leigh, was credited as co-author on his later novels. The novels have sold millions of copies around the world and were published in 27 languages. The Eddings had no children.

"Leigh and David Eddings have a literary legacy that will brighten the lives of readers for years to come," said Richard Schierburg, Chairman of the National Jewish Health Development Board. "With their wonderful bequest to National Jewish Health, they now have a legacy of saving lives and, we hope, bringing an end to asthma."

Renowned worldwide for patient care, National Jewish Health faculty also conduct groundbreaking research in both

basic and clinical science. Throughout its history National Jewish Health has contributed to the discovery, development and evaluation of new asthma treatments for children. At the Kunsberg School on the National Jewish Health campus, children with moderate to severe asthma who have fallen behind in their education, learn to manage their asthma while catching up academically.

Founded in 1899 as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish Health remains the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders. People from around the country and the world travel to National Jewish for its personalized care.

For more information about National Jewish Health, visit nationaljewish.org.

National Jewish Health is the leading respiratory hospital in the nation. Founded 120 years ago as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish Health today is the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to groundbreaking medical research and treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders. Patients and families come to National Jewish Health from around the world to receive cutting-edge, comprehensive, coordinated care. To learn more, visit the [media resources page](#).

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