SPIKE AND MARY YOH GIVE $5 MILLION TO SUPPORT DUKE UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL PROGRAM

DURHAM, N.C. -- Mary and Harold L. "Spike" Yoh, Jr., vice chairman of Duke's Board of Trustees, have given Duke University’s athletic program $5 million to support major facility improvements for the football program, President Nannerl O. Keohane announced Saturday.

The gift, largest ever for intercollegiate athletics at Duke, launches a football enhancement effort that officials say will feature a new football complex adjacent to Wallace Wade Stadium.

"Spike and Mary have given us a great start," Keohane said. "Duke has been at a disadvantage when it comes to facilities for football and they have stepped forward to ensure our student-athletes have needed resources to make our football program competitive. That’s important at Duke, because we pride ourselves on pursuing excellence in every area, including intercollegiate athletics. Duke's football program, our players and coaches, deserve the kind of training facilities it takes to pursue excellence."

The athletics department has launched a planning effort and hopes to break ground in 2000 following a comprehensive size and scope assessment from an architectural firm. The proposed building would include a new locker room, weight room, equipment room and state-of-the-art training facilities, as well as coaches' offices and team meeting rooms. Cost of the new facility has yet to be determined.

"Mary and Spike’s gift is a very exciting boost for Duke football," said Athletic Director Joe Alleva, who emphasized when he was appointed last year that improving facilities for football and strengthening the football program were among his top priorities. "Enhancing the football facilities has been a priority of mine since day one. This is one more indication that Duke is serious about football and committed to excellence."

-MORE-
Alleva said the project will enhance the entire department by freeing existing facilities devoted to football in the Murray Building. That space will be devoted to the non-revenue "Olympic" sports, principally men’s and women’s lacrosse and soccer.

Head Coach Carl Franks, who moved to Duke Dec. 1 from the University of Florida, said the gift will have an immediate impact.

"It is so important to be able to tell our kids in the program today and the student-athletes we recruit in the future that they will be the beneficiaries of a major financial commitment to our program," said Franks, a 1983 Duke graduate who won All-ACC honors for excellence in both academics and football. "There can't be any better news for me to start my head coaching career at my alma mater."

Spike Yoh retired last month as chairman of the board and chief executive officer of Day & Zimmermann Inc., a billion-dollar sales diversified professional service firm now managed by his children in Philadelphia. Spike Yoh graduated in 1958 from the School of Engineering and Mary Milus Yoh graduated from Duke’s Woman’s College in 1959. The Yohs and their five children (Harold III, Michael, Karen, Jeffrey and William) and a daughter-in-law (Sharon) collectively have earned nine degrees from Duke.

The Yohs' previous gifts traditionally have supported the university’s academic program. In 1996, they established the Yoh Family Professorship and were among the first donors to respond to a major university initiative to enhance faculty support that was made possible by a matching gifts challenge from Duke parents Anne and Robert Bass, of Fort Worth, Texas. Spike Yoh chaired the Duke Annual Fund from 1993 to 1996. Under his leadership, the Annual Fund set giving records, reaching the $11 million mark for the first time.

"What we support is a matter of what Duke needs," Spike Yoh said. "Our endowment for the professorship provided faculty support to emphasize the importance of Duke faculty being excellent in teaching and research. And our support of the Annual Fund reflects our appreciation of Duke’s need for ongoing operating support.

"Duke has always provided strong support to help student-athletes succeed academically and, with the $20 million investment in student recreational facilities (now under construction), the university has ensured that all students have access to first-class fitness and recreational facilities. We think it’s important that the football players also have a first-rate facility to support their competitiveness on the gridiron. This is a 'two-fer' for Duke, because we will have a new building and at the same time free up space that student-athletes need in other sports."
Mary Yoh originally suggested to her husband that this was an area where their philanthropy could serve an important Duke need. "Duke football is going to be at a disadvantage until we have the right facilities," she said. "We knew that many other ACC schools have significantly upgraded their football facilities. We have a great new coach and we want to support him, his players and the program."

The $5 million gift is part of the athletic department’s $65 million goal to increase student scholarships and athletic facilities as part of Duke’s $1.5 billion fund-raising Campaign for Duke.

Spike Yoh began his professional career in 1960, joining a firm begun by his father, the H.L. Yoh Co., which merged with Day & Zimmermann in 1962. He held a variety of management positions with the firm, becoming chief executive officer in 1976 and chairman of the board in 1980. He earned a master’s degree in business administration from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania in 1962.

Since graduating from Duke, Spike Yoh has been active in university affairs, particularly at the School of Engineering, where he served as chairman of the Dean’s Council and on the school’s development committee. He was first elected to the university's Board of Trustees in 1991 and is in his second term. He holds a number of awards from the university, among the most notable being the Charles A. Dukes Award for Outstanding Service to the university (1996), the Blue Devil Award (1986) and the Engineering Distinguished Alumni Award (1983).

He has been active also in civic and charitable activities in greater Philadelphia. He has been honored for outstanding service by numerous organizations, including the Boy Scouts of America, the American Red Cross, the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, the American Jewish Committee and the March of Dimes.

Spike Yoh has served as a member of the executive committee and chairman of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce; Mid-Atlantic chairman of the U.S. Olympic Committee; board member and vice chairman of the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corp.; and member of regional and national committees, including continuing service on the national executive board of the Boy Scouts of America.

###