

Northern Illinois University Receives Gift of \$40 Million for Health Sciences Education and Research

The Baustert Family Foundation donation, the largest in NIU history, will fund creation of the Baustert Bahwell Health Technology Center

DEKALB, IL, UNITED STATES, October 9, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Northern Illinois University](https://www.niu.edu) is proud and honored

to share that it has received a \$40 million gift from the Baustert Family Foundation, the largest single gift in the university's history. This transformational gift will directly support the development of NIU's future home for health professions education and transdisciplinary research. The new facility will be named the Baustert Bahwell Health Technology Center.



“

This historic gift allows NIU to realize fully our vision of 'building for a healthier tomorrow.' ”

*Northern Illinois University
President Lisa Freeman*

“This historic gift allows NIU to realize fully our vision of 'building for a healthier tomorrow' by creating a modern space designed to foster innovation, transdisciplinary collaboration and interprofessional practice, and will enable our students and faculty to deliver on the promise of health care technology to improve patient care and health outcomes,” said NIU President Lisa Freeman.

NIU's Baustert Bahwell Health Technology Center will

connect health-related programs and experts across the university – including nursing, public health, audiology, biomedical engineering and anatomy, among other disciplines – to catalyze learning, service and research for students and faculty. Outfitted with the newest technologies to deliver an enhanced approach to curriculum, the center will house specialized laboratories and flexible learning, study and collaboration spaces, all designed to improve the preparation of future clinicians and professionals and, ultimately, the health and well-being of individuals and families in our region.

The gift was made by James and Theo (Bahwell) Baustert through the Baustert Family Foundation. In 1971, James co-founded Cardiac Pacemakers, Inc., a former St. Paul, Minnesota-based manufacturer of implantable cardiac rhythm management devices, such as pacemakers and defibrillators. The company was acquired by Eli Lilly in 1978 and is now a subsidiary of Boston Scientific.

James and Theo have been active philanthropists for decades, most recently through the Baustert Family Foundation, established in 2016, which is an active supporter within the health and human services non-profit space, with gifts to local community organizations throughout Minnesota, Illinois and beyond.

“NIU is where my parents met and began their lives together,” said Jeff Baustert, son of James and Theo and Baustert Family Foundation spokesman. “This gift is a marriage of a need by NIU and focus of interest from our family. It stands as a culmination of my parents’ legacy in the medical device industry and their support of education and research. NIU’s plans for the Health Technology Center were a perfect fit for us.”

The Baustert Bahwell Health Technology Center will be a multifunctional facility offering community health care clinics in audiology, physical therapy and speech-language pathology; and modern and flexible research, teaching and innovation spaces. As a stepping stone from the main campus to west campus, the center will be built at the northwest corner of Lucinda Avenue and Annie Glidden Road on the current location of NIU’s Lincoln Residence Hall, which is scheduled for demolition in 2025.

Construction on the center is expected to begin in 2026 with a budget of \$87 million. The State of Illinois Capital Development Board designated \$77 million for the project. Of that amount, NIU received \$7.7 million for planning and design efforts that began in 2022.

The Baustert Family Foundation gift will provide: \$10 million identified to close the gap on construction costs; \$14 million for future programmatic development, including the acquisition of technology, faculty endowments and student scholarships; and \$14 million held in a restricted facility endowment maintenance fund. The remaining \$2 million of the gift is designated for the Northern Fund in its support for emerging projects at the university.

The NIU Foundation, which is the recipient of the Baustert gift, partners with NIU to fund projects across the university, including the programmatic and facility development of the Baustert Bahwell Health Technology Center.

“The Baustert Family Foundation gift is emblematic of the philanthropic potential we envision that will fund student and faculty excellence at NIU for decades to come,” said Catherine B. Squires, vice president for University Advancement and president and CEO of the NIU Foundation. “We are incredibly grateful for this investment and how it will inspire future philanthropy and deliver benefits far beyond the Huskie community, impacting our region and

our world.”

Lisa Miner

Northern Illinois University

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