Wayne and Kay Woolsey give $12 million to Wichita State University to support the Barton School of Business and Geology Department

Wichita oil producer Wayne Woolsey and his wife, Kay, have committed a lead gift of $10 million to build a new home for the W. Frank Barton School of Business at Wichita State University. The couple also will donate $2 million to the WSU Department of Geology to support field camp experiences for students and the petroleum geology program.

Their $12 million gift represents the single largest cash donation ever made to Wichita State and the WSU Foundation. In recognition of the gift for the business school facility, Wichita State will name the new building the Wayne and Kay Woolsey Hall, a move approved today by the Kansas Board of Regents. The announcement was made today at a news conference at Wichita State.

Wayne Woolsey is chairman of Woolsey Companies, an oil and natural gas exploration and production company he founded in 1978 after 20 years in the industry. He has a master’s degree in geology from Texas A&M. Kay Woolsey joined Woolsey Companies in 1986 and has served as vice president and secretary, handling land, legal and administrative functions.

“I’ve been fortunate to find success in a field that I enjoy a great deal, and I view this gift as something that will help develop other successful entrepreneurs and business leaders,” Wayne Woolsey said. “A great business school facility at Wichita State will strengthen our workforce and our economy, and that is worth investing in.”

The 136,000-square-foot facility will be built in the heart of the WSU Innovation Campus, with groundbreaking expected to begin in 2019. The project is the top priority in the WSU Foundation’s $250 million Shock the World Campaign for Wichita State.

“With their extraordinary gift, Wayne and Kay are demonstrating a commitment not only to WSU students and faculty, but also to the community where their hard work and perseverance led to
great success,” said Elizabeth King, WSU Foundation president and CEO. “They view WSU as an essential partner in our region’s growth and prosperity. We are fortunate to have their friendship.”

The Woolsey gift brings to $21.5 million the amount raised for the business school project, which is expected to cost about $50 million. The WSU Foundation, with its community and campus partners, will raise at least half of the total cost from private donors, with the university committing the rest.

“Wichita State has an excellent business school, and now we will have a great place to educate our students that will serve as a catalyst for the regional economy,” said WSU President John Bardo. “A facility that reflects today’s business environment will attract top students who want an applied learning experience that makes them career-ready the day they graduate.”

The project to build a new home for the Barton School of Business is focused on creating an environment for students and faculty that inspires collaboration, innovation and an entrepreneurial mind-set. Its location on the Innovation Campus will nurture applied learning experiences with partners and businesses active there.

The building will replace Clinton Hall, built in 1970, as the home of the Barton School. With a lead gift in place, the WSU Foundation anticipates completing fundraising by the end of the next fiscal year.

The $2 million gift from Wayne and Kay Woolsey for the WSU Geology Department stems from their desire to make a significant impact on the program. Half will endow the Woolsey Family Field Camp Scholarship to make field excursions more affordable for students. The remaining $1 million will endow the Woolsey Family Support Fund for Petroleum Geology, dedicated to programming that strengthens petroleum geology education.

“My geology education was invaluable to my career, and I believe strongly in the value of field work to provide real-world experiences in this complex discipline,” Woolsey said.

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**Media note:** Photos may be found at wichita.edu/foundationphotos

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