A dozen years after making a leadership gift to help build a campus center for film, television and new media, Marcy Carsey has made a major donation to secure the future of the now-thriving research and teaching hub that bears her name. The Carsey-Wolf Center (CWC) will receive $5 million from the former television executive, whose pledge will support staff and programming, fund existing and future projects and enable the pursuit of new opportunities now and for years to come.

The center is co-named for Carsey’s fellow lead donor and CWC benefactor Dick Wolf, also an Emmy-winning producer, whose credits include the Law & Order franchise and current hit Chicago Fire.

“The Carsey-Wolf Center has done such a wonderful job in its mission to be an interdisciplinary institute,” said Carsey, current chair of the UC Santa Barbara Foundation Board of Trustees and an honorary alumna of UCSB. “I think it’s time we ensured that it’s going to keep going — and growing. They have put a template out there that’s just a beautiful thing. It’s wonderful, fertile ground to grow new shoots.”

The center’s overall mission is to foster the creativity, critical skills, historical understanding and new forms of literacy needed to be informed citizens in the 21st century and beyond. By engaging industry professionals and policy makers, as well as students and scholars, it aims to increase public understanding of the role of media in society and inform policy debates.

Occupying a unique place at the juncture of academia and industry, CWC benefits students, the community and the media industries at large via its screening and production facilities, as well as its programs and initiatives. For example, the latter category includes the Environmental Media Initiative, which teaches communication from an environmental perspective and sees scientists collaborate with film and media scholars on research and public programming.

The crux of CWC’s work is reflected in the Media Industries Project, a leading hub for research on digital distribution, creative labor and globalization, as well as in its Media Internship Program pairing students with well-known media companies for hands-on experience. The center’s bricks-and-mortar heart resides at Pollock Theater, where in the last year alone CWC hosted 53 films, conferences, panels and other media-rich events featuring an international array of films and filmmakers who interacted with scholars, students and community members.

Carsey’s new pledge will ensure that the center’s rise continues. The way she structured her gift — part outright funds and part estate commitment — will guarantee it.

“Nobody has all the money in the world, so you try to figure out ways to most effectively use whatever money you can give,” Carsey said. “The university has been really helpful in trying to make it work for me, and others who want to help, for whatever level of gift that somebody wants to make.”