



## **Libertarian donors fund new research center at UM's business school**

By Carrie Wells  
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Two high-profile libertarians are helping to start a new research center at UM's business school. UM business school to start new research center funded by a Koch brother and owner of Philadelphia Flyers.

A foundation led by the owner of the Philadelphia Flyers hockey team and the Charles Koch Foundation have pledged \$6 million to create a new center that will study enterprise and markets at the University of Maryland's business school.

The center will be dubbed the Ed Snider Center for Enterprise and Markets after a \$5 million donation by Ed Snider, a Maryland alumni and chairman of Comcast-Spectacor, which owns the Flyers.

With another \$1 million from the Koch Foundation, the university can hire three professors and a managing director, in addition to support staff, five doctoral candidates and four post-doctoral fellows.

Koch and his brother David run Koch Industries, an oil, gas, and chemical conglomerate that is the country's second-largest privately held company.

The Koch brothers are known for financially backing libertarian and free-market organizations, supporting conservative political causes, and helping to found other economic and policy think tanks like the conservative Cato Institute.

Charles Koch also is a board member at the George Mason University's Mercatus Center, a market-oriented think tank that some left-leaning critics argue is partisan and favors viewpoints held by the Kochs. The brothers have drawn criticism for similar donations to other universities.

University of Maryland officials said the center will conduct its hiring and research independently of the donors. The \$5 million gift from the Snider Foundation is the second-largest in the business school's history after the \$15 million naming grant from Robert H. Smith in 1997.

The center will draw on the expertise of academics outside of the business school and study "business as transactions among people within firms and markets" and "the history and philosophy of enterprise, markets and institutions," said Alexander Triantis, dean of the Robert H. Smith School of Business.

Snider, who recently recovered from cancer, also is known for his libertarian views. He helped found the Ayn Rand Institute and was executive producer of the film "Atlas Shrugged: Part I," based on one of the libertarian author's books.