



World's Largest Physical Culture Collection Gets \$1 Million and 25 New Artifacts

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AUSTIN, Texas — The world's largest physical culture collection, located in the H.J. Lutchter Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports at The University of Texas at Austin, has received a \$1 million gift from physical fitness icons Joe and Betty Weider, along with their pledge to donate around 25 unique paintings and sculptures from their personal collection.

This is the second \$1 million gift the Weiders have given to The University of Texas at Austin. To acknowledge the Weiders' generosity and honor their lifetime of achievements in the field of physical culture, the Stark Center announced that its galleries related to the history of exercise and fitness will be known as the Joe and Betty Weider Museum of Physical Culture.



Joe and Betty Weider with President William Powers Jr.

"Physical culture" is a broad term that originated in the 19th century and that refers to many ways of promoting strength, health and vigor. The attainment of health and strength could be through purposive exercise regimens like running, resistance training, cycling, swimming, athletics, field sports and walking, as well as through proper eating habits, recreation and rest. Reflecting the breadth of the term, the Stark Center collections include books, magazines, photographs, correspondence and artifacts related to physical fitness, sports, nutrition and alternative medicine.

The Weiders' involvement with The University of Texas at Austin began in 2004 when the Weider Foundation pledged \$1 million to create the Joe Weider Physical Culture Endowment Fund. Interest from that fund has supported work related to the Todd-McLean Physical Culture Collection, a donation to the university from Drs. Jan and Terry Todd, longtime faculty members in the **Department of Kinesiology and Health Education** and record-setting competitive lifters.

At the time of their first \$1 million gift, the Weiders indicated that another \$1 million would be forthcoming when the university provided a large space to serve as permanent home for the Todd-McLean Collection. In 2006, the Todds secured a \$3.5 million gift from the Nelda C. and H.J. Lutchter Stark Foundation, and that gift triggered The University of Texas at Austin's decision to allocate 27,500 square feet of space at the north end of Darrell K Royal-Texas Memorial Stadium for the collection. The collection was named in honor of Lutchter Stark, who served on the University of Texas System Board of Regents for 25 years.

Fulfilling their promise, the Weiders presented their second \$1 million gift and pledged paintings, sculptures, books, photographs and other rare artifacts from their private collection.

Joe Weider, a legend and pioneer in the history of weight training and physical fitness, began his over 60-year career in 1940 with the publication of a small magazine called *Your Physique*. As the magazine grew, it sparked a national interest in weight training and led Joe and his brother Ben to found the International Federation of Bodybuilders to oversee the emerging sport. Over the next six decades, Joe Weider added equipment and food supplement divisions to his corporate holdings and greatly expanded his publishing efforts.

His fleet of magazines, which he sold in 2004, has included *Mr. America*, *Muscle Power*, *Muscle & Fitness*, *Muscle Builder*, *Shape*, *Men's Fitness*, *Living Fit*, *Prime*, *Health and Fitness*, *Fit Pregnancy*, *Cooks*, *Senior Golfer* and *Flex*. Weider is the author of over 40 books and training courses that have been influential in creating a systematic approach to bodybuilding. In the 1960s, Weider elevated the sport of bodybuilding to new heights with his creation of the Mr. Olympia contest and his decision to help bring Arnold Schwarzenegger to America. As governor of California, Schwarzenegger paid homage to Joe Weider's promotion of physical fitness by designating July 9, 2007, as Joe Weider Day in California.

"It's a pleasure to get to work with the Todds to help them preserve, among other things, the history of fitness, weight training and bodybuilding," said Weider. "The Todds and Betty and I share a similar goal—to educate others about exercise, health and good nutrition."

Betty Weider, one of the most sought-after "supermodels" of the 1950s, began weight training as a teenager and attributes the longevity of her career to a lifelong interest in nutrition and exercise. After her marriage to Joe in 1961, Betty became the female symbol of Weider Health and Fitness, appearing in advertising and on covers of the Weider magazines. Realizing her influence as a role model for young females, she began writing about exercise and nutrition and urged her husband to create an exercise magazine just for women.

In response, Joe launched Shape magazine in 1982 and it quickly became one of the Weiders' most popular and financially successful publications. Betty has authored or co-authored numerous fitness books, including "Better and Better: Six Weeks to a Great Shape at Any Age," "The Weider Book of Bodybuilding" and "The Weider Book of Bodybuilding for Women."

"Jan and I never could have assembled the collection that forms the basis of the Stark Center," said Terry Todd, who co-directs the Stark Center with his wife Jan, "or raised the funds to build the center without the help of people like Joe and Betty Weider and members of the Stark Foundation Board of Directors. We've done what we can do personally, and we'll continue to contribute to the support and work of the center as long as we're able. But we're just two people, and our dreams are larger than our pocketbooks. With friends like the Weiders and the Stark Foundation board our dreams are coming true—we are *deeply* grateful for this magnificent gift and excited about the Weider Museum."

Learn more about the [Stark Center](#) and see [samples of the center's holdings](#).

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