

RE Insider: Developer donates \$10M for new BioPark center

By [Melody Simmons](#) – Senior Reporter, Baltimore Business Journal

Jan 19, 2025

Edward St. John, founder and chairman of St. John Properties Inc., just gifted the University of Maryland another \$10 million.

St. John and his wife, Jennifer, presented the gift to top university officials this month to help establish the Edward & Jennifer St. John Center for Translational Engineering and Medicine in the [newly opened 4MLK tower](#) at the University of Maryland BioPark campus in West Baltimore, where researchers will study "medical innovations" for an array of illnesses.



Edward St. John, chairman of St. John Properties, founded the company in 1971.
St. John Properties

The latest \$10 million gift is headed to the St. John center that will be based on the fourth floor of the 4MLK research tower. The facility will unite clinicians and engineers from

the University of Maryland School of Medicine downtown and the A. James Clark School of Engineering in College Park to weld real-world medical concerns in the development of medical devices and diagnostics, an article in the University of Maryland's in-house publication *MarylandToday* says. In addition, the new gift will allow for creation of endowed professorships in bioengineering and undergraduate and graduate student awards in translational engineering and medicine.

The move was the latest act of philanthropy for St. John, whose alma mater is the University of Maryland, College Park. It is also the second \$10 million gift to the University of Maryland from the high-profile yet reserved developer: [In 2011, he helped fund a portion of the development of long-needed undergraduate classrooms](#) in a new building on the College Park campus. That gift came with naming rights, and the nearly 187,000-square-foot Edward St. John Learning and Teaching Center was born.

St. John also has gifted millions more for learning and entertainment spaces over the years to enhance programs at the Maryland Science Center, the Living Classrooms Foundation and the private McDonogh School, to name a few. His Edward St. John Foundation first opened in 1998, and so far has pledged or donated \$65 million in awards in Maryland and beyond with funds set aside from the company's corporate revenue. Foundation president Sharon Akers was at the recent ceremony.

"This significant gift allows us to unite the expertise of UMB's clinicians with the engineering ingenuity of UMCP's faculty, who together will discover innovative treatments and breakthrough technologies that simply cannot emerge when each works in isolation," University of Maryland, Baltimore President Bruce E. Jarrell said in a statement. "This synergy opens exciting new possibilities for translating research into tangible solutions that will address today's most pressing health challenges."

St. John studied engineering in College Park and dreamed of becoming a pilot. That changed after his graduation, when he was steered by his mother into a commercial real estate career.

St. John Properties today has [grown into a powerhouse national firm](#) with a \$5 billion portfolio that totals over 24 million square feet of properties owned and managed in nine states, according to its website.
