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Tufts University dedicates the new Joyce Cummings Center

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Shown are: Bill and Joyce Cummings with Tufts University president Anthony Monaco, Ph.D. and spouse Zoia Monaco, Ph.D.
(Photo credit: Caitlin Cunningham for Tufts University)

Medford, MA An April 26 dinner marked the culmination of a project 35 years in the making: Joyce Cummings Center. Named for the co-founder of Cummings Foundation, the brand-new Tufts University structure houses 148,000 s/f of interdisciplinary learning space.

The seven-level building sits on College Ave., adjacent to the MBTA Green Line extension. A substantial commitment from Cummings Foundation funded much of its design and construction.

The project was first proposed in 1987 by local native Bill Cummings, a Tufts University alumnus and then trustee, as well as husband of Joyce Cummings. It took decades, however, before the timing was right for three key entities—Tufts, the city of Medford, and MBTA—to finally bring it all together.

“With its completion, we can all see how vital this fine new Joyce Cummings Center is as a stunning gateway and a perfect connector between upper and lower campus,” said Bill Cummings. “More importantly, this is a new hub for collaboration, innovation, and community activity.”

In her address at the dedication, a modest Joyce Cummings shared her discomfort with the building’s name. She went on to explain, however, that other women convinced her of the importance of women being recognized on university campuses.

“While I don’t think I’ll ever get used to seeing my name connected with this building, I will forever be incredibly proud to be associated with the life-changing and life-enriching preparation that will take place inside it,” said Joyce Cummings.

Several STEM-related programs are based at Joyce Cummings Center, plus Derby Entrepreneurship Center and Fletcher School’s executive education and Global Master of Arts programs.

“By bringing these individual elements together, we not only support existing synergies, but we also build an environment where connection and partnership are the norm,” said Tufts University president Anthony Monaco, Ph.D.

Returning to Tufts to join Monaco and the Cummings for the occasion was Lawrence Bacow, Ph.D., past president of Tufts and current president of Harvard University. During Bacow’s tenure, Cummings Foundation committed \$50 million to what is now named Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University, in North Grafton.

Woburn-based Cummings Foundation was established in 1986 by Joyce and Bill Cummings. It has benefited from substantial contributions from the Cummings family, often through donations of debt-free commercial real estate. The Foundation directly operates its own charitable subsidiaries, including New Horizons retirement communities in Marlborough and Woburn, and it has awarded more than \$320 million to date.