

Science dean to ride from “Desert to Dome” to mark new Notre Dame-Parseghian Foundation partnership

Julie Hail Flory • Date: July 08, 2010



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Gregory P. Crawford, dean of the College of Science at the University of Notre Dame, and his wife, Renate, will embark on a 2,200-mile bicycle ride this summer to mark the newly strengthened [partnership](#) between Notre Dame and the Ara Parseghian Medical Research Foundation.

“Desert to Dome: Riding for the Lives of Children” will begin July 24 (Saturday) in Tucson, Az., the home of the Parseghian Foundation, and will culminate in the Crawfords’ arrival on the Notre Dame campus in South Bend, Ind., in August.

Notre Dame and the Parseghian Foundation last month announced an enhanced relationship formed in order to support and advance research initiatives to find treatment and cure options for Niemann-Pick Type C (NPC), a rare and deadly neurodegenerative disease that primarily strikes children before or during adolescence.

“The ride is a celebration of the unique relationship between Notre Dame and the Parseghian Foundation,” [Dean Crawford](#) said. “Through the partnership, we will fund not just Notre Dame scientists looking for treatments and cures for this disease, but also young researchers at other universities in order to form new partnerships – and build on existing ones – as we work toward our common goal of tackling this devastating disease.”

A grass roots, non-profit organization dedicated to funding medical research projects to find a treatment for NPC and related neurodegenerative disorders, the [Parseghian Foundation](#) was founded in 1994 and is named in honor of Notre Dame's former head football coach Ara Parseghian, who lost three grandchildren to NPC.

“We had a lot of work to do when we first started. Very few people knew anything about this orphan disease and, fortunately for us, Notre Dame was behind us all the way,” Parseghian said. “We’ve come a long way and, together, maybe the Fighting Irish and our foundation can bring a happy ending to families like ours by finding a cure for this disease.”

Through a generous gift to Notre Dame, the Parseghian Foundation recently established the Michael, Marcia and Christa Parseghian Endowment for Excellence to support NPC research and discovery and to build on the Foundation's commitment to collaborate with young researchers at other institutions.

Funds also have been dedicated in support of an annual scientific conference on NPC research that will be held at Notre Dame beginning in 2011, bringing together researchers from around the world to share discoveries and progress on fighting the disease.



The Crawfords will ride for 29 days across seven states, stopping along the route to visit Notre Dame alumni clubs and cycling groups. They will chronicle their trip online at <http://deserttodome.nd.edu>.

Dean of the Notre Dame [College of Science](#) since 2008, Crawford is a world-renowned physicist who holds eight U.S. patents, has over 300 research and education publications and is the editor of four books. His cutting-edge research on liquid crystals and polymers, nanoscience and photonic materials spans the fields of condensed matter physics, physical chemistry, applied mathematics and biomedical engineering.