David J. Winkler’s involvement with UC San Diego is a near-perfect example of the power of collaboration between the community and the university. He had a vision and acted on it. As a result, the UC San Diego Pediatric Diabetes Research Center (PDRC) will play a greater role in our understanding of type 1 diabetes, and ultimately PDRC researchers and clinicians will work toward better treatments and a cure for this disease.

The Winkler-UC San Diego relationship can be traced back to the ceramics classes he took in the mid-1970s. He has since continued to connect with the university through its offerings to the community, including additional Extension courses, concerts and visits to Birch Aquarium with his grandchildren. “I attended the Clinton Global Initiative event; I’ve enjoyed lectures at Scripps Institution of Oceanography; I spend time in the UCSD libraries. UC San Diego provides a wealth of opportunities for anyone interested in engaging.”

But without question, David’s focus today is on bringing together the resources on campus and off that will advance research and care in a disease that has had an impact on his family. A longtime board member of the Scripps Whittier Diabetes Institute, David realized the importance of greatly expanding the basic and clinical research effort in diabetes. Acknowledging UC San Diego’s capacity as a renowned academic research institution and medical school, he approached Health Sciences to carry his vision forward.

David is largely responsible for the establishment of the PDRC. In the future, it will be housed in the Altman Clinical Translational Research Institute UC San Diego’s East Campus near the Jacobs Medical Center along with the Rady Children’s Hospital diabetes clinic. He and his wife Sherry established an endowed chair for the new director of the PDRC. They also made an additional gift which enabled UC San Diego to recruit a prominent researcher working in stem cells and type 1 diabetes.

David was born and raised in West Hartford, Connecticut. He graduated with honors from Tufts University in 1975 where he studied biology and planning. David received his legal training at the University of San Diego and Oxford University, Oxford, England. He is a lawyer and real estate broker licensed in California since 1978.

As CEO of Del Mar Partnership, Inc., he handles finance, tax and contract matters; investor relations; and discretionary government approvals for this 33-year-old company and its affiliated entities.

In addition to founding and serving as the Chair of the PDRC Leadership Council at UC San Diego, he is also on the boards of Nature and Culture International, the Scripps Whittier Institute for Diabetes, and the
Melvin Garb Foundation. Formerly, he was the Chair of the Board of Trustees of The Scripps Whittier Institute for Diabetes and served for eight years on its Board of Directors and Executive Committee. He Chaired the San Diego Chapter of the American Diabetes Association. David was Volunteer of the Year for the Combined Health Agencies Drive (CHAD). In 2011, the San Diego Chapter of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) honored him, his company and UC San Diego’s PDRC for his work in diabetes.

David has participated on panels at the UC San Diego CONNECT Program to help analyze and critique new technology companies in their formative stages. As a founding member of the San Diego Economic Development Corporation’s Emerging Technology Group, he worked with other community leaders to help foster the growth of bioscience and high-tech companies in San Diego County. He was also a board member on the San Diego BioCommerce Association.

David served on the City of Del Mar committee reviewing redevelopment of the Del Mar Fairgrounds property. He was a member of the North San Diego County CEO Roundtable and on the Mayor’s Advisory Board for the City of Encinitas. He has been a director for several other not-for-profit organizations including the Temple Solel building committee, the planning board for the community of Cardiff-by-the Sea, the Realtor-Attorney Committee of the San Diego Bar Association and Board of Realtors, the Coastal Community Foundation, and the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy.

What started with pottery now revolves around pediatric diabetes, yet the story remains one of great potential when community members become involved with UC San Diego. David enthusiastically supports UCSD, which he refers to as, “A powerful and impressive asset for San Diego and the Country.”