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INDUSTRY WATCH

Girardi Gives \$1 Million To Loyola High School

By Kenneth Davis

Despite his self-proclaimed lackluster performance at the school, top litigator Thomas Girardi recently gave his alma mater, Loyola High School, a \$1 million donation.

Girardi, partner at Los Angeles' Girardi & Keese, decided to become a lawyer while a student at Loyola High, he says.

However, getting through school was far from a cakewalk for the celebrated attorney.

"Given some of my grades that I received at Loyola High School, I am sure that there are numerous teachers who are surprised by the gift," Girardi says.

His donation is the third-largest one-time gift from an alumnus. The school last year received a \$2 million donation from former student Frank Ardolf and an anonymous \$5 million donation earlier this year.

"It's truly historic," says the Rev. Robert Walsh, Loyola High president. "[Girardi] is a remarkable man, a very impressive individual.

"He clearly understands the roots of his success were at Loyola High."

Girardi credits the teachers and staff at the school for setting him on a successful career path.

"Anyone who ever went to Loyola High School would immediately know why I made the donation," Girardi says. "The school does so much for you to put you on the right track, to keep you out of harm's way and give you a sense of values."

Attending Loyola High has become



THOMAS GIRARDI

something of a family tradition for the Girardi family.

Girardi graduated in 1957, while his son, Matthew Girardi, graduated in 1986. His nephew, Vincent Girardi, is a sophomore at the school.

"Everything you end up with materially at the end of the day you can trace back to Loyola High School," Girardi says.

"Quite honestly, I'm definitely cheating Loyola High School and Loyola Law School if I had to pay back what they've

truly given me," he says.

The gift is earmarked for Loyola's 12-year, four-phase expansion plan. It will go in part for the construction of the William H. Hannon Science Hall and Frank J. Ardolf and Frances R. Ardolf Academic Hall.

These new additions to the school will help centralize and expand the classrooms, laboratories and science faculty offices, allowing Loyola to increase the number of courses offered and enhance the technological resources and services available on campus.

The funds also will be used for the refurbishment of Loyola Hall, the main building of the school, which was built in 1917. All the school's administrative offices are located in Loyola Hall, which also contains classrooms on the second and third floors.

The money also will be used for costs incurred in acquiring surrounding real estate for expansion.

Loyola High School, a Jesuit, all-boys school, is located near downtown Los Angeles. Founded in 1865, it is the oldest secondary school in Southern California.

Girardi specializes in commercial litigation, product-liability law and toxic torts.

Last year, he won a \$45 million verdict against Ford Motor Co. on behalf of his 12-year-old client, who was paralyzed because of a defective seat belt.

He also helped negotiate the Public Utilities Commission's \$1.7 billion agreement with El Paso Corp. over price gouging during the state's energy crisis.