

Buffett Tops 13 Biggest Donors of 2012

Warren Buffett pledged more than \$3 billion in 2012, making him the most generous donor among America's biggest philanthropists

BY MICHAEL S. FISCHER, ADVISORONE

January 4, 2013

Warren Buffett has come through again—if only by happenstance.

Buffett pledged more than \$3 billion to his children's foundations in 2012, making him the most generous donor among America's biggest philanthropists, according to a survey released Tuesday by The Chronicle of Philanthropy.



Warren Buffett flanked by his son, Peter, and his daughter, Susan, who both benefitted from his largesse. (Photo: AP)

The largest gifts announced last year amounted to some \$5.1 billion, The Chronicle reported. Absent Buffett's largesse, however, the total of the biggest gifts would have been just \$2 billion, far off the \$2.6 billion level in 2011.

The Chronicle saw a good sign for 2013 in three December announcements of gifts of more than \$100 million. Thirteen commitments in 2012 (including Buffett's) were for \$100 million or more.

Even after the recession's end, charities continue to struggle to raise big donations.

In 2007, the biggest individual gifts amounted to \$4.1 billion, and skyrocketed to \$8 billion in 2008 (with more than half coming from one donor). Big donations then plummeted to \$2.7 billion in 2009 and to \$1.4 billion in 2010.

Things picked up in 2012, with gifts of \$1 million or more totaling \$6.1 billion, compared with \$5.4 billion in 2011.

Following is The Chronicle's baker's dozen of the biggest gifts in 2012 by American philanthropists. It does not include anonymous gifts of artwork or other noncash donations or gifts

13. **James Simons**, a technology entrepreneur, and his wife **Marilyn** pledged \$60 million to UC Berkeley for a new computing institute.



12. Businessman **David Koch** (left) pledged \$60 million to the Metropolitan Museum of Art for renovations of its outdoor plaza.

11. Financier **John Paulson** and his wife **Jenny** pledged \$100 million to the Central Park Conservancy for endowment and park-restorations programs.

10. Entertainment executive **David Geffen** pledged \$100 million to UCLA's medical school for scholarships.

9. Venture capitalist **Michael Moritz** and his wife **Harriet Heyman**, a writer, pledged \$116.4 million to the University of Oxford for undergraduate scholarships.



8. **Phil Knight** (left), Nike's chairman, and his wife Penelope pledged \$125 million to the Oregon Health & Science University

7. **David Gundlach**, founder of an insurance company, made a \$140 million bequest to the Elkhart County Community Foundation.



6. Financier **Carl Icahn** (left) pledged \$150 million to the Mount Sinai School of Medicine for medical research.

5. **Fred Fields**, former head of Coe Manufacturing Co., made a \$150 million bequest to the Oregon Community Foundation to support arts and education.

4. Publisher and real estate mogul **Mortimer Zuckerman** pledged \$200 million to Columbia University's Mind Brain Behavior Institute.

3. **Mark Zuckerberg**, Facebook's co-founder, and his wife Priscilla Chan contributed \$498.8 million to the Silicon Valley Community Foundation to support education and health.



2. **Paul Allen** (left), Microsoft's co-founder, pledged \$300 million to the Allen Institute for Brain Science so it could expand its staff and programs.

1. **Warren Buffett** pledged more than \$3 billion, \$1.03 billion to each of his children's foundations:

Howard G. Buffett Foundation

NoVo Foundation (Peter Buffett's fund)

Sherwood Foundation (Susan Buffett's fund)