

# VALLEY

## & State

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SECTION B

## Sarver's 1st big donation: \$1 mil for Family Museum

By Kathy Shayna Shocket  
The Arizona Republic

On the heels of Robert Sarver ringing the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange to celebrate his Western Alliance Bancorporation going public is the buzz about his \$1 million personal gift to the Phoenix Family Museum.

The children's museum will be built at the former Monroe School at Seventh and Van Buren streets.

It's Sarver's first major donation in the Valley since he and his investment group purchased the Phoenix Suns for \$401 million in June 2004.

Suns Chief Executive Officer Jerry Colangelo, who

added \$250,000 to Sarver's pledge, was the driving force behind Sarver's commitment.

"If Jerry has taught me one thing, it's that if you want to be part of this community, it is important to give back," Sarver said from his San Diego home.

Colangelo and Sarver have teamed up to co-chair the museum's fund-raising campaign. "I believe in leading by example," Colangelo said.

Their combined pledge of \$1.25 million represents approximately 10 percent of the museum's \$12.3 million capital campaign. The money will fund building renovations, exhibits and start-up operations.

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"The Suns charities have always focused on children's charities, and this fits in nicely with those efforts," Sarver said. Not only have personal donation requests poured in from other Valley charities, but Sarver was asked to contribute to the capital campaign to build a children's museum in San Diego. "I was hit up to be one of its major donors, but you have to pick your passions," said the father of three young children.

Colangelo, who organized a private fund-raiser at the museum site two years ago, has been a strong supporter of the museum, to be completed in May 2007. "There are many cities with great children's museums' and I was inspired by what the museum could be for my 10 grandchildren and the children of the Valley," he said.

Suns Vice President Tom Ambrose has been the museum's chairman of the board of directors.

With hands-on exhibits and



Phoenix Suns owner Robert Sarver (left) and CEO Jerry Colangelo co-chair the museum's fund-raising efforts.

creative activities, the museum's goal is to advance early childhood development by engaging minds, muscles and imaginations of its visitors.

"We are elated that they have embraced this project in the way they have and are giving such a great boost to the campaign," said Deb Gilpin, executive director of the Phoenix Family Museum.

The \$10.5 million bond financing to buy and renovate the 65,000-square-foot historic Monroe School was approved by Phoenix voters in 2001.

Museum construction is set to begin in 2006.