

For Immediate Release

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**PEARSON FAMILY FOUNDATION DONATES \$100 MILLION  
TO UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, CREATING INSTITUTE  
TO CONFRONT NEW ERA OF GLOBAL CONFLICTS**

*Landmark Gift Creates The Pearson Institute for the Study and Resolution of Global Conflicts  
and The Pearson Global Forum at the Harris School of Public Policy*

**CHICAGO, Sept. 30** – At a time of heightened global violence, as war and political persecution drive the largest displacement of refugees and migrants since World War II, the University of Chicago has received a \$100 million gift to establish the first research institute and annual global forum of their kind devoted solely to the study and resolution of global conflicts.

The landmark gift from The Thomas L. Pearson and The Pearson Family Members Foundation (“The Pearson Family Foundation”) is equal in size to the second-largest gift in the University’s history.

The gift was announced by University of Chicago President Robert J. Zimmer before an enthusiastic audience of more than 1,100 faculty, students, alumni, trustees and dignitaries at the University’s Mandel Hall this morning.

Richard N. Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations and an expert on U.S. foreign policy, who has been recognized for his efforts to promote international peace and conflict resolution, followed Zimmer with comments on the importance of better understanding conflicts between and within states and what has been shown to reduce their frequency, intensity and duration.

The \$100 million gift was made to the University at the direction of Thomas L. Pearson and Timothy R. Pearson, Chairman and President & CEO, respectively, of The Pearson Family Foundation. The Pearsons are business entrepreneurs, investors and philanthropists with a long-standing interest in the resolution of global disputes and conflicts.

**‘Transformative Gift’**

“The University of Chicago is deeply grateful to the Pearson Family for this transformative gift. Their generosity creates The Pearson Institute for the Study and Resolution of Global Conflicts and The Pearson Global Forum, signaling a vital and unprecedented step in confronting the new era of violent conflicts,” said Zimmer.

“The direct use of analysis and understanding to improve lives is a longstanding attribute of the University of Chicago,” Zimmer said. “Importantly, the study of global conflicts is a field ripe for groundbreaking research approaches, and The Pearson Institute will seek to inform more effective policy solutions for resolving violent conflicts to make a lasting impact around the world.”

## **Society's Toughest Problems**

Thomas L. Pearson said, "Our choice of the University of Chicago for this gift underscores our recognition of the University's history of fostering an environment where rigorous inquiry is successfully applied to society's toughest problems. It also signifies our belief that non-state conflicts, from drug cartels to insurgent organizations such as ISIS, increasingly constitute the foreign policy challenge of our time."

"The imperative is to identify new strategies now that will address the spectrum of entities engaged in violent conflict from global superpowers, to state and sub-state, and non-state groups. Cold War-type solutions alone are less effective in today's era of global conflicts, which requires a complex interaction of military, economic, political and cultural factors," Thomas Pearson said.

More people have been displaced this year, such as those fleeing the war zone in Syria, than at any time since World War II, creating a global humanitarian crisis. UN estimates show that in 2014 alone, an estimated 13.9 million individuals were newly displaced due to conflict or persecution, and that one in every 122 people in the world, a total of 59.5 million, is either a refugee, internally displaced or seeking asylum, Thomas Pearson added.

## **Institute to Fill Critical Gap in Identifying New Strategies**

"Grounded in Chicago Harris' belief in the power of exacting, quantitative research, we're convinced that The Pearson Institute will fill a critical gap in identifying new strategies rooted in innovative and data-driven research approaches and will act as a driving force in transforming how we understand and approach global conflicts," said Daniel Diermeier, dean of the Harris School of Public Policy.

"The Pearson Institute will be built on the principle that the new era of violent conflicts calls for data-driven, analytical approaches to inform better policy solutions. Clearly, the goals of The Pearson Institute will embrace the University's pioneering use of quantitative tools in the social sciences," Diermeier said.

The Pearson Institute, housed at the Harris School of Public Policy, Diermeier noted, will concentrate its work in three main areas: (1) research to understand, prevent and resolve violent conflicts; (2) engagement by annually convening the international policy and academic community to recognize new evidence-based approaches and policies that reduce global conflicts; and, (3) education for the next generation of scholars and practitioners through new courses and programs, all designed to help resolve conflicts and inform more effective policies.

## **Professorships in Harris School, The Pearson Institute Faculty Director**

As part of the \$100 million Pearson Family gift, the University will establish four named professorships in the Harris School: The Reverend Dr. Richard L. Pearson Professor of Global

Conflicts Studies; The Ramalee E. Pearson Professor of Global Conflict Studies; The Philip K. Pearson Professor of Global Conflict Studies; and The David L. Pearson Professor of Global Conflict Studies. The Faculty Director of The Pearson Institute, who will be a prominent scholar, will hold the first of these named chairs.

All four named professorships will hold appointments at The Pearson Institute for the Study and Resolution of Global Conflicts.

Additionally, reflecting the scale of such a significant donation, the University will create a Pearson Fellows program for Masters of Public Policy students and Pearson Scholars for Ph.D. students working in this specialized area of scholarship.

### **The Pearson Global Forum**

The Pearson Institute will annually convene preeminent international policy leaders and scholars at The Pearson Global Forum, to ensure the regular exchange of ideas, and to maximize the potential for positive change by also bringing together participants from a variety of sectors concerned with global conflicts. In addition to its planned annual convocation, The Pearson Global Forum will also recognize evidence-based policies that reduce global conflicts, and it will present and host conferences and related events highlighting the application of The Pearson Institute's research findings to conflict resolution.

The collective aim of The Pearson Institute and The Pearson Global Forum will be to serve as catalysts in understanding the causes of conflicts, and designing, pioneering and informing effective new policies that will help lead to conflict resolution.

### **Formidable Journey Ahead**

Timothy R. Pearson said, "We know the journey ahead will be formidable—to find new ways through The Pearson Institute to study and understand global conflicts, to significantly and meaningfully impact and inform policy, and to share these findings around the world through The Pearson Global Forum."

"But this mission to contribute to a global society at peace, by developing innovative strategies and by convening leading scholars and policy makers from around the world, can make a difference in millions of people's lives. For those committed to making a difference in the world in which we live, we ask everyone interested to join us," he said.

### The Thomas L. Pearson and The Pearson Family Members Foundation

The Thomas L. Pearson and The Pearson Family Members Foundation, through programs supported by its U.S.-based private philanthropy, seeks to encourage the study and resolution of global conflicts. This mission reflects the legacy of Rev. Dr. Richard L. and Ramalee E. Pearson, in combination with the Pearson Family's continued commitment to make a difference in the global society in which we live. As the past Global Benefactor of the Nobel Peace Center and the Nobel Peace Prize concert in Oslo, the Pearson Family has a demonstrated interest in the resolution of global disputes and conflicts.

### University of Chicago

One of the world's premier academic and research institutions, the University of Chicago has pioneered new ways of thinking since its founding in 1890. With a commitment to free, rigorous and open inquiry into the world's toughest problems, UChicago scholars take an interdisciplinary approach to research that spans arts to engineering, medicine to education and have worked around the world to help create new fields of study. With preeminent undergraduate and graduate programs, 157,000 alumni and numerous permanent centers around the world, the impact of the University of Chicago today is greater than ever.

### Harris School of Public Policy

For more than 25 years, the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy has been driven by the belief that rigorous, quantitative research is the best guide for public policy. The school does not restrict itself to any particular policy domain but distinguishes itself by its unique point of view. From urban studies to early childhood development, from energy to global health and now global conflicts, Harris brings an exacting, data-driven perspective to the full spectrum of policy concerns.