

## ABOUT THE PEROT FAMILY



*(L-R) Carolyn Perot Rathjen, Nancy Perot Mulford, Ross Perot, Margot Perot, Ross Perot, Jr., Suzanne Perot McGee, Katherine Perot Reeves. Photo by Allison V. Smith*

In May 2008, the five Perot children donated \$50 million to the new museum being built in Victory Park in Dallas in honor of their parents, Margot and Ross Perot. Their gift represents the greatest amount ever given to the Museum and is believed to be one of the single-largest gifts to a Dallas museum. As a result of their gift, the museum is named the **Perot Museum of Nature and Science**.

News of the gift was made public at a press conference on May 30. Immediately following the announcement, a surprise video ran offering special words of congratulations to the Perots – everyone from kindergartners at the East Dallas Community School, who delighted the audience with their snaggled-toothed proclamations "to learn more about science and become doctors and archeologists when they grow up," to astronaut Buzz Aldrin, philanthropist Margaret McDermott, then-U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison and Pritzker Prize Laureate Thom Mayne, architect for the new Perot Museum. Also featured was epidemiologist Dr. Robert Haley, who recalled that his early interest in science was spurred by frequent visits as a child to science museums.

"Margot and Ross Perot have given so much to Dallas and to thousands of worthwhile projects across America. I can think of no better legacy than a museum that inspires young people to pursue careers in science, engineering and technology," said former Dallas Mayor Tom Leppert.

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Ross Perot, Jr., fought back tears during the press conference. Later he said, "I just thought of my parents coming here 50 years ago. They drove into Dallas from Texarkana, didn't know anybody and went to work. Dallas embraced them, and look at how far they've come. It's an amazing community."

Ms. Mulford said that they'd been searching for a way to honor their parents, "who have given so much to us and to this city. They're both very modest and reluctant to have anything like this named for them, but I think it's important for their legacy to be memorialized in the city." When the Museum opportunity came along it "felt perfect," she said, "because it covers education and research and engineering."

The elder Ross Perot emphasized his and Margot's lifelong passion for education, particularly in the sciences: "We need more engineers in our country."

He said he hoped the new museum would inspire a new generation of engineers and scientists. "This will get them to dream," he said. "In our country, you can dream the dream and make the dream come true." He said he and Margot were "honored that my children and grandchildren wanted to do this. And I hope it will inspire young people to reach for the stars, as I was able to do."

### **Comments from the Perot Children**

Below are statements made at a May 30, 2008, news conference by the Perot children:

"Mom and Dad place a premium on education and the influence it has on the development of society and innovation. This museum will touch and enrich so many lives, just as Mom and Dad have."

*-- Katherine Perot Reeves*

Mom and Dad came to Dallas with great educations, a lot of love for family and each other, and big dreams. These resources, along with hard work, good timing and a lot of luck blessed our family and literally tens of thousands of others, which is why this gift is such a fitting honor to their service and their success.

*-- Carolyn Perot Rathjen*

One of the most precious gifts that Mom and Dad gave us was a desire to always broaden our horizons - exactly what this wonderful museum will do for Dallas, for North Texas and for all the visitors who come here.

*-- Suzanne Perot McGee*

It is so compelling to hear how many great researchers, scientists, engineers, doctors, and educators first became interested in their chosen fields as a result of visiting a great museum of science or natural history. It is our hope that this museum can be an inspiration to the next generation of pioneers, discoverers and visionaries.

*-- Nancy Perot Mulford*

The story of the growth and development of Dallas has been a story of service, sacrifice, innovation and boldness, and Mom and Dad have contributed greatly to that story. That is why we are so proud to add another chapter to that story with this gift to this wonderful museum in their honor.

*-- Ross Perot, Jr.*