Hunter Receives Record $40M for School of Social Work

Hunter College this fall received a gift of $40 million, the largest in the college’s and CUNY’s history. It will be used to construct a building in Harlem for the School of Social Work.

In honor of the gift, the school will be named the Lois V. and Samuel J. Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College. The $135-million eight-story building will be at Third Avenue and 118th Street in East Harlem. The remaining $95 million will come from state education funds appropriated last spring. The CUNY School of Public Health will also be housed in the building.

The building that has been home to the Hunter College School of Social Work for nearly 40 years will be sold to a private developer. “The move is an exciting step forward,” said Hunter College President Jennifer J. Raab. “Now we’ll have a 21st-century building to match our 21st-century vision for the school of social work.”

Chancellor Matthew Goldstein has hailed the move to Harlem as a great step for the school which is the City’s only public graduate school of social work. He told The New York Times that Harlem is “exactly the right place in the city to build the school.”

Lois and Samuel Silberman have a rich history of support and leadership at Hunter. They provided more than $5 million to build the East 79th Street building on land that was formerly occupied by the family’s townhouse.

Samuel Silberman, a businessman and philanthropist who also supported numerous Jewish and humanitarian causes, was with his wife, an honorary member of the Hunter College Foundation’s Board of Trustees and received many honors from the college, including an honorary doctorate. He died in 2000. Lois Silberman, who is 87, told the Times her husband would have been pleased about the new building.