BIOGRAPHY: Paul G. Allen, Co-Founder

Paul G. Allen is a technologist and leading philanthropist who started Microsoft with Bill Gates. He is founder and chairman of Vulcan Inc., the company that oversees his business and philanthropic activities.

Allen started Microsoft with Gates, a childhood friend, in Albuquerque in 1975. He was the company's chief technologist until he left in 1983. Today, Allen continues the search for knowledge that led to the creation of Microsoft and has become one of the most generous and best-known philanthropists in America. He supports and advances world-class projects and high-impact initiatives that improve the way people live, learn, work and experience the world through arts, science, education, entertainment, sports, business and technology.

His multibillion-dollar investment portfolio includes a major real estate redevelopment in Seattle's South Lake Union neighborhood and holdings in dozens of technology, media and other companies.

He also owns the Seattle Seahawks of the National Football League, the Portland Trail Blazers of the National Basketball Association, and is part of the primary ownership group for the Seattle Sounders FC, the city's Major League Soccer team.

With lifetime giving of more than $1.5 billion, Allen has pledged to leave a majority of his estate to philanthropy. He gives back to the community through the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, which works to transform individual lives and strengthen communities by supporting arts and culture, youth engagement, community development and social change, and scientific and technological innovation. He also gives directly, including $26 million in 2010 to Washington State University for the Paul G. Allen School for Global Animal Health.

In 2003, he created the Allen Institute for Brain Science to accelerate understanding of the human brain in health and disease. The Seattle-based nonprofit pursues unprecedented large-scale research initiatives that result in knowledge, data and tools intended to fuel discovery throughout the broader scientific community. The Institute has generated groundbreaking online public resources that integrate extensive genomic and neuroanatomical data, including interactive atlases of the mouse and human brain. These resources have become staple research tools for scientists worldwide, helping to lead them to insights about neurological function and brain-related diseases and disorders. Given the Institute's achievements, in March 2012, Allen pledged $300 million to significantly expand its scientific programs. This funding brought his total commitment to date to $500 million and launched three new initiatives that will tackle some of the most fundamental and complex questions in brain science.

In 2004, Allen funded SpaceShipOne, the first privately-backed effort to successfully put a civilian in suborbital space, winning him and designer Burt Rutan the Ansari X-Prize. In 2011, Allen got back into the space business with the formation of Stratolaunch Systems which is developing an innovative airborne launch system. It will utilize the largest aircraft ever manufactured and will provide orbital access to space with greater safety, cost-effectiveness and flexibility.

His independent film company, Vulcan Productions, has won numerous awards for feature films and documentaries, including the Emmy Award-winning Rx for Survival—A Global Health Challenge; the Peabody Award-winning Judgment Day: Intelligent Design; the PBS series This Emotional Life; and the PBS series The Blues, which Martin Scorsese executive produced with Allen and Jo Lynn Allen.
Idea Man, Allen’s 2011 memoir, was a New York Times bestseller.

Allen is also founder of the EMP Museum, Seattle’s critically acclaimed interactive museum of music, popular culture and science fiction; the Flying Heritage Collection, an assemblage of rare World War II aircraft restored to flying condition and shared with the public; and the Living Computer Museum, a collection of restored vintage timesharing computer equipment.

Learn more about Allen at www.paulallen.com.