The Twist Family Endowment for American Studies was established by James Twist in honor of his family. All three children of Frank J. and Rose Marie Twist are graduates of Notre Dame. Clare J. Twist, MD ('82), is a pediatric oncologist at Stanford University. Christine Twist Burke ('79) is president of Chris Burke, Inc., a marketing research firm in Chicago. James F. Twist, MD ('76), is an ophthalmologist in Buffalo, New York.

James served on the Notre Dame Alumni Association Board of Directors and is a past president of the Buffalo Ophthalmologic Society, the Western New York Chapter-American College of Surgeons, and the Notre Dame Club of Buffalo and Western New York. He is a member of the Notre Dame Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa and received his medical degree from SUNY-Buffalo School of Medicine in 1980. He and his wife, Maureen, have a son, James F. Twist Jr.

Focusing on the American presidency within the context of American studies, the Twist Endowment allows the Hesburgh Libraries to acquire resources of significance to American studies and culture from a broad range of perspectives, including those of history, political science, social science, literary and art criticism, culture, and communications theory.