

CAL FUTURES

PHILANTHROPIC, FINANCIAL, AND ESTATE PLANNING NEWS
FOR UC BERKELEY ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

SPRING 2024

**GO BEARS,
GO GREEN!**

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When did the Bancroft's Mark Twain Papers and Project most recently acquire a set of Mark Twain's letters?

Answer inside.

Photo by Jami Smith/UC Berkeley Library

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A Note From the Executive Director



Welcome to the Spring 2024 issue of *Cal Futures!*

As the new executive director of Berkeley's Office

of Gift Planning, I am delighted to introduce this issue. Our theme is centered around English and literature in honor of our featured donor, Gorm Kirsch '90, who studied English at Berkeley.

Kirsch and husband Geoffrey Fox have made a gift from their will: a simple yet powerful way to support Berkeley. The gift establishes a Chancellor's Chair for the Department of English as well as a fellowship fund for English graduate students at Berkeley Connect. I hope you find Gorm's story of generosity compelling.

In campus news, our historic 10-year Light the Way campaign concluded at the end of 2023. More than 225,000 donors contributed \$7.3 billion! What an incredible show of support and impact. Thank you for helping us maintain the world-class academic experience for which Berkeley is renowned. Stay tuned for more news of campaign finale celebrations.

To learn more about how you can make the Berkeley dream possible with your legacy gift, you can reach us at 510.642.6300 or ogp@berkeley.edu. We look forward to hearing from you.

Fiat Lux!

Carl A. Wayne, J.D.
Executive Director
Office of Gift Planning
planyourlegacy.berkeley.edu

Have English Degree, Will Travel

Gorm Kirsch forges a path now for future generations

By Dana Enfinger



Gorm Kirsch smiles proudly with Berkeley diploma in hand in 1990.

Gorm Kirsch '90 has a deep dedication to Berkeley and a penchant for getting out in the world to discover, share, and make it better.

Gorm's parents took a similar trajectory before him.

His father, Jack Kirsch, who passed away in 2018, was an esteemed professor at Berkeley in the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology and the Department of Chemistry. Jack was honored with the Edward A. Dickson Emeriti Professorship for his contributions to teaching, research, and public service.

Jack and Gorm's mother, Birthe, whose native country is Denmark, established the Jack and Birthe Kirsch Prize to help support chemistry students at Berkeley.

The couple lived in Kensington, California, in the Berkeley Hills where they raised Gorm and his brother, Joshua, who also attended Berkeley, majoring in history and getting a law degree.

Gorm, who majored in English at Berkeley, is now retired and enjoying traveling with husband Geoff Fox. When the couple isn't discovering new places, they live on a cattle property in northern New South Wales, Australia.

"Travel was a big part of my parents' lives, and it's turned out to be a big part of mine," Gorm said.

In the 1980s, Gorm volunteered for AIDS organizations. After graduating from Berkeley, his interest in health equity would lead him to accept a role in HIV prevention efforts at the National Health Service in the United Kingdom.

Gorm went on to get his master's degree in public health from Columbia University. He would later take on a position at the World Health Organization, focusing on communications and policy work, continuing to meld his ability to deftly communicate with his interest in people and their health.



Gorm Kirsch (left) with husband Geoff Fox in Greenland

Gorm later freelanced in healthcare finance and went into the home nursing care business before selling his business and retiring in 2020.

“I’ve used my English degree from Berkeley in everything I’ve done,” Gorm said.

Gorm has included a gift in his will to benefit Berkeley, which focuses on two prongs: support for Berkeley Connect and — most fittingly — the endowment of a chair in the Department of English.

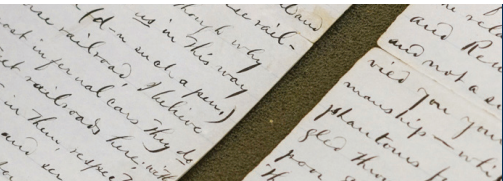
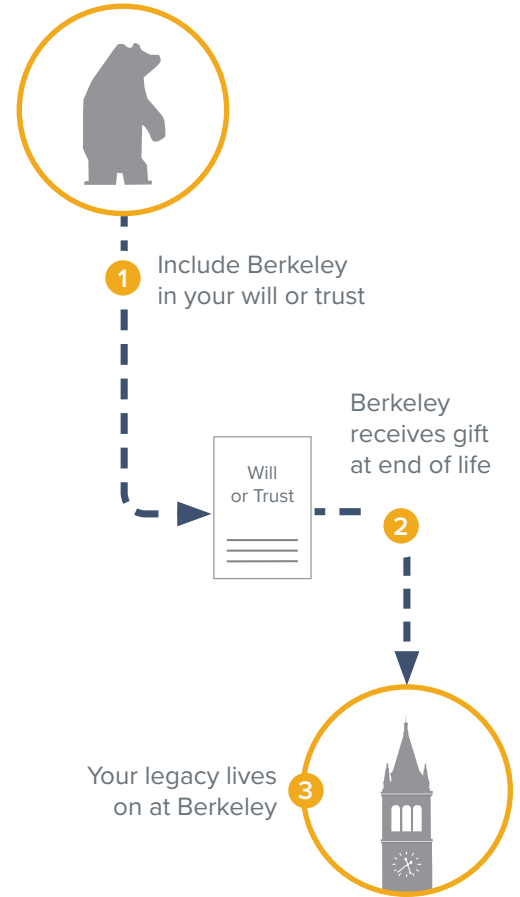
“What Berkeley Connect does is really impressive,” he said. “It matches undergrads with grad students to help undergrads find their interests and navigate Berkeley. I remember feeling a bit lost when I first got there.”

Gorm was ultimately able to adjust to his surroundings and fondly recalled two Berkeley moments that made an impact on him. The first was the “Introduction to Shakespeare” class where influential literary historian Stephen Greenblatt kept Gorm and 500 other students spellbound.

“The second is that I spent a lot of time in the library,” Gorm said, noting it was the perfect place to go study and decompress. “I was an English major, after all.” ■

WILL/LIVING TRUST

How it works



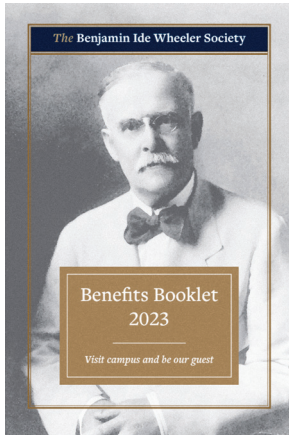
When did the Bancroft’s Mark Twain Papers and Project most recently acquire a set of Mark Twain’s letters?

- A. 2021 B. 2022 C. 2023 D. 2024**

D. 2024

Beloved American writer and humorist Samuel Langhorne Clemens, known by the pen name Mark Twain, lived from 1835 to 1910. Even though the letter featured on the cover was acquired by the Bancroft in 2021, letters and other private papers continue to be added to the Mark Twain Papers and Project. In as recently as February of this year, the project acquired 69 newly edited letters from Twain written from January through March 1884, according to marktwainproject.org (as of press time of this issue). Scholars estimate that Twain wrote at least 50,000 letters in his lifetime. At least!

The Benjamin Ide Wheeler Society



Have you already included Berkeley in your estate plan? If so, it's time to welcome you to the Benjamin Ide Wheeler Society, Berkeley's gift planning community of over 2,300 legacy donors! We'd like to offer a special thank you to all of our new and existing members for their generosity and commitment to furthering Berkeley's mission. When you become a member, you gain access to a multitude of benefits, including:

- An invitation to our annual Wheeler Society luncheon
- Free admission and discounts to campus exhibits and events
- A welcome package that includes a Wheeler pin to wear to events
- A special thank you video from the chancellor
- Campus updates from our executive director

We look forward to you joining us!

Special Dedication to Chancellor Carol T. Christ



Photo: Keegan Houser

The Office of Gift Planning would like to dedicate this issue of *Cal Futures*, which leans into the theme of English, to Chancellor Carol T. Christ, herself a scholar of Victorian and English literature.

Chancellor Christ steps down at the end of June, having served our university as Chancellor since 2017, focusing on many key initiatives and projects during her tenure. Christ's Berkeley journey first began in 1970, when she joined the faculty. She served as chair of the English department from 1985 to 1988. Her dedication to this remarkable institution and its community throughout her years as a faculty member, administrator, and our 11th Chancellor has been immensely inspiring. ■

This newsletter offers only general gift planning information. We urge you to seek the advice of an attorney in developing your personal estate plan, as the Office of Gift Planning may not render tax or legal advice to friends and alumni of the university. If you would like more information concerning charitable giving as a component of estate planning, we would be happy to provide you with more specific ideas.

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- IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution

Gifts that pay you income

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- Real Estate (\$250,000 net minimum)

Gifts that take effect at your passing

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- Will/Living Trust
- Brokerage Accounts
- Life Insurance
- Real Estate

I have already included Berkeley in my estate plan.

I am not sure which gift plan would work best.

Please contact me.

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