How did Ludwig’s Fountain get its name? 

Answer inside.
A Note from the Executive Director

Welcome to the spring issue of Cal Futures. As we shelter in place during this uncertain time, I am sending my warmest wishes to you and your loved ones for your health and well-being. While the Berkeley community may be working remotely right now, the university continues to actively leverage its scientific and academic expertise to help address the challenges associated with this moment in time. From innovations in testing to guidance on economic policy, UC Berkeley is providing critical leadership to California, the United States, and the world. To learn more, I encourage you to watch the weekly live “Berkeley Campus Conversations: COVID 19” video town halls. You can find upcoming talks and archives at news.berkeley.edu/berkeley-conversations-covid-19.

As you may know, just before the SIP orders, UC Berkeley launched the public phase of its ambitious fundraising initiative, Light the Way: The Campaign for Berkeley. This new campaign will help ensure Berkeley continues to project a brilliant light now and into the future, maintain its comprehensive excellence, empower the next generation of leaders, and fuel innovative solutions for society’s greatest challenges, including the ones we face now.

We are continually inspired by the ways in which Berkeley alumni, faculty, and friends support this amazing institution. In this issue, you will read about a few of them, including Aman Kumar, whose plan to make a bequest to the School of Optometry was inspired by a life-changing trip to campus as a teenager.

Please don’t hesitate to contact us with any questions or just to let us know how you are doing. You can reach us at (800) 200-0575 or ogp@berkeley.edu. We look forward to hearing from you. Fiat Lux!

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An Eye Toward The Future

A brush with blindness inspires a visionary gift

Aman Kumar was packing for Harvard Business School when it happened. He recognized the symptoms immediately. In fact, he could literally see them. His retina was in the process of detaching, and if not treated immediately, he would face total vision loss. He was only 25.

Born with a host of vision challenges, Aman had spent several years in high school under the care of Dr. Ian Bailey, a renowned UC Berkeley vision scientist, clinician, and international authority in the field of low vision. Bailey’s practical expertise enabled the bright young teenager to better see the world in front of him. But this clarity came with caveats: Aman was at risk of going blind, with retinal detachment the likely culprit. Fortunately, thanks to the guidance he received from Berkeley Optometry, he was prepared.

“I knew the moment it happened,” says Aman, who two years prior had completed a master’s degree in computer science and artificial intelligence at Stanford University. “I looked up and saw a tiny green spot in the center of my vision, like an afterimage with shimmering concentric circles around it. I went straight to the emergency room.”

Aman spent the next eight weeks prone on his stomach with a vitrectomy bubble inserted into his eye to support the retina as it healed back into position. “The doctors told me that if I moved during recovery, the surgical intervention might not be effective,”

Aman Kumar (left) is enjoying better clarity today thanks to the years of care he received from UC Berkeley vision scientist and clinician Ian Bailey (right), who is now an emeritus professor.
During the early ’60s, Ludwig von Schwarzenberg’s favorite pastime was visiting the fountain near Sproul Hall. He was exceptionally social, making friends with students and visiting luminaries alike. One year, he was even nominated to run for student council president. He lost, but he didn’t care. He continued to encourage others to lighten up and be playful. Carpe diem. Or in his case, carpe the ball. Because playing catch was one of his favorite ways to engage people as he gleefully ignored campus rules and played in the fountain. In fact, he was so beloved that the Regents of the University of California formally named the fountain after him. Ludwig’s ancestors, German short-haired pointers, would have been proud. His owner, Berkeley engineer John Littleford, certainly was.
The Benjamin Ide Wheeler Society

A Very Special Memorial Gift

*A daughter’s life inspires a lasting legacy*

As a child growing up in Iran, Shadi Khakpour was a bright, gregarious girl. She loved the piano and began playing when she was 5 years old. Within a few years, she could play the works of master composers. She excelled at sports such as tennis and skiing, and had a special love for horses. She was fluent in Persian, English, and French and could recite verses by ancient poets such as Hafiz. She was a beloved only child, known for her kindness, intelligence, and infectious laughter. And she dreamed big. She hoped to help others as a genetic engineer and was well on her way as a student at UC Berkeley when her life tragically ended in a car accident in December 1997. To honor their daughter’s luminous spirit, her parents have included a gift in their estate plan to establish the Shadi Khakpour Scholarship for undergraduate students. This scholarship will help keep her memory alive while helping others. “Our daughter, Shadi, had a huge spirit,” said her parents. “She was the most uncomplicated kind human. It is for her love of Berkeley that we decided to make this institution the beneficiary of our estate.”

Due to social distancing guidelines, the Northern California Wheeler Society Luncheon scheduled for July 15 may be postponed. We are exploring options for virtual gatherings and will update members accordingly. Thank you for your understanding.

Your Planned Gift Lights the Way for Berkeley

As the COVID-19 pandemic redefines our world, experts from across the UC Berkeley campus are rising up to meet the complex challenges it presents. We are galvanized by the exceptional show of support from our broad community, including donors like you. Philanthropy remains a core element that enables Berkeley’s excellence, and we aim to ensure the university continues stepping up as an academic and global leader, particularly in challenging times. As we look ahead to the future, your planned gifts will go far to help Berkeley light the way to recovery and long-term resilience. Thank you for your continued support!

*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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