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CAL FUTURES

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

FALL 2022

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GO GREEN!**

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Photo: Keegan Houser

How many Berkeley
graduate student alumni
have won Nobel Prizes?

—
Answer inside.

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Greetings from the Graduate Division



Welcome to the Fall 2022 issue of *Cal Futures*. I'm honored to fill in for this issue's Executive Director column. We're incredibly grateful for Randi Silverman's contributions to Berkeley and her work to help maintain our standing as the top public university in the nation. We wish her the best in her retirement!

As Chancellor Christ recently announced, we broke campus fundraising records this year, with donors contributing more than \$1 billion in gifts and pledges. Thank you! Graduate education support represented a good portion of these gifts, such as the generous fellowship commitment by Professor Bob Knight and his wife, Donatella Scabini, highlighted in this issue of *Cal Futures*. Berkeley's graduate students support our faculty in producing cutting-edge research, and as student instructors, they open our undergraduates' minds to help sustain our teaching mission. At the same time, they advance possibilities for a more just and sustainable future through their own research. I invite you to read about just a few of these outstanding scholars at grad.berkeley.edu/gradstudents.

In my job, I am always looking for ways to relieve our graduate students' financial burdens. This is especially important for students from underrepresented groups who enrich the unique culture that defines Berkeley. In addition to new diversity fellowships, we've initiated a five-year funding guarantee for all incoming doctoral students. Other graduate initiatives include our new Inclusive Excellence Hub, where historically underrepresented students can build multidisciplinary networks of support and belonging. None of this would be possible without your generous financial contributions.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you wish to join our efforts in supporting Berkeley's amazing graduate student community. *Fiat Lux!*

Lisa García Bedolla

Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and
Dean of the Graduate Division
graddean@berkeley.edu

Supporting 'the hearts and hands' of research

Bequest gift from professor-researcher couple will enhance the work of graduate students



Donatella Scabini and Bob Knight

By David Peterkofsky

Robert Knight and his wife, Donatella Scabini, grew up on opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Though he lived in New Jersey and she in Italy, both came from working-class families and were the children of fathers whose educations were interrupted.

"My dad had to drop out of school in eighth grade — he went to work after his dad died," says Bob, a psychology professor at Berkeley for the past 22 years and the former director of the campus's Helen

Wills Neuroscience Institute (HWNI). "But he had simple advice for my brother and me: 'Now that you have an education, keep going to school until you can't stand it anymore.'"

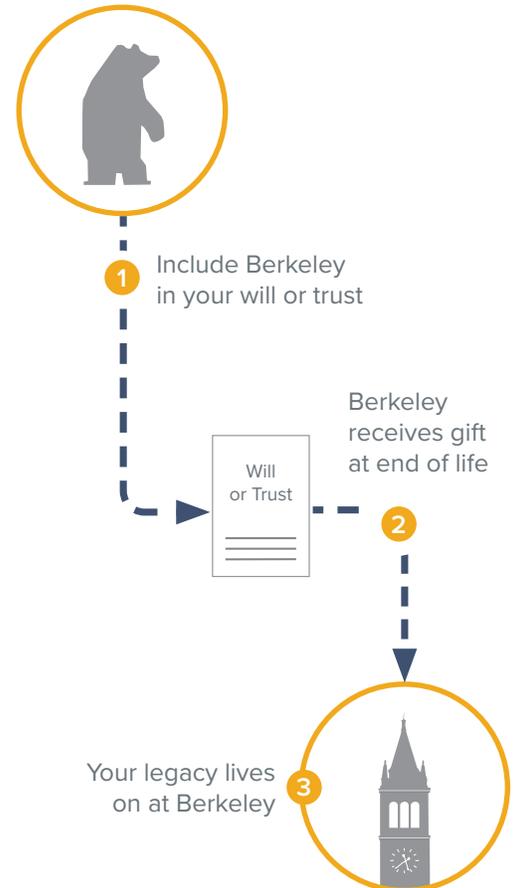
Bob became the first in his family to go to college, eventually earning degrees from the Illinois Institute of Technology and Northwestern. At Illinois Tech, he received a "full ride," while also holding down a job at the campus gas station to help pay his bills. Similarly, Donatella worked as a teaching assistant while studying at UC Davis, where she and Bob met.

After many years working at Davis, the couple headed to Berkeley. Bob continued his teaching career and established his lab, which focuses on attention and memory, neuropsychology and physiology, and cognitive neuroscience.

In addition to their work in academia, Bob says the 2012 sale of a startup company that he co-founded "really solidified our financial stability." It enabled the couple to think about paying it forward with an estate gift to their shared academic home. **Seeing firsthand how private philanthropy can ease the financial burdens of graduate education, they agreed to split their gift to support graduate students evenly between Berkeley's psychology department and the HWNI.**

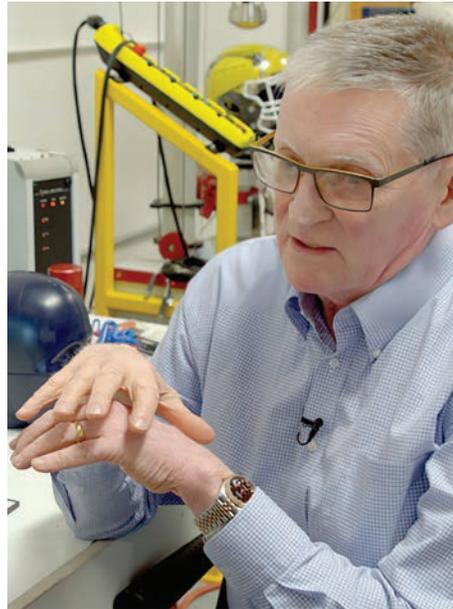
WILL/LIVING TRUST

How it works



Their gift, named in honor of Bob’s parents, addresses a vital need that comes up routinely in Bob’s cognitive neuroscience research lab. “I worked closely with grad students in Bob’s lab over the years,” says Donatella, who has a Ph.D. in neuropsychology and ran Berkeley’s neurological patient research program for 22 years. **“It’s important that they have the ability to work and not worry about taking loans, particularly when they come from socioeconomic backgrounds that do not readily provide them funds.”**

While planning their gift, both Bob and Donatella hoped that it would encourage other faculty to consider making similar gifts to Berkeley. And not surprisingly, that’s exactly what happened. “Three people we know are now changing their wills — two are faculty that I know personally,” Bob says. “One friend told me, ‘I saw what you did, thought it was cool, so I’m going to do something similar.’”



Professor Knight in the lab

The relationship that the couple has today with the lab’s psychology graduate students and neuroscience Ph.D.

candidates is close-knit. For the past 20 years, Bob and Donatella have even arranged an annual camping trip with members of the lab, strengthening that bond further.

That connection underscores the pride that Bob has for the dozens of talented students he has mentored over the course of his career. **“The grad students are the hearts and hands of the lab,”** he says. “They collect the data and are doing the work. If you’re a good mentor, you guide them to pursue things that inspire them. I hand them the keys to the Ferrari, tell them to drive as fast as they can, and I provide the guardrails.” ■



How many Berkeley graduate student alumni have won Nobel Prizes?

Answer: 23

Berkeley has seen nearly two dozen of its graduate student alumni earn Nobel Prizes. The first was Harold Urey, who earned his Ph.D. at Berkeley in 1923 and was bestowed the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1934 for his discovery of heavy hydrogen. The most recent was David Julius Ph.D. ’84 (pictured at left), who shared the 2021 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine with Ardem Patapoutian for their discoveries of receptors for temperature and touch. ■

The Benjamin Ide Wheeler Society



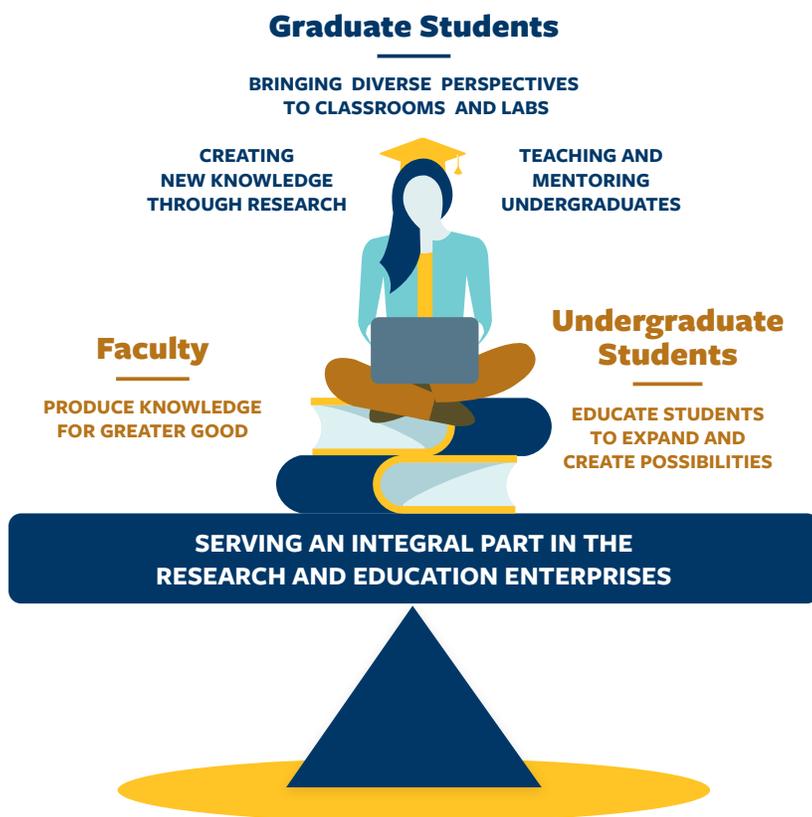
Attending the July 18 luncheon were donors Patricia Mar '64, Stan Mar '77, and Shelly '79 and Peter '79 De Vries.

Lower Sproul Plaza came to life on July 18 when Wheeler members came together in person for the first time in three years! The 35th Annual Luncheon featured the lecture “Privacy of the People, for the People, and by the People?” by Jennifer Urban, Clinical Professor of Law. Closing remarks were made by Chancellor Carol T. Christ.

Donors with eligible planned gifts will be invited to join the Benjamin Ide Wheeler Society, Berkeley’s community of committed gift planning donors. ■

Graduate Students: At the Fulcrum of Berkeley’s Mission

Graduate students are vital to Berkeley’s continued preeminence. They connect research to teaching, working alongside faculty to drive discoveries that shape the world for the better, and they mentor undergraduates, inspiring them to open their minds to the greatest possibilities. Their diverse perspectives enliven classrooms and labs, widening the doors to educational opportunities that set students from all backgrounds on a path toward successful careers and lives. ■



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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