CAL FUTURES
PHILANTHROPIC, FINANCIAL, AND ESTATE PLANNING NEWS
FOR UC BERKELEY ALUMNI AND FRIENDS
SPRING 2021

Who are these famous alumni?
Answer inside.
A Note from the Executive Director

Welcome to the spring issue of Cal Futures! As I write this column, a record number of vaccines are being administered in California, case rates are decreasing, and the state is set to open to full capacity in June (assuming we stay the course). I am finally feeling optimistic, and my hope is that you, too, are beginning to enjoy some semblance of normalcy — and that you and your loved ones are healthy and well.

America made history this year not only in vaccine doses distributed but also in the makeup of our country's new administration. In January, Kamala Harris became the first woman, the first Black American, and the first Indian American to be sworn in as vice president. The daughter of Cal alumni, she spent her early years in Berkeley. Our pride runs deep — and it doesn't end with her.

Appointees with Berkeley ties also joined the new administration. Janet Yellen, professor emerita of economics and business administration, is the first woman to serve as treasury secretary. Jennifer Granholm ’84, professor of public policy, is our new energy secretary; Alejandro Mayorkas ’81 is the first Latinx leader of homeland security; and Adewale “Wally” Adeyemo ’04 is the first African American to serve as deputy treasury secretary.

Much like these remarkable change makers, fellow alumni Steve and Carolyn Balling (see profile) also inspire us with their generosity and foresight in supporting our great university. The gift they included in their estate plan to benefit the Rausser College of Natural Resources will help support future graduate students.

As signs of hope and goodwill expand, we remain grateful for your generous and enduring support.

Go Bears!

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A Natural Choice

Lifelong Friendship Inspires Alumni Couple’s Gift to Grad Students

As a first-year graduate student studying entomology, Steven Balling ’74, Ph.D. ’82 was in search of a like-minded mentor. He had just completed a bachelor's degree in conservation of natural resources, a new interdisciplinary major inspired by the environmental movement. His future wife, Carolyn ’74 — whom he'd met on a botany class field trip to Point Reyes — had left for a two-year stint in Montana with the Girl Scouts of America while he stayed in Berkeley and secured a job in the entomology lab where he studied the invasive killer bee.

“Nobody else would hire me,” recalls Steve, laughing. He applied to the grad program, and soon met his future mentor, Professor Vince Resh, then a junior faculty member not much older than him who had just started teaching freshwater ecology at Cal.

“I took one of his classes, and we hit it off,” says Steve. “I knew I wanted to be an entomologist, but I wasn’t sure in which field.”

Within the year, he became Resh’s first Ph.D. student, studying non-toxic mosquito control, using an integrated pest management (IPM) approach to pest control. Their research aligned so well — Vince focused on the ecology of aquatic insects — that Steve stayed on as a postdoc in his lab.

When Steve moved on, he found the agricultural industry had not yet embraced IPM, and he immediately knew what his role
Both agree, however, that their inspiration runs deeper. “Vince is a good friend because when we went to Cal, we came out without any debt.”

“We always knew we wanted to give back,” says Steve. “You sink a lot of roots into Berkeley. It stays with you.”

Nearly forty years later, the Ballings chose to honor their lifelong friendship with Vince and their time at Cal through a generous bequest of two gifts to the university: one to the Rausser College of Natural Resources Graduate Student Support Fund and the second to the Lewis and Ann Resh Endowed Graduate Student Support Fund.

“Although neither of my parents went to college,” says Vince, who established the memorial fund 12 years ago, “they were great believers in education. My wife and I wanted to help support graduate students. This gift will enable the fund to continue.”

“We always knew we wanted to give back,” says Steve. “You sink a lot of roots into Berkeley. It stays with you.”

Adds Carolyn, “We wanted to fund graduate student scholarships because when we went to Cal, we came out without any debt.”

Both agree, however, that their inspiration runs deeper. “Vince is a good guy. He’s family.”

Q: Who is this?

A: Shyamala Gopalan and Donald Harris

The parents of Kamala Harris, America’s first female vice president, met as graduate students at UC Berkeley in 1962. Donald, a Jamaican immigrant pursuing a Ph.D. in economics, was giving a talk at a meeting of the Afro American Association, the first Black student group at Berkeley. Shyamala, an immigrant from India studying the role of hormones in breast cancer, caught his attention there. Two years later, they were married. Kamala credits both her parents’ connections with the vibrant Black community on- and off-campus for her sense of identity, but it was her mother who had the greatest influence on her character. “My mother used to say, don’t sit around and complain about things, do something,” Kamala said during a 2019 speech in Oakland. “My mother never asked for permission to tell her what was possible.”
The Benjamin Ide Wheeler Society

With California set to reopen to full capacity in June, the Office of Gift Planning looks forward to seeing you back on campus again soon. There is no substitute for connecting in person, but as a precaution, we once again plan to host this summer’s Benjamin Ide Wheeler Society event via Zoom. Be sure to check your mailboxes (email and physical) for more, including quarterly email messages from our executive director and later on our 2022 Wheeler Society Benefits Booklet filled with coupons for campus-based games, events, and exhibits that we hope you’ll finally get to enjoy in person again.

If you are not a member and want to learn more about the Benjamin Ide Wheeler Society and our growing community of gift planning donors, please reach out to our office. We will be happy to answer any questions.

We miss you and look forward to connecting with you in person again next year!

Enjoy Tax Benefits with Gifts of Cash and Appreciated Securities

Did you know that through the end of 2021, you can take an income tax charitable deduction for cash gifts to public charities of up to 100 percent of your adjusted gross income? The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 extended several provisions of the CARES Act into 2021, some that make cash gifts an even more attractive way to support Berkeley. Also in 2021, non-itemizers can reduce their taxable income (rather than AGI) by making cash gifts to public charities. Joint filers can deduct a maximum of $600, and single or married couples filing separately can deduct up to $300.

You can also enjoy a double tax benefit with a gift to Berkeley of appreciated securities. If you’ve held the securities for more than one year, you would avoid capital gains tax on the securities’ appreciation, and you would be eligible to claim an income tax charitable deduction for their current value. The full fair market value of the securities would support your favorite Berkeley programs.

Contact our office for more information on how to support Berkeley with a tax-savvy gift.

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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