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BENCHMARKS

THE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2011

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Campus celebration February 25. A campus-wide celebration will be held next week to honor individuals who have won major scientific awards, and to say farewell to Paul Nurse. All are invited. The event will take place in Weiss Café at 2 p.m.

Town Hall meeting scheduled for March 21. Incoming president Marc Tessier-Lavigne will hold a town hall meeting for all members of the campus community at 3 p.m. on March 21 in Caspary Auditorium. Dr. Tessier-Lavigne will speak about his vision for the university and will take questions. Additionally, Dr. Tessier-Lavigne will give the Friday Lecture on March 4. His talk, titled "Wiring the Brain: Common Mechanisms of Axon Guidance, Regeneration and Degeneration," will be at 3:45 p.m. in Caspary.

Bring your child to work. In celebration of national "Take Your Child to Work Day," Human Resources is hosting activities from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursday, April 28. Children between the ages of 8 and 12 who are accompanied by an adult are welcome. The registration deadline is Friday, April 8. Contact HR at x8300 or hr@rockefeller.edu.

New employee discount available for event tickets. Discounted tickets to Broadway shows, as well as to theme parks and events in Orlando, Las Vegas and elsewhere are now available through ticketsatwork.com. The Web site also offers discounted movie tickets at several theater chains. Use company code "ROCKU" to register.

Spring Insight lectures scheduled. Speakers in the campus lecture series on sciences, arts and humanities will be: Claudia Dreifus, adjunct associate professor at Columbia University and contributing writer to *The New York Times*; George Amato, Ph.D., director of the Sackler Institute for Comparative Genomics, American Museum of Natural History; and Peter Neufeld, co-director of the Innocence Project. For dates and times, go to feature-events.rockefeller.edu.

Announcements for this page may be submitted to zveilleux@rockefeller.edu.

BENCHMARKS

Paul Nurse, President
Jane Rendall, Corporate Secretary
Joe Bonner, Director of Communications
Zach Veilleux, Executive Editor

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CAMPUS NEWS

Building renovations proceeding despite snow

by ZACH VEILLEUX

Despite the winter having so far dumped 43.9 inches more snow than normal on the Upper East Side, major construction projects in Flexner and Welch Halls, and minor renovations to the President's House in preparation for its new residents, are proceeding on schedule.

"Although the work has not been highly visible, with construction vehicles and heavy equipment at work, there is progress going on inside all three structures," says John Tooze, vice president for scientific and facility operations.

Flexner Hall is the furthest along of the three projects, and crews are currently in the process of removing asbestos insulation from ceilings and pipes. Under New York City laws enacted in 2009, each floor must be inspected and certified once asbestos abatement work has been completed before any other demolition or construction can begin in the building. These new requirements mean that the demolition phase of the process is proceeding somewhat more slowly than it did with Smith Hall, but the building's contractor, Turner Construction, projects that time can be made up later in the schedule. Demolition is expected to be complete by the end of April, and the focus of the work will shift to building out the new space.

When fully complete in November 2012, the building will contain seven floors of open-plan laboratories and will be linked to the newly completed Green-

berg Building on each floor. Over the past several months, faculty that will occupy the new spaces (see chart, page 2) have had the opportunity to customize their labs, and their modifications have been incorporated into the project drawings. The university's architects, in conjunction with a consulting firm, EME Group, have also been working to enhance the sustainable elements of the building's design. The team projects that Flexner will ultimately obtain a LEED certification from the U.S. Green Building Council, and will also qualify for rebates from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, which will help to offset the costs of some energy efficient systems.

In Welch Hall, which has only been empty since mid-December, demolition and asbestos abatement are just getting under way. Turner is also in the process of filing for the necessary permits from the city, and workers have recently completed construction of a ramp between Founder's Hall and Nurses Residence, which will provide access to the site and serve as a temporary means of egress for occupants of the neighboring buildings. The next step, a protective bridge over the FDR drive, required by the city to prevent construction materials from accidentally falling onto the roadway, will be installed during overnight hours in late February.

Designs for the refurbished Welch Hall
continued on page 2

APPOINTMENT

Amy C. Falls appointed VP for investments

by JOSEPH BONNER

The Rockefeller University has appointed Amy C. Falls as chief investment officer and vice president for investments. She succeeds Lisa Danzig, who is leaving Rockefeller after 10 years to pursue new challenges. Ms. Falls begins on April 4, and Ms. Danzig will remain until then to assist with the transition.

"On behalf of the board, I would like to express our appreciation to Lisa for all of her many contributions to the university and wish her well in her future endeavors," says Russell L. Carson, chairman of Rockefeller's

Board of Trustees. "When Lisa informed us that she was leaving, we were delighted to be able to recruit someone of Amy's experience and capability. We believe that Amy will make a very positive contribution to both the performance of the endowment and to the university as a whole."



Ms. Danzig joined the university's Office of Investments in 2001 with responsibility for the portfolio's private investments including buyout, venture, growth capital and real assets. In 2003 she

was promoted to director, and in 2005 she

FROM PAUL NURSE

Stepping down

With my time as president of The Rockefeller University coming to an end in just a few weeks I want to take this opportunity — my last column in *BenchMarks* — to express both how much I appreciate having had the opportunity to lead this great university and the pleasure of working with an outstanding group of colleagues for nearly eight years.

There have been a number of initiatives attempted since 2003, two of which I am particularly glad to have seen succeed. The first is our faculty recruitment program. Under the outstanding guidance of its chairs and with contributions from many faculty members, the faculty search committee has identified an exceptional and diverse group of young recruits who will contribute greatly to Rockefeller in the coming years. The scientists we have hired are working in a variety of exciting areas, from cell biology to immunology to ethology. They are bright and energetic, and they will enhance the intellectual culture and community of Rockefeller for many years to come.

The second is the Collaborative Research Center. With help from our Board of Trustees and thanks

continued on page 2

was appointed vice president and chief investment officer. Over her tenure as CIO, Ms. Danzig has played a significant role in expanding the portfolio into real estate, other real assets such as oil and gas and power, and emerging markets. She helped steer the endowment through the market turmoil of 2008 and 2009 when the portfolio posted a first quartile return despite declining in value. Her extensive prior experience in the debt capital markets has helped the university maintain the highest bond ratings while maximizing its debt capacity.

"I have greatly enjoyed my time at Rockefeller and working with all its wonderful, dedicated scientists, employees and administrators," says Ms. Danzig. "It has been a privilege to help support the institution and I am pleased that the endowment weathered the difficulties of the past several years and is once again on the upswing."

Ms. Falls is currently the chief investment officer for Phillips Academy (better

continued on page 4

Tom Muir to leave Rockefeller for Princeton

by JOSEPH BONNER

Tom W. Muir, a chemist who studies molecular recognition in cellular signal transduction, has been appointed the Van Zandt Williams, Jr. Class of 1965 Professor in Chemistry at Princeton University. Dr. Muir is currently dividing his time between the Upper East Side and Princeton as he sets up a new lab and winds down operations in Smith Hall, and will formally move to Princeton in April.

Dr. Muir joined Rockefeller in 1996 as assistant professor and head of laboratory. He was named associate professor in 2000, professor in 2002 and Richard E. Salomon Family Professor in 2005. He is head of the Selma and Lawrence Ruben Laboratory of Synthetic Protein Chemistry and director of the Pels Family Center for Biochemistry and Structural Biology at Rockefeller.

Dr. Muir investigates the physicochemical basis of protein function in complex systems of biomedical interest. By combining tools of organic chemistry, biochem-

istry and cell biology, his research has led to the development of new technologies that provide fundamental insight into how proteins work.

Dr. Muir and his colleagues use novel techniques to study molecular recognition in prokaryotic and eukaryotic signal transduction. One of these techniques is a general approach to investigating protein activity called expressed protein ligation, which allows synthetic peptides and recombinant proteins to be chemoselectively linked together. This is done by introducing molecular “sticky ends,” which act like Velcro, to the complementary ends of the proteins, causing them to react when mixed together in water. Introduction of these sticky ends can either be achieved chemically or biosynthetically, and it is possible to append the synthetic molecule at either end of the recombinant protein, or even in the middle.

The technology opens up proteins to

the tools of organic chemistry by allowing researchers to incorporate unnatural amino acids, posttranslational modifications and isotopic probes into specific protein sites. In collaboration with scientists in other Rockefeller labs, Dr. Muir is currently using expressed protein ligation to study how histone modifications control the local structure and activity of chromatin and potassium channel selectivity.

“The move to Princeton will allow me to reconnect with my roots in the physical sciences and will hopefully provide new opportunities to apply both established and emerging methods in physical and organic chemistry to the various biological areas my laboratory is interested in,” says Dr. Muir. “I am also excited to play a role in the major building effort under way in chemistry at Princeton. The opportunity to help shape the direction of chemical biology at this institution is truly appealing to me.”

Dr. Muir has received the Blavatnik Award for Young Scientists, the Vincent du Vigneaud Award from the American Peptide Society for excellence in peptide research and Rockefeller University’s Distinguished Teaching Award, among other honors. He served as a junior and tenured member of the university’s Academic Council, and also as chairman of the faculty search committee from 2009 to 2011.

“Rockefeller is a truly magical place to conduct biomedical research,” Dr. Muir says. “I have always felt like I was at science camp for professional researchers — it’s just been great fun. Leaving Rockefeller, with its great tradition in peptide and protein chemistry, was as hard a professional decision as I will likely ever make. Certainly, I leave a part of myself here and hope that in the years to come I will have the opportunity to visit and interact with the many inspirational scientists I have been privileged to know and befriend here.”

Stepping down (continued from page 1)

to the generosity of our donors, we have managed to improve and modernize the university’s most elderly infrastructure in a way that will help foster interactions and collaborations. Buildings do not always work the way that you hope they will when you see their designs on paper, but in this case I think they will. The Greenberg building is both grand and intimate and the labs of Smith Hall are functioning well, their open structure both comfortable to work in and an encouragement to scientists’ working together.

Credit for these accomplishments of course belongs to everyone. The Executive Officers, the Board and Academic Council have contributed greatly. Innovative science requires not only imaginative scientists and competent leaders,

but also excellent support from the administrative and service staff who, for example, run the equipment, keep the books, take out the trash and look after the mice. Rockefeller’s staff are truly dedicated to their work and it is because of all of them that the university is as successful as it is.

One other development which I am personally pleased to have been able to influence is what I see as an increased transparency and openness in the management of the institution. Over the years we have been able gradually to shape our working practices, which I hope has led to increased consensus, and to clarify policies and procedures for the benefit of our community.

It is sad for me to be stepping down, but the opportunity to play an impor-

tant role in science in the U.K. is one I could not pass up. The Royal Society, the presidency of which I assumed at the end of 2010, is the oldest scientific academy in the world, and its president is the informal scientific advisor to the prime minister. As well as holding this post, I will be the director and chief executive of the U.K. Centre for Medical Research and Innovation, a new facility in central London devoted to understanding the basic biology underlying human health. The UKCMRI will be of a similar size to Rockefeller and much of what I have learned here will inform my work there.

I also plan to maintain a lab at Rockefeller, and I will be visiting every couple of months. I have greatly enjoyed my years here, and I intend to keep a strong

connection with the university as president emeritus. Anne has also very much enjoyed living in New York and working with the Child and Family Center, where she has many friends among both the children and the teachers.

As you know, Marc Tessier-Lavigne will succeed me as Rockefeller’s president in March. The search committee, led by the Chairman of the Board, Russ Carson, made an excellent choice with Marc. Having worked in both academia and industry, he brings a new, fresh perspective to the university. He is experienced in managing complex organizations and has a particular interest in translational biomedicine. I’m confident that the university will be in very good hands with Marc. I wish Marc, and all of you, the very best for the future.

Construction (continued from page 1)

originally created in 2008 have been refined, and the university has had the plans reviewed by the New York State Historic Preservation Office in order to ensure that the proposed modifications are consistent with the site’s history.

“We were already looking to maintain Welch’s historic character and are even salvaging and reusing many of the interior finishes including the wood paneling, some flooring and various light fixtures,” says George Candler, associate vice president for planning and construction. “Consulting with the state office is providing helpful guidance on material selection and design details.”

“Although Welch Hall is a smaller project physically, it is more complex than Flexner in many ways,” says Dr. Tooze. “Access to the site is difficult, and because we are aiming to preserve the building’s grandeur, much of the finishing work requires skilled craftsmen and precise installation.” Because materials can’t go through the Founder’s lobby, they must be delivered from the south side of the site, near Nurses Residence, pass under the pedestrian bridge between Nurses Residence and Founder’s, then enter near the existing Audubon Room. An internal hoist running through the center of the building will provide access to the below-ground floors.

At the President’s House, Plant Operations is taking advantage of a six-month period of vacancy to perform long-deferred maintenance and to ready the house for occupancy by Marc Tessier-Lavigne and his family. Decades-old heating and cooling systems are being replaced with new high-efficiency units, lighting is being

upgraded to take advantage of energy-saving dimmable LED fixtures, gas service is being installed, and the security and fire alarms are being improved.

In the public areas, the wood flooring and paneling and the ceiling are being refurbished, a new bathroom is being installed and minor repairs are being made to windows and woodwork. In addition, a new exterior entrance is being installed in the catering kitchen that will simplify food deliveries for dinners and events.

In the private residence, the layout is being reconfigured to provide additional guest rooms for Dr. Tessier-Lavigne’s college-age sons and other visitors. A combined kitchen and living area is being created in the first-floor space formerly occupied by an office and separate TV room. Finally, the rarely used elevator is being removed to free up floor space, and minor renovations are being made to the upstairs bedrooms.

“The end result will be a modern home that is in a state of good repair and is well suited to the needs of the Tessier-Lavigne family and for the various university events and functions that take place in it,” says Dr. Tooze. “Money for the renovation is not coming from the university’s operating budget, but is being raised by the Board of Trustees.” The Tessier-Lavigne family is also contributing to the costs.

“Although work on these projects is going to continue to cause some disruption on campus, the good news is that they remain on schedule and on budget,” says Dr. Tooze. “When they are finished next year, the university’s facilities as a whole will be in excellent shape.”



Demolition. The first floor of Flexner Hall, fully demolished and ready for the next phase of construction. This space, at the east end of the building, was formerly occupied by the Tomasz Lab.

Flexner Hall Lab Assignments

- 5th Floor**
Sean F. Brady, Howard C. Hang
- 4th Floor**
Gaby Maimon, Daniel Kronauer
- 3rd Floor**
Nathaniel Heintz, GENSAT
- 2nd Floor**
Michel C. Nussenzweig, TBD
- 1st Floor**
Marc Tessier-Lavigne, TBD
- A Level**
TBD
- B Level**
TBD

CoreSource named new health plan administrator

by ZACH VEILLEUX

The Rockefeller University has chosen CoreSource, Inc., a national administrator of self-funded health insurance plans, to replace The Principal Financial Group as the university's third-party benefits administrator. The change in providers, which was effective as of January 1, 2011, means a new team will process claims for Rockefeller employees covered by the self-funded Rockefeller health plan and those who have dental insurance or flexible spending accounts. There are no changes to the terms of the policies themselves and Oxford plans are not affected.

CoreSource, which has its headquarters in Chicago but maintains regional offices throughout the country, serves about 700 mostly small and mid-sized organizations with a total of around 1.4 million employees, somewhat more than Principal's 840,000. In 2009 it processed approximately \$3 billion in claims.

The change in providers was precipitated by Principal's announcement in September 2010 that it would exit the health insurance business. "Although we had

been pleased with Principal, their decision to stop operating as a benefits administrator required us to look for a new vendor,"

says Virginia Huffman, vice president for human resources. "We decided to do it sooner rather than later out of concern

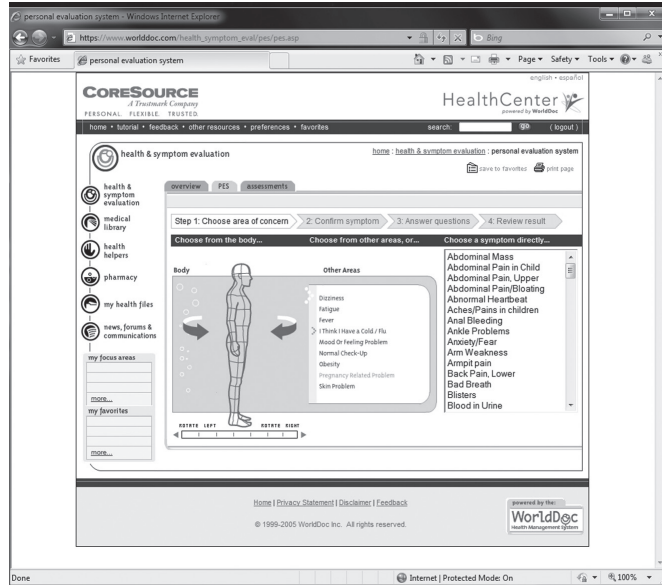
that Principal's service might suffer as their business begins to wind down." Principal has been the university's claims administrator since January 2008.

In evaluating new third-party administrators, Human Resources followed the same course that led them to Principal three years ago. With guidance from a benefits consulting firm, Mercer, they identified a short list of firms that met the university's basic criteria, including the ability to work with the existing

Aetna and Weill-Cornell networks. They then evaluated each company, meeting with key personnel and checking references.

"The goal was to find a company that will process our claims quickly and accurately, but also one that has experience working with medical communities, in which plan participants often have extensive knowledge of their treatment options," says Ms. Huffman. "After meeting with the entire team of claims processors and speaking with several of their clients, we're confident that CoreSource is well equipped to serve our unique needs."

CoreSource offers several convenient features that Principal did not, including the option to have health and dental claim reimbursements sent via direct deposit, the addition of a dental network offering discounted rates, and access to an online "Health Center" where members can access stored medical files and diagnose common symptoms online. Like Principal, CoreSource uses CVS/Caremark for prescription management.



CoreSource on the Web. A Web-based tool available at www.coresource.com suggests possible diagnoses and potential treatments based on answers to questions about symptoms.

CAMPUS NEWS

Lavoisier painting returns to Rockefeller

by ZACH VEILLEUX

For more than 50 years, a dramatic life-size painting of Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier, considered by many to be the father of modern chemistry, hung in Welch Hall. Painted in 1788 by Jacques-Louis David, it depicts Lavoisier seated at his workbench, lab notebook in hand, surrounded by scientific apparatuses and conversing with his wife and collaborator Marie-Anne Pierette Paulze. It's a dramatic and inspirational work of art, but since 1977 viewing it has required a long walk to Fifth Avenue. The university sold it 34 years ago and it now hangs in The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Originally a gift from John D. Rockefeller, who bought it (via a dealer) from Mr. Lavoisier's family, the painting was one of several valuable works sold in the seventies. The proceeds from its sale — about \$4 million — were used to endow two professorships and four graduate fellowships. Maclyn McCarty and Norton Zinder were the first recipients of the professorships.

Although there is no getting it back from the Met, Paul Nurse, the university's outgoing president, has had made and framed a full-size reproduction. The

copy, an ultra-high-resolution photograph which Dr. Nurse has presented to the university as a gift, is temporarily on display in the lobby of the Rockefeller Research Building. It will be relocated to Welch Hall, near the spot where it hung for half a century, after construction work is completed in Welch. (A second copy, also purchased by Dr. Nurse, will be hung in his new office at the Royal Society in London.)

Lavoisier, a French nobleman, is best known for his discovery that matter is indestructible, a key tenet of chemistry and physics. He also assembled the first comprehensive list of chemical elements, helped construct the metric system and demonstrated the role of oxygen in rusting and respiration. He was a rigorous and meticulous experimenter who overturned many of the era's scientific beliefs but also made numerous enemies. He was branded a traitor and beheaded via guillotine during the French revolution.

"The portrait of Lavoisier and his wife has long been one my favorite works of art," says Dr. Nurse. "It is wonderful to be able to have this magnificent painting — even a reproduction — back on display at Rockefeller."



Chemists at work. Portrait of Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier and his wife, an eight by six foot oil painting.



Saying goodbye. At Ms. Nurse's going away party in December, Zoe Williams, Mateo Fabella and Alina Mertens-Schill, all from the CFC's Green Room, presented her with a book of photos.

PHOTO: ZACH VEILLEUX

Nurses donate to CFC

Anne Nurse, a former nursery school teacher in the U.K., formed her relationship with the university's Child and Family Center soon after arriving from London back in 2003.

"We were a little nervous when we heard that the new president's wife wanted to come visit the CFC," recalls Marjorie Goldsmith, the school's director at the time. "But Anne turned out to be amazing. She read and told stories to the kids, organized cooking projects, and accompanied us on outdoor adventures. She became close friends with many of the teachers and the kids."

During the seven years that the Nurses lived on campus, Ms. Nurse devoted hundreds of hours to the CFC, and was instrumental in helping set up the children's garden, located between Caspary Auditorium and Philosophers Garden. She spent many spring mornings working shoulder-to-shoulder with the preschoolers as they dug up worms, plucked weeds and ultimately harvested green beans, basil and tomatoes.

Although Ms. Nurse, who moved back to London last fall, is no longer able to regularly spend time at the CFC, her presence continues to be felt. In December, the Nurses announced they would donate \$15,000 to the CFC to help ensure that the community's children continue to have new opportunities to explore nature.

"Although Anne will be sorely missed, it's wonderful to be able to expand our outdoor education program thanks to the Nurses' generous gift," says Karen Booth, the center's director. "Anne shared her deep sense of wonder and delight in learning with the children, whether making gingerbread cookies, telling stories, going out to the library or dancing and singing in music class. She made a real difference in the children's lives."

MILESTONES

PROMOTIONS, AWARDS AND PERSONNEL NEWS

Awarded:

C. David Allis, the 2011 Lewis S. Rosenstiel Award for Distinguished Work in Basic Medical Science from Brandeis University. He shares the prize with Michael Grunstein, a professor of biological chemistry in the Gefen School of Medicine and the Molecular Biology Institute at UCLA, for establishing “the key molecular connections between histones, histone modifications and chromatin structure and their effect on the regulation of gene transcription.” The award will be presented at Brandeis on April 14, 2011. Dr. Allis is the Joy and Jack Fishman Professor and head of the Laboratory of Chromatin Biology and Epigenetics.

Attallah Kappas, the Lillian Wald Award from the Visiting Nurse Service of New York. Named in honor of the founder of the Visiting Nurse Service, the award recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to the health and welfare of others. Dr. Kappas, who is Sherman Fairchild Professor and Physician-in-Chief Emeritus of The Rockefeller University Hospital, is also a member of the board of directors of the Visiting Nurse Service. The award was presented November 11 at the Service’s 2010 benefit.

Anne Schaefer, a Young Investigator Award from the National Alliance for Research on Schizophrenia and Depression. NARSAD Young Investigators receive up to \$60,000 over two years to fund “proof of concept” research that scientists can leverage for additional grants. Dr. Schaefer, a senior research associate in the Laboratory of Molecular and Cellular Neuroscience, studies the epigenetic mechanisms of mood regulation.

Named:

Robert B. Darnell and **Victor Wilson**, fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the world’s largest general scientific society. Fellows of AAAS are elected by their peers in recognition of scientifically or socially distinguished efforts to advance science or its applications. Dr. Darnell is Robert and Harriet Heilbrunn Professor and head of the Laboratory of Molecular Neuro-oncology as well as a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator; Dr. Wilson is professor emeritus and head of the Laboratory of Neurophysiology.

Promoted (academic appointments):

Lance Langston, to research associate, O’Donnell Lab.

Alison North, to research associate professor, Office of Academic Affairs.

Can Pham, to research associate, Steller Lab.

Hired:

Hiroshi Abe, postdoctoral associate, Gilbert Lab.

Melissa Aillaud, research assistant, Casanova Lab.

Deborah Beck, research assistant, Vosshall Lab.

James Belarde, research assistant, Greengard Lab.

Annika Borrmann, foreign research intern, Sakmar Lab.

Regina Butler, clinical research nurse, Hospital Nursing Inpatient.

Joseph Cagno, manager, intellectual property, Technology Transfer.

Giuseppe Cataldo, research assistant, Pfaff Lab.

Lance Coleman, animal attendant, Comparative Bioscience Center.

Laura Corredor, animal health technician I, Comparative Bioscience Center.

Martin Elias Costa, visiting student, White and Levy Center for Mind Brain and Behavior.

Andre Eichert, postdoctoral associate, Blobel Lab.

Paola Emhardt, animal technician, Heintz Lab.

Linda Feighery, postdoctoral fellow, Mucida Lab.

Angelica Ferguson, research assistant, Hang Lab.

Brenna Flatley, research assistant, Rice Lab.

Maria Garcia-Fernandez, visiting fellow, Steller Lab.

Elizabeth Garner, postdoctoral associate, Smogorzewska Lab.

Maria Genander, postdoctoral fellow, Fuchs Lab.

Jeffrey Glassberg, visiting fellow, Collier Lab.

Sylvie Goldman, visiting fellow, Pfaff Lab.

Keith Gonzales, visiting fellow, McEwen Lab.

W. Vallen Graham, postdoctoral associate, Sakmar Lab.

Richard Hite, postdoctoral associate, MacKinnon Lab.

Hans-Heinrich Hoffmann, postdoctoral associate, Rice Lab.

Kevin Johnson, medical staff services coordinator, Hospital Regulatory Affairs.

Daniel Keenan, visiting professor, Pfaff Lab.

Guillaume Lafforgue, visiting student, Chua Lab.

Sonia Legister, nursing assistant, Hospital Nursing Inpatient.

Antonio Luz, research support assistant, High Throughput Screening Resource Center.

Gaby Maimon, assistant professor, Maimon Lab.

OBITUARY

Patricia Wills-Abrahams

by **BRETT NORMAN**

For 20 years, Patricia Wills-Abrahams guaranteed things ran smoothly at Rockefeller’s Office of Planning and Construction. As office manager, she handled financial statements and contacts with outside contractors and made sure the department’s staff was well provisioned. “In this office, we all do a little bit of everything, and she was really the jack of all trades,” said George Candler, associate vice president, who hired her as his assistant two decades ago. Ms. Wills-Abrahams passed away January 2.

Born June 19, 1940, and raised in Queens, Ms. Wills-Abrahams was a lifelong New Yorker. She had a sharp sense of humor, a direct manner of speaking and canny instincts for working with people. “She had really good judgment about people we dealt with — very clear insight,” Mr. Candler says. She was married to Alan Abrahams, an interior designer who was her second husband, and lived on 34th Street in Manhattan. She brought her own knack for design to her job. “She helped with all sorts of projects,” says Daria Moore, a project manager in the office who worked with Ms. Wills-Abrahams for almost nine years.

Ms. Wills-Abrahams had three daughters and a son from a previous marriage. The department, with a staff of five, “was up to date on all the stories about the families and the grandchildren,” Ms. Moore says. “She was a friend as well as a colleague, and we all miss her,” Mr. Candler says. The funeral service was private. Ms. Wills-Abrahams is survived by her husband, four children and three grandchildren.

Inbal Maniv, research assistant, Marraffini Lab.

Christopher Melnik, mechanic II, Plant Operations Power House.

Juanita Merritt, animal health technician I, Comparative Bioscience Center.

Yuko Nakajima, postdoctoral associate, Kapoor Lab.

Catherine Oikonomou, postdoctoral associate, Fred Cross Lab.

Robin Perez-Medina, data network technician, Information Technology.

Kinning Poon, postdoctoral associate, Leibowitz Lab.

Susan Powell, CBC supervisor, Comparative Bioscience Center.

Beili Quan, postdoctoral associate, Blobel Lab.

Robert Ralston, visiting scientist, Rice Lab.

Jose Ramirez, project assistant, Planning and Construction.

Jonathan Saragosti, postdoctoral associate, Leibler Lab.

Danae Erika Schulz, postdoctoral associate, Papavasiliou Lab.

Anna Serrano, research assistant, Fischetti Lab.

Theodoros Sklaviadis, member of the adjunct faculty, Papavasiliou Lab.

Katja Stehfest, visiting fellow, Sakmar Lab.

Milica Tesic Mark, research support specialist, Proteomics Resource Center.

Kaye Thomas, research support specialist, Bio-Imaging Resource Center.

Tao Tong, research support specialist, Bio-Imaging Resource Center.

Jordi Villa Fontes, visiting student, Smogorzewska Lab.

Melanie von Schimmelmann, postdoctoral associate, Greengard Lab.

Laura Votey, development assistant I, Development.

Sean Wallace, postdoctoral associate, Shaham Lab.

Daniel Weinstein, member of the adjunct faculty, Brivanlou Lab.

Louise Weston, postdoctoral associate, Nurse Lab.

Mireille Williams Sharp, development assistant I, Development.

Benjamin Winer, research assistant, Fischetti Lab.

Yingpu Yu, postdoctoral associate, Rice Lab.

This publication lists new hires, awards and promotions. Staff promotions are listed yearly; academic promotions and appointments are listed monthly.

Amy Falls (continued from page 1)

known as Andover) in Andover, Massachusetts, which has endowment assets of nearly \$800 million. As Phillips Academy’s inaugural CIO, Ms. Falls helped lead the effort to establish the Andover Investment Office — the first of its kind for a traditional independent secondary school. Since establishing that office in 2005, the endowment has generated top quartile results in each of the past four years. In 2010, Ms. Falls was chosen as a Rising Star of Foundations and Endowments by the publishers of *Institutional Investor* and praised for her ability “to find smaller managers that others miss.” Last year Ms. Falls and her team were nominated for Middle Market Endowment manager of the year.

“I am deeply honored to be joining the Rockefeller University team,” says Ms. Falls. “The vitally important advances in human health made possible by the ground-breaking research conducted here are truly thrilling. I am very excited to have the chance to contribute, even in a small way, to this powerful mission.”

Prior to Ms. Falls’s tenure as chief investment officer at Phillips, she was a managing director and the global fixed income strategist for Morgan Stanley,

where she was a member of the Fixed Income Management Committee and the firm’s Global Asset Allocation Committee. At Morgan Stanley, Ms. Falls was responsible for assessing investment trends across interest rate, foreign exchange and commodities markets globally. Prior to that position, Ms. Falls ran Morgan Stanley’s Emerging Markets Research group where she was an *Institutional Investor*-ranked analyst and was the global high yield strategist. During this time Ms. Falls helped the firm and its clients navigate through two substantial emerging market crises in 1994 and 1998.

Ms. Falls holds a bachelor’s degree in history from Georgetown University and a master’s degree in public policy from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Ms. Falls is vice president of the board and chair of the investment committee of the Brearley School and chairs the investment committee for the Diller Quail School of Music, both in New York.

Ms. Falls has taught and continues to teach on topics in international investing and risk assessment, most recently at the Athena Center for Leadership Studies at Barnard College.

Bent to the breaking point



Eighteen inches of wet, heavy snow didn’t just look pretty, it also stuck to tree branches, loading them with hundreds of extra pounds of dead weight. From the perspective of the university’s trees, the January 26 snowstorm was the worst in over a decade. Among the hardest hit were an American holly near the entrance to the Bronk building, and a blue atlas cedar on the southeast corner of Caspary Auditorium. Both will survive, but will need to be treated by an arborist in the spring.