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## **BenchMarks 2012, March 16**

The Rockefeller University

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# BENCHMARKS

THE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

FRIDAY, MARCH 16, 2012

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**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 26. Children between the ages of 8 and 12 who are accompanied by an adult are welcome. The registration deadline is Friday, April 13. For information or to register, contact HR at x8300 or [hr@rockefeller.edu](mailto:hr@rockefeller.edu).

**Convocation is June 14.** 41 students will receive Ph.Ds at this year’s Convocation. In addition honorary degrees will be awarded to James E. Darnell Jr., Vincent Astor Professor Emeritus and head of the Laboratory of Molecular Cell Biology at Rockefeller, and Joan Steitz, Sterling Professor of Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry and Yale School of Medicine and a Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator. The processional will be at 2:20 p.m.; the ceremony is at 2:30 p.m. in Caspary Auditorium. The campus reception will be on the Peggy Rockefeller Plaza following the ceremony. For more information, please contact Arianne Dowdell at x8073 or [adowdell@rockefeller.edu](mailto:adowdell@rockefeller.edu).

**A Scientific Symposium in Memory of Ralph M. Steinman** will be held on May 14 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. in Caspary Auditorium. Current and former members of the Steinman lab will discuss Dr. Steinman’s research. The program will be divided into four sessions:

*The Journal of Experimental Medicine* and Early Days  
Chair: Michel Nussenzweig

Dendritic Cell Development  
Chair: Kayo Inaba

Dendritic Cell Physiology  
Chair: Ira Mellman

Into the Clinic  
Chairs: Jacques Banchemareau and Sarah Schlesinger

Additional details can be found at [www.rockefeller.edu/steinman-symposium](http://www.rockefeller.edu/steinman-symposium).

Announcements for this page may be submitted to [zveilleux@rockefeller.edu](mailto:zveilleux@rockefeller.edu).

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

## New strategic plan to emphasize recruitment, hospital, infrastructure



by ZACH VEILLEUX

After a series of weekly meetings held throughout the fall and winter, the university’s strategic planning committee, chaired by President Marc Tessier-Lavigne, has identified several themes that will likely become central elements of the plan’s first draft. The final plan is to be presented to the Board of Trustees in June.

The planning process began with discussions of Rockefeller’s identity and mission, and the committee quickly reaffirmed the university’s long-standing commitment to fundamental science and its application to human biology, along with the more recent focus on fostering collaborations both internally and externally.

Although the committee is also looking into many aspects of the university’s operations, including its facilities, fundraising plans, graduate and postgraduate education programs, core resource centers and long-term finances, a major emphasis of the new plan will be on faculty recruitment, which is critical to sustaining the university’s scientific mission. “The strategic planning commit-

tee has strongly endorsed the open search for tenure-track faculty, which has been a great success and has led to numerous exceptional hires,” says committee member Cori Bargmann, head of the Laboratory of Neural Circuits and Behavior, who is also chair of this year’s faculty recruitment committee. “The search has taken advantage of the wisdom of the entire faculty, who have been involved in all stages of the process. Where there is room for improvement is in our ability to reach all of the best candidates across all fields, beyond those who respond to our ads.”

The committee has also addressed questions of how many faculty members the university should be recruiting annually, and what should be the mix between tenure-track and mid-career hires. “Rockefeller has been well served by mid-career hiring in the past, and it provides an opportunity to fill in demographic or scientific gaps and create new prospects for collaboration,” says Dr. Tessier-Lavigne. The committee is considering recommend-

ing that about a dozen tenure-track and perhaps half as many mid-career hires be made over an eight-year period.

To that end, the 2011–2012 open search for tenure-track faculty is already well under way (see “Faculty recruitment to benefit from \$10 million gift,” page 2), and a process for identifying potential mid-career hires will be created. Current faculty have already submitted around 140 names of distinguished scientists who might be recruitment targets. “We intend to consider these in small groups based on a variety of criteria including field of specialty, in order to generate a short list that can then be reviewed by a committee representing all areas of research,” says Dr. Tessier-Lavigne. Although a precise mechanism has not yet been identified, the strategic planning committee also recommends continuing to pursue exceptional individuals in an ad hoc way when the opportunity arises.

A second key theme of the strategic plan will be on strengthening the university’s

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## FINANCE

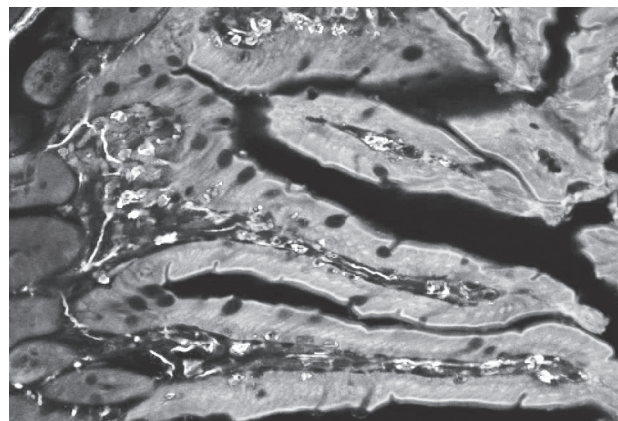
## \$15 million gift from Helmsley Trust to fund research on digestive diseases

by ZACH VEILLEUX

A new \$15 million gift — among the largest donation to the university since the

closure of the Campaign for Collaborative Science last June — will help fund research into digestive disorders, including metabolic diseases, cancers and infections.

The gift is the university’s first from the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust, a philanthropy established in 1999 by the titans of the New York real estate and hotel industries who were also generous benefactors of numerous charitable causes. The funds will establish a new center, to be known as the Center for Basic and Translational Research on Disorders of the Digestive



**Dollars for digestion.** A segment of small intestines from a mouse is infected with bacteria used as a model for human colitis. Colitis is one several digestive diseases under study at Rockefeller that will receive new funding from the Helmsley Trust.

System, which will support interdisciplinary basic research and foster collaborations among some 20 Rockefeller labs that study biological processes related to the digestive system. The center will also encourage clinically oriented studies centered in The Rockefeller University Hospital.

In addition to supporting laboratories working in the fields of immunology, microbiology, cancer biology and metabolic disease, the new center will award fellowships to students, postdoctoral researchers and physician-scientists, and will provide seed funding for early phase projects involving promising new paths to discovery. The center will also sponsor seminars, symposia and retreats, and provide support for the purchase of shared equipment.

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## BENCHMARKS

Marc Tessier-Lavigne, President  
Jane Rendall, Corporate Secretary  
Joe Bonner, Director of Communications  
Zach Veilleux, Executive Editor

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# Strategic plan (continued from page 1)

commitment to science-based medicine. “Increasingly biomedical research is moving from animal models to studies in humans, and our clinical facilities and long tradition of translational studies put us in a unique position to lead this transformation,” says Dr. Tessier-Lavigne. “The ultimate aim is to facilitate and accelerate the application of science to medicine by removing impediments to translation.”

In more concrete terms, this means creating new initiatives to support The Rockefeller University Hospital, lowering barriers to conducting clinical trials and securing funding to move research from the lab to the clinic. Currently or in the recent past, 33 of the university’s labs — nearly half — have or had at least one human subjects research protocol.

The committee has also suggested the creation of a new research center to be based on a broad but cohesive theme — genetic medicine — which would work to establish the hospital as a leader in translating the clinical implications of DNA sequence variants identified by whole genome sequencing. It is widely believed that this endeavor will in time have a transformative effect on medical practice.

“There’s currently a significant opportunity for a program in medical research that seeks to establish the clinical significance of DNA variants that cause human disease or that contribute to normal phenotypic variation,” says Jeffrey Friedman, head of the Laboratory of Molecular Genetics, who chairs a working group devoted to developing the concept. “The implications of this program would be pervasive as this objective is at the core of the concept of ‘personalized medicine’ and is likely to become a key element of many clinical research programs in the coming years.”

Objectives of the Center for Human Variation and Personalized Medicine would be to identify DNA variants that have large clinical effects, establish the distinct clinical features of the patients who carry them and understand how those patients respond differently to specific therapies.

“The new center would provide an intellectual framework for The Rockefeller University Hospital and the university itself, and could serve as a nidus for interactions among Rockefeller faculty and investigators at other New York institutions, including the New York Genome Center,” says Dr. Friedman.

Establishing such a center would require hiring new faculty devoted to the study of genetic disease and bioinformatics as well as enhancing some hospital capabilities.

“This not only has the potential to generate breakthrough knowledge about the origins of disease, but it is an opportunity to build our expertise in several important areas, including bioinformatics,” says Dr. Tessier-Lavigne. “It also takes advantage of the unique resources provided by the university’s research hospital, leverages significant existing strengths among the faculty and complements the genomic capabilities of the citywide genome center.”

Finally, the strategic planning committee is working to develop a master plan for the university’s buildings and infrastructure. Although the most pressing infrastructure issues have now been addressed with renovations to Smith, Flexner and Welch Halls, other facilities will soon need repair. “The development of a master plan will give us a global look at the need for repairs, renovations and renewal of all our buildings in the 5, 10, 20 and 100 year time frames, and give us the perspective to help make decisions about our infrastructure and invest wisely in capital projects,” says Dr. Tessier-Lavigne. The last time a master plan was created was in the late 1990s, under President Arnie Levine.

After evaluating bids from 13 architectural firms, the university’s administration chose Rafael Viñoly Architects to prepare the master plan, and formed a committee to work with them. In addition to Dr. Tessier-Lavigne and five faculty members — Dr. Bargmann, Dr. Friedman, Jeff Ravetch, Vanessa Ruta and Mike Young — the committee includes John Tooze, vice president for scientific and facility operations, Alex Kogan, associate vice president for plant operations, and George Candler, associate vice president for planning and construction. This committee has been reporting regularly to the strategic planning committee as a whole.

Rafael Viñoly Architects, a New York based firm with extensive experience working with educational and biomedical clients throughout the world, will document the current conditions and expected longevity of all the university’s structures, including laboratory spaces, support facilities and housing. They will also conduct an analysis of zoning regulations and air rights to determine where new buildings are feasible. Their final report, to be completed this summer, will include their findings as well as several proposals for how and where the university’s needs for different kinds of space can best be accommodated, and at what costs. Although the architects’ proposals may suggest the placement and size of new buildings, they will stop short

of proposing actual building designs.

“The architects’ instructions are to provide us with options at all levels, emphasizing modular forms that could be constructed in phases depending on our needs,” says Dr. Tessier-Lavigne. “We have asked them to be respectful of the unique and historic nature of our campus and of the spirit of the existing Dan Kiley designed landscape.”

A draft report, delivered to the committee in late January, weighed the costs of refurbishing the Bronk building against new phased construction to be located in any of several areas, including over the FDR Drive, where the university owns air rights.

“I want to emphasize that we are looking at this document not necessarily as a blueprint for what we will specifically

build in the coming years, but as a tool to help us understand our options,” says Dr. Tessier-Lavigne. “It can also help guide our decision-making about more pressing infrastructure issues such as those we are facing in Bronx and our graduate student residences.”

Although work from the master planning process is informing the strategic plan, it is in many ways an independent project, says Dr. Tessier-Lavigne, and it will continue even after the strategic plan is complete. In the shorter term, the committee is also exploring various ways in which the campus environment might be enhanced in a cost-effective way, increasing its appeal for potential graduate students and faculty recruits as well as current faculty and staff.

## Faculty recruitment to benefit from \$10 million gift

While efforts to refine the faculty recruitment process continue to be developed by the strategic planning committee, the search for the best and brightest new lab heads continues. A new gift to support faculty recruitment, received from the Robertson Foundation in November, will support that search by funding the establishment of up to eight new tenure track investigators over five years.

The Robertson gift, which is \$10 million, is structured as a challenge grant: it will fully fund the recruitment of the first, third, fifth and seventh new faculty member provided that the university is able to raise money for the second, fourth, sixth and eighth. It will pay up to \$2.5 million over three years toward startup costs for each researcher it funds.

The Robertson Foundation was established in 1996 by hedge fund manager Julian H. Robertson Jr., and his family, and makes grants in education, the environment, medical research and religion and spirituality. Mr. Robertson, chairman and chief executive officer of Tiger Management, has been a member of the university’s Board of Trustees since 2001.

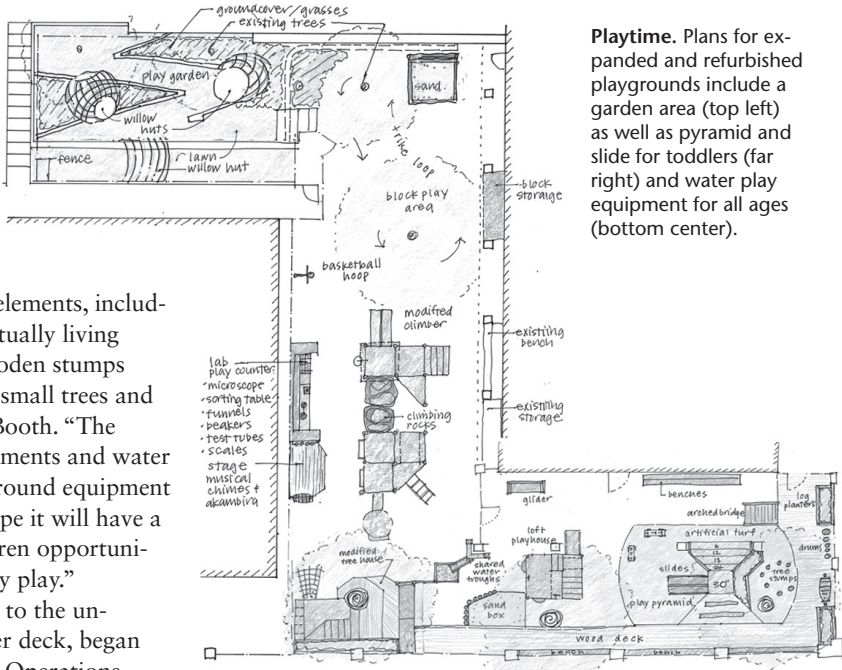
“Julian Robertson’s generous gift provides support specifically for tenure track scientists just starting out in their careers, when they are engaged in the

expensive process of outfitting and staffing their labs,” says Marc Tessier-Lavigne, the university’s president. “These young investigators, who are tackling some of the most challenging problems in science, contribute greatly to the university’s intellectual environment.”

“Julian’s timely gift comes just as we have depleted the funds that paid for our previous rounds of faculty recruitment,” says Russ Carson, chair of the university’s Board. “Thanks to his support, the university can pursue its ambitious faculty recruitment efforts and set up its newest faculty members for success.”

The university’s current cycle of faculty recruitment, begun in August, has yielded 508 applicants, of which 11 have been invited to campus for interviews — four women and seven men. As in past years, the search committee consists of subgroups in each of eight fields to identify qualified candidates who are then evaluated by the full committee. The search committee is chaired by Cori Bargmann, head of the Lulu and Anthony Wang Laboratory of Neural Circuits and Behavior, and co-chaired by Robert Darnell, head of the Laboratory of Molecular Neuro-Oncology; it consists of 20 additional members.

The university’s spring 2012 faculty search begins March 15.



**Playtime.** Plans for expanded and refurbished playgrounds include a garden area (top left) as well as pyramid and slide for toddlers (far right) and water play equipment for all ages (bottom center).

### CAMPUS NEWS

## CFC playgrounds to be renovated

by ZACH VEILLEUX

Three outdoor playgrounds used by the Child and Family Center’s 122 children are slated to be updated and slightly expanded over the coming months.

The infant and toddler playground located on the west side of Sophie Fricke Hall, used by children up to three years old, was in poor repair, with damaged rubber flooring and uneven surfaces that made running and scootering difficult. On the preschool playground, north of Sophie Fricke, the climber was missing a middle section that had been damaged and removed last year. The last time either space had been renovated was 1994.

“Although we are fortunate to have the entire campus for our children to explore, dedicated high-quality outdoor play areas are still important for kids as they develop gross motor skills and learn to socialize with each other,” says Karen Booth, the CFC’s director. “Our playgrounds, though functional, were badly in need of an update.”

Ms. Booth solicited bids from several design firms before choosing Studio MLA Architects of Brookline, Massachusetts, to work on the design. Over the course of several months beginning last August, Ms. Booth and designers from MLA explored options for reconfiguring and equipping the two playgrounds, as well as redesigning the Berlin Garden, an open play area between the Graduate Student Residence and the Bronk Laboratory that is used as a tri-cycle track and for sand and water play.

The final designs reflect feedback from CFC teachers and parents as well as ideas from Ms. Booth’s study of innovative playgrounds in New York City and throughout the northeast. They also include a modest expansion of the existing space, which will now extend north as far as the IT Pavilion’s rear entrance.

“The new designs incorporate natural elements, including features like willow huts, which are actually living plants grown over a mesh framework, wooden stumps that children can learn to balance on, and small trees and clusters of ornamental grasses,” says Ms. Booth. “The space will also feature fixed musical instruments and water features, as well as more traditional playground equipment like climbers, slides and sandboxes. We hope it will have a more ‘magical’ feel, and will give the children opportunities and inspiration for pretend and fantasy play.”

The first phase of construction, repairs to the underlying structure of the infant and toddler deck, began in January, and is being overseen by Plant Operations. (Knee-high plexiglass windows were created in the construction fencing that allow the kids to follow the progress day-to-day.) The infant and toddler areas will be finished this spring in time to enjoy the warming weather.

A timeline for the completion of the preschool playground and Berlin garden will be developed in the coming weeks based on the availability of funds.



# Norton Zinder, pioneering molecular geneticist, dies at 83

by JOSEPH BONNER

Norton D. Zinder, a geneticist and microbiologist whose research on the genetics of bacteria and on the properties of bacteriophages — viruses that infect bacteria — provided seminal information on the mechanisms of heredity, died February 3 after a long illness. He was 83.

Dr. Zinder was a John D. Rockefeller Jr. Professor Emeritus and spent his entire research career at Rockefeller.

“Norton was a founder of modern genetics,” says Michael Young, vice president for academic affairs and a close colleague of Dr. Zinder’s. “As Josh Lederberg’s first graduate student, he had a hand in many of the most basic developments connected to the birth of bacterial and bacteriophage genetics.”

Dr. Zinder’s first major discovery, transduction in bacteria, resulted from experiments performed in Dr. Lederberg’s lab, then at the University of Wisconsin. In 1949, the two began a series of investigations, based on the 1946 findings of Dr. Lederberg and Edward Tatum that two strains of the bacterium *Escherichia coli* could mate under certain conditions. Dr. Zinder and Dr. Lederberg attempted to induce mating in another species of bacterium, *Salmonella typhimurium*. The expected colonies of the new type of cells appeared, but further analysis revealed that they were the product not of sexual mating, but of a hitherto unknown process, now designated “transduction,” whereby bacteriophages act as carriers of genetic material from donor to recipient bacteria.

These experiments and the resulting methodology made transduction a powerful tool for the study of bacterial genetics and for such applied problems as antibiotic resistance and bacterial classification. Further research enabled Dr. Zinder and his colleagues to develop techniques for mating *Salmonella* which allow for the specific differentiation of donor (male) and recipient (female) bacteria.

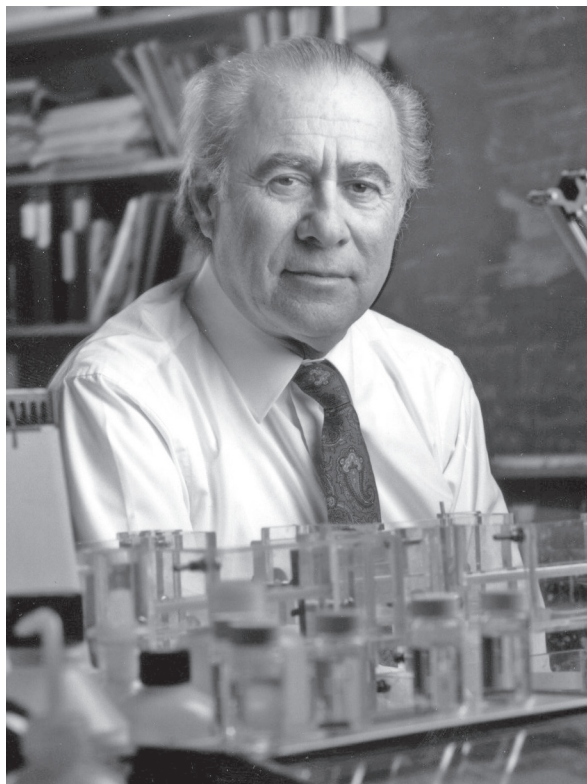
“Norton’s monumental discovery of transduction, and his proof that it involved a virus carrying foreign, bacterial genes between cells, provided a first look at nature’s own recombinant DNA,” says Dr. Young. “His later work on restriction enzymes, rules for protein synthesis, and his early, persuasive leadership in the human genome project, were also central to the growth of molecular biology.”

Upon moving to Rockefeller, Dr. Zinder further pursued his studies of transduction and confirmed that transduction is mediated by viral particles exchanging their own DNA for bacterial DNA, which they then carried. This discovery anticipated the use of recombinant DNA in the 1970s.

In 1960, Dr. Zinder and Timothy Loeb, then a graduate student in his laboratory, discovered seven new bacterial viruses specific for *E. coli* males, one of which proved to be the first known RNA-containing bacteriophages. This discovery of the RNA phages had great importance in studies of fundamental genetic processes because their unusually small size — smaller than the polio virus and with half its genetic material — made it possible to identify each submolecule of their genetic code.

Additional investigations of the RNA bacteriophages led Dr. Zinder and his laboratory group to the first demonstration, in 1962, that virus replication in the RNA phage is not dependent on DNA. It also provided further details of protein biosynthesis, including the finding that ribonucleic acid carries the blueprint for the manufacture of protein.

Dr. Zinder’s research on molecular and physiological genetics emphasized genetic recombination and the physical mapping of phage genomes by means of restriction enzymes that cleave genetic material. The tools he developed for this work continue to be used widely.



“Norton made many contributions because he kept experimenting, his mind could not stop,” says Jesse Ausubel, director of the Program for the Human Environment and a longtime friend of Dr. Zinder’s. “Everything had an almost frightening immediacy to him, the countless lectures and thesis presentations he loyally attended at Rockefeller, articles in *The New York Times*, a casual remark in a committee meeting, an experiment in his lab, a missed opportunity by the Mets or Knicks, a family trip to Italy or Israel. It was as if everything that had ever happened to him in his life had happened that day.”

Dr. Zinder was born in New York City on November 7, 1928. He graduated from Bronx High School of Science at the age of 15 and received an A.B. degree from Columbia University three years later. In 1952, he received his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin and joined The Rockefeller University — then known as The Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research — as an

assistant. He was appointed associate in 1956, associate professor in 1958, professor in 1964 and John D. Rockefeller Jr. Professor in 1977. From 1993 to 1995, he served as the university’s dean of graduate and post-graduate studies.

In addition to his research on molecular genetics, Dr. Zinder was an active spokesman on the responsibilities of scientists. In 1973 he chaired a committee that evaluated the National Cancer Institute’s nine-year-old Virus Cancer Program. The committee’s findings, known as the Zinder Report, resulted in a major reorganization of the program. One of the original members of the Committee on Recombinant DNA Molecules of the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences, he was among the 140 molecular biologists who gathered in Asilomar, California to develop a set of guidelines for the safe use recombinant DNA technology. In the early 1980s he chaired a committee of the National Academy of Sciences and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission which made recommendations on the technical means for disposal of the large U.S. stockpile of chemical weapons.

“Among his other contributions, Norton was an enthusiastic supporter of the human genome project, and without him it might have taken much longer to complete,” says Professor Emeritus Peter Model, who joined Dr. Zinder’s Laboratory of Genetics as a post-doctoral fellow in 1967 and became co-head of the lab in 1987. “Many scientists were wary of it for reasons ranging from fear that it would consume too much in the way of resources, both financial and human, and because it seemed to them mindless. So far the project and the infrastructure built around it have led to exciting science that promises to revolutionize both medicine and biology.”

Elected a member of the National Academy of Sciences in 1969, Dr. Zinder was a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Society of Biological Chemists, the Genetics Society of America, the American Society of Microbiology, the American Association for the Advancement of Science and Sigma Xi. He received the Eli Lilly Award in Microbiology in 1962, the United States Steel Foundation Award from the National Academy of Sciences in 1966, Columbia University’s Medal of Excellence 1969 and the Scientific Freedom and Responsibility award from the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1982.

He was married to the former Marilyn Estricher, who died in 2004. He is survived by his sons, Stephen and Michael, and five grandsons.

“I’ve come to understand and appreciate the enormous influence Norton has had on how I do my science,” says Jeffrey V. Ravetch, Theresa and Eugene M. Lang Professor and a former graduate student of Dr. Zinder’s. “Norton’s standards weren’t just high, they were nearly unattainable. The lesson was clear — it wasn’t good enough to be the best in your field, you had to create new fields and in so doing change the way everyone else understood the world.”

## NEW TRUSTEES

# Board elects Dinakar Singh, Susan Lyne

by JOSEPH BONNER

The university’s Board elected two new trustees at its fall meeting on November 16: Dinakar Singh and Susan Lyne. The board now numbers 42.

Mr. Singh is the founding partner of TPG-Axon Capital, a global investment firm. Through offices in New York, London, Hong Kong and Tokyo, TPG-Axon invests across global markets and asset classes. The firm was founded by Mr. Singh in late 2004 in partnership with Texas Pacific Group.

He was previously a partner at Goldman Sachs, where he was co-head of the Principal Strategies department. During his 14 years at Goldman Sachs, he served on a number of the firm’s key leadership committees, including the Securities Division Operating Committee, Risk Committee, Partnership Committee and Asia Management Committee.

Mr. Singh is the chairman of the board

of the Spinal Muscular Atrophy Foundation, whose mission is to accelerate the development of a treatment for Spinal Muscular Atrophy, the number one genetic killer of infants and toddlers. The foundation was established in 2003 by Mr. Singh and his wife, Loren Eng, who have a daughter with the disease. The Spinal Muscular Atrophy Foundation is the world’s leading funder of research into the disease, with more \$100 million spent on basic, translational and clinical research.

Mr. Singh serves on the Yale University Investment Committee and the Trilateral Commission. In addition to his seat on the Rockefeller University Board of Trustees, he is a member of the boards of the New York Public Library, Columbia University Medical Center and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratories.

“Rockefeller University is a crown jewel of American research — a unique collec-

tion of scientific intellect, harnessed together in an environment that maximizes creativity,” says Mr. Singh. “The result has been sustained leadership in finding solutions to pressing biomedical problems, and I am proud and honored to support the university in its continued mission.”

Ms. Lyne is chairman of Gilt Groupe, the e-commerce company that pioneered “flash sales” in the United States. Before joining Gilt, Ms. Lyne served from 2004 to 2008 as president and CEO of Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, where she led the company’s recovery and return to profitability. During her tenure at Martha Stewart she was named Publishing



Dinakar Singh (left) and Susan Lyne.



Executive of the Year by *Advertising Age* and received a Matrix Award from New York Women in Communications.

From 1996 to 2004, Ms. Lyne held various positions at the Walt Disney Company and ABC, including executive vice president

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of development and new business and executive vice president of movies and miniseries. In 2002 she was named president of ABC Entertainment, where she was responsible for the network’s primetime schedule and oversaw the development of shows such as *Desperate Housewives*, *Lost* and *Grey’s Anatomy*.

Ms. Lyne spent 15 years in the magazine industry before joining Disney. She was managing editor of *New Times* and *The Village Voice* and, in 1987, created and launched *Premiere Magazine*, where she served as editor-in-chief and publication director.

In addition to Gilt Groupe, Ms. Lyne is on the board of AOL, Inc. She is a trustee of The New School and a former trustee of The Posse Foundation and The Public Theater.

“I lost my husband to pancreatic cancer so I am deeply interested in how and why cancers grow, and in new approaches to treating the disease. Spending an afternoon with Titia de Lange in her laboratory, and hearing about Ralph Steinman’s work, convinced me that the most interesting, consequential research is happening here at Rockefeller University,” Ms. Lyne says.

# MILESTONES

## PROMOTIONS, AWARDS AND PERSONNEL NEWS

### Awarded:

**Elaine Fuchs**, the 2012 March of Dimes Prize in Developmental Biology. The prize, which Dr. Fuchs shares with Howard Green of Harvard Medical School, was established in 1996 as a tribute to the pioneering virologist Jonas Salk, and recognizes leaders in the field of developmental biology who offer hope for the prevention and treatments of some of the most serious birth defects and other human diseases. It consists of a \$250,000 award and a silver medal in the design of the Roosevelt dime. Dr. Fuchs is Rebecca C. Lancefield Professor and head of the Laboratory of Mammalian Cell Biology and Development.

**Tarun Kapoor**, the 2012 Irving Sigal Young Investigator Award from The Protein Society, in recognition of his work to dissect mechanisms of cell division. The award, which is sponsored by Merck Research Laboratories, recognizes a significant contribution to the study of proteins by a scientist who is in the early stages of an independent career. Past Rockefeller recipients include John Kuriyan in 1997 and Thomas Muir in 2005. Dr. Kapoor, Pels Family Professor and head of the Laboratory of Chemistry and Cell Biology, shares the award with Mei Hong of Iowa State University.

**Ralph E. Kleiner**, a Damon Runyon Fellowship from the Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation. The postdoctoral fellowships provide independent funding for innovative cancer research projects. Dr. Kleiner, a member of Dr. Kapoor’s laboratory, is one of 18 new Damon Runyon Fellows announced this winter.

**Gaby Maimon**, a Sloan Research Fellowship from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. Dr. Maimon, head of the Laboratory of Integrative Brain Function, is one of 126 researchers to receive a Sloan Fellowship this year.

**Johannes Scheid**, a Harold M. Weintraub Graduate Student Award from the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. Mr. Scheid is one of 13 awardees, all advanced graduate students at or near the completion of their studies in the biological sciences and chosen for the quality, originality and significance of their thesis research. Mr. Scheid, a member of Michel Nussenzweig’s Laboratory of Molecular Immunology, is the seventh Rockefeller student to receive this prestigious award in the last 10 years.

### Named:

**James E. Darnell Jr.**’s *RNA: Life’s Indispensable Molecule*, named one of 2011’s “25 Outstanding Academic Titles” by *Choice* magazine. *Choice* is the premier source for reviews of academic books, electronic media and Internet resources of interest to those in higher education.

### Published:

*The Vestibular System: A Sixth Sense*, by **Victor J. Wilson**. The book, published by Oxford University Press, is an integrative, comprehensive and innovative look at a sense that is often overlooked, covering the subject from

“Diseases that affect the digestive system are among the most prevalent health problems in the world today, but little is known about the fundamental causes and basic biology of these conditions,” says Marc Tessier-Lavigne, the university’s president. “The grant from the Helmsley Trust will allow us to bring together faculty for intensive interdisciplinary collaboration that will pave the way for new treatments for a broad range of disorders.” Conditions under study in the new center will include inflammatory bowel disorders such as Crohn’s disease and colitis; obesity and metabolic disease; celiac disease; and many types of cancer, notably GISTs (gastrointestinal stromal tumors) and colorectal, liver and pancreatic cancer.

“Funding provided by this gift will advance the work of scientists doing basic research related to the digestive system as well as those faculty members who want to accelerate the translation of their discoveries from the laboratory bench to the patient’s bedside through disease-focused studies in our hospital,” says Barry S. Collier, the university’s vice president for medical affairs and the

physician-in-chief of The Rockefeller University Hospital, who will serve as the center’s director. “We believe that the center will be a springboard for the development of new diagnostic tools, therapeutics and preventive measures for digestive disease.”

The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust aspires to improve lives by supporting effective nonprofits in health and medical research, social services, education and conservation. Established in 1999, it is administered by four trustees selected by Leona Helmsley and supports a diverse range of organizations. It has committed more than \$540 million in grants to charitable organizations since 2008.

“We are thrilled about this grant,” says John Codey, one of four trustees of the Helmsley Charitable Trust. “Some of the most interesting problems in science are found at the intersections of disciplines, and the best way to solve them is through collaboration. Rockefeller is the ideal environment for a concerted effort to understand the digestive system and find answers to some of the most critical health-related problems of the 21st century.”

### OBITUARY

## Dennis Ryan

Dennis Ryan, 63, a security guard who worked mostly day and evening shifts, died January 29. Born and raised in Hell’s Kitchen, Mr. Ryan had a career in the NYPD, from which he retired as a detective in 1986. He had been with Rockefeller since 2006.

“He had an outgoing personality and loved to spend time with his two grandchildren,” says Jim Rogers, director of Security. “His presence at Rockefeller will be sorely missed.”

- Israel Tojal Silva**, postdoctoral associate, Nussenzweig Lab.
- Linda Spatz**, visiting associate professor, Nussenzweig Lab.
- John Steele**, postdoctoral associate, Greengard Lab.
- Neal Steigbigel**, member of the adjunct faculty, Tomasz Lab.
- Nils Stenkilsson Hoff**, visiting student, Friedman Lab.
- Christin Stottmeister**, foreign research intern, Tuschl Lab.
- Dena Sweeney**, research assistant, Brivanlou Lab.
- Melinda Ternei**, laboratory technician, Brady Lab.
- Shih-Chieh Ti**, postdoctoral associate, Kapoor Lab.
- Steven Tittley**, animal attendant, Comparative Bioscience Center.
- Jason Vitale**, painter, Plant Operations Carpenter Shop.
- Olle Wahlen**, visiting student, Friedman Lab.
- Bregtje Wallach**, academic programs assistant, President’s Office.
- Qiao Wang**, postdoctoral associate, Nussenzweig Lab.
- Terance Ware**, receiving clerk, Purchasing.
- Richard Wing**, postdoctoral associate, Blobel Lab.
- Joelle Yudin**, administrative assistant, Leibler Lab.

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