

12-1-1995

NEWS AND NOTES 1995, VOL.6, NO.11

The Rockefeller University

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The Rockefeller University, "NEWS AND NOTES 1995, VOL.6, NO.11" (1995). *News And Notes 1995*. Book 27.
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Major human genetics center created at RU

Starr Foundation gives \$5 million to 4th interdisciplinary center on campus



Professor Jeffrey Friedman is the director of the Starr Center for Human Genetics.

With a \$5 million grant from The Starr Foundation, the university has established one of the largest centers for human genetic research in the United States.

The Starr Center for Human Genetics will provide RU scientists the facilities, highly trained staff, and equipment needed for genetic studies of hundreds of families and human biology research. These investigations should yield information crucial for a better understanding of the genetic aspects of such major medical disorders as heart disease, obesity, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, autoimmune diseases, mental illness, and cancer.

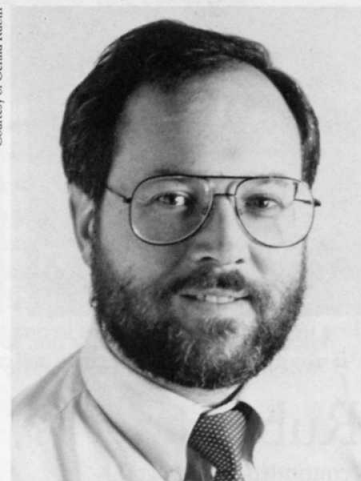
"The Starr Center for Human Genetics will allow us to improve on Rockefeller University's great strengths in biomedical research,

particularly molecular genetics, to tease apart the tangle of genetic factors that underlie many diseases," said Torsten N. Wiesel, president of the university. "We are enormously grateful to The Starr Foundation for its critical support of the center, which will conduct large-scale studies involving thousands of affected people. The results will be useful for the development of strategies for prevention and treatment."

In making the announcement, Wiesel noted that the center builds on the university's strong, 50-year heritage in genetics research that traces back to February 1944 when Oswald Avery, Colin MacLeod, and Maclyn McCarty published their findings that DNA carries genetic

See **Center**, page 3

Molecular geneticist to discuss fruit fly mapping



Gerald M. Rubin, a member of the National Academy of Sciences, directs the Berkeley *Drosophila* Genome Project at the University of California at Berkeley.

Gerald M. Rubin, John D. MacArthur Professor of Genetics at the University of California at Berkeley and an investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI), discusses "The *Drosophila* Genome Project—A Progress Report" at the Friday lecture today (Dec. 1).

Rubin directs the Berkeley *Drosophila* Genome Project, whose goal is to determine the complete sequencing of the 120 million base pairs of the fruit fly's genome and annotate this sequence with biologically important features. His Friday lecture will cover the progress of the project, which has completed more than 2.5 million base pairs of the sequence.

Research in Rubin's laboratory focuses on several genes that determine cell fate in the developing retina of the fruit fly. One of these genes, *sevenless*, is essential for the development of a single type of photoreceptor cell, called R7. Rubin and his colleagues isolated and characterized *sevenless* and showed that this gene encodes a transmembrane protein with a tyrosine kinase domain. Rubin will discuss this work in a separate lecture today at 11:00 A.M. in 305 Weiss.

See **Rubin**, page 2

Architect to speak on modernism

Internationally renowned architect Fumihiko Maki will give a lecture entitled, "Speaking for the Present: My Forty Years with Modernism" at Caspary Auditorium Thurs., Dec. 7. The retrospective lecture, part of the fall series of the Architectural League of New York, is hosted by the university.

Considered one of the world's greatest living modernists, Maki played an instrumental role in forming the "Metabolism" movement of the 1960s, which espoused that buildings should be dynamic and provide flexible frameworks to change with time. Recipient of numerous awards, including the

prestigious Pritzker Architecture Prize and Harvard's Prince of Wales Prize in 1993, Maki's major projects include the National Museum of Art in Kyoto, the Nippon Convention Center in Chiba, the Yerba Buena Gardens Visual Arts Center in San Francisco, the Tokyo Metropolitan Gymnasium, and the Hillside Project in Tokyo.

Maki studied at the University of Tokyo, the Cranbrook School of Environmental Design, and Harvard University, and frequently lectures at universities around the world. He has held academic appointments at Harvard, the University of Tokyo, and Washington University, and is currently a visiting professor at Keio University. He is principal of Maki & Associates, the firm he founded in 1965.

An architectural exhibit at the New York Museum of Modern Art, *Light Construction*, features one of Maki's works, the Salzburg Congress Center. The exhibit runs through Tues., Jan. 2, 1996.

Reservations for the lecture, which begins at 6:30 P.M., may be made by calling the Architectural League (753-1722). Members of the university community may call the Office of Public Affairs, x8967, to make reservations.

Chinese art and photography exhibit open to RU community at President's House



On display in the President's House are 19th and 20th century Chinese paintings from the Mirsky Collection and early views of the Peking Union Medical College. Members of the RU community who wish to visit the exhibit, open Wed., Dec. 6, 13, and 20 from 12 noon to 2:00 P.M., may sign up at the Founder's Hall security desk. Group size is limited due to the small display area.

2 Dirac plaque

2 Strang site

4 Lyons party

Pais, Dirac, Newton, and Hawking— together for a moment in a regal space time

Cieda Dirac-Wahrenburg



Great Britain's Royal Society commemorated physicist Paul Dirac Mon., Nov. 13 with a symposium and the installation of a plaque in Westminster Abbey. RU Professor Emeritus Abraham Pais gave a lecture, "Paul Dirac: Aspects of His Life and Work," at the meeting and then attended the dedication in Westminster Abbey, at which renowned mathematician Stephen Hawking made a brief presentation. The commemorative plaque is adjacent to the grave of Sir Isaac Newton. "Dirac and I were good personal friends," said Pais, shown here with a bust of Dirac in the lecture hall of the Royal Society in London. "It was a lovely day, full of pomp and circumstance, and very moving."

Rubin

(continued from page 1)

"Over the years, Gerry's lab has made many major contributions to our understanding of *Drosophila* eye development, one of the most recent being the impressive genetic dissection of the signal transduction pathway downstream of the sevenless receptor kinase," said Assistant Professor Ulrike Gaul, who introduces Rubin today. "Gerry's service to the *Drosophila* community in directing the genome project is invaluable. The project will revolutionize *Drosophila* research."

Rubin received a Ph.D. from Cambridge University in 1974, after working with Andrew Travers and Sydney Brenner at the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology. He was a Helen Hay Whitney Foundation Fellow in David S. Hogness's lab at the Stanford University School of Medicine from 1974 to 1976. In 1977 he joined the faculty of the Sidney Farber Cancer Institute at Harvard Medical School, which he left in 1980 to become a staff member at the Carnegie Institution of Washington. Rubin moved to the University of California at Berkeley in 1983 and was named MacArthur Professor. He became head of Berkeley's Division of Genetics in the Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology and an HHMI investigator in 1987. He has directed the *Drosophila* Genome Center since 1992.

Elected to the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in 1987, Rubin

received the 1985 NAS-U.S. Steel Foundation Award in Molecular Biology. Among his other awards and honors are the Passano Foundation Young Scientist Award, the Newcomb Cleveland Prize from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and the Howard Taylor Ricketts Award from the University of Chicago. He is a fellow of the AAAS and the American Academy of Microbiology.

The lecture will be held at 3:45 P.M. in Caspary Auditorium and preceded by tea at 3:15 P.M. in Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Lounge. All are welcome.

Bassoonist premieres jazz suite, reinterprets arias, rags, and classics in RU concert

by Associate Professor George Reeke

Daniel Smith, bassoon soloist, led an unusual RU Concerts program Wed., Nov. 15.

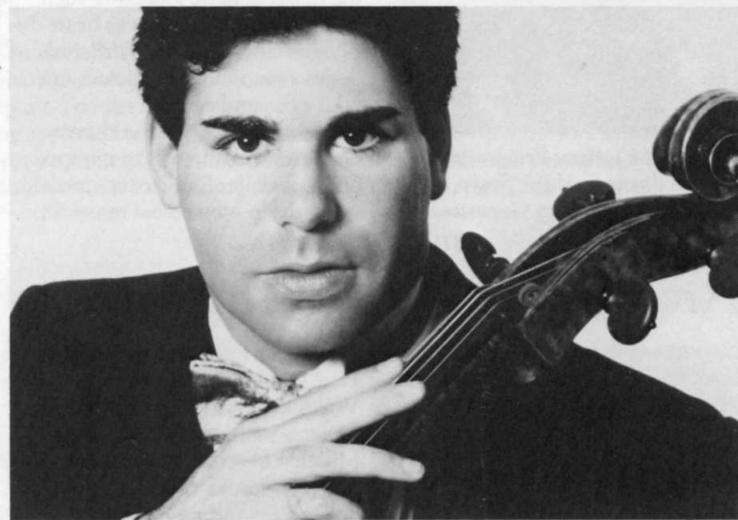
In the first half, he performed classical selections with Edward Polochick at the piano. As Smith explained, very few pieces have been written for bassoon solo, so he played mostly arrangements of well known pieces, ranging from *Londonderry Air* (dedicated by Smith to RU concert coordinator Cathy Rogers) to a movement from a Mozart violin sonata and a Scott Joplin rag. A sonata by William Hurlstone that actually was written for the bassoon successfully recalled turn-of-the-century scenes.

Of interest to opera lovers were a pair of arias in which the bassoon took the part of the singer: "Ebben?

Ne andrò lontana" from Catalani's *La Wally* (known to moviegoers who saw *Diva* and *Philadelphia*), and "Largo al factotum" from Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*. In the latter, the bassoon gave an excellent imitation of Figaro's confident patter.

In the second half, Smith was joined by jazz bassoonist Michael Rabinowitz, pianist Donald Johnston, bassist Pat O'Leary, and drummer Steve Johns in a group of jazz selections, starting with the world premiere of Steve Gray's *Jazz Suite for Bassoon*. With intricate ensemble work, the two bassoons alternated presenting new melodic fragments and imitating each other, to the delight of the audience. Familiar pieces rounded out the evening.

Steve J. Sherman



Cellist William De Rosa will bring his 1739 Montagnana cello to Caspary Auditorium for the next concert in the evening series, Wed., Jan. 17. Contact Cathy Rogers, concert coordinator, for ticket information, x8437.

New lease on site for Strang center

Greg Vincent



Michael Osborne (left), president of the Strang Cancer Prevention Center, and Jack Fishman (right), its director of research, were among the guests who joined Rockefeller President Torsten Wiesel at a reception Wed., Nov. 1 to celebrate the signing of the university's agreement to lease Rockefeller laboratory space to Strang's Research Laboratory.

News&Notes is published each Friday throughout the academic year by The Rockefeller University, 1230 York Avenue, New York, NY 10021. Phone: 212-327-8967.

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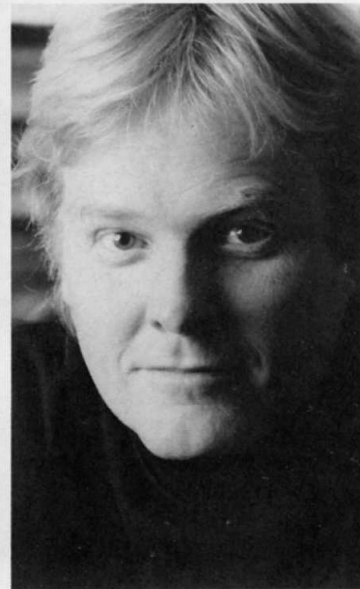
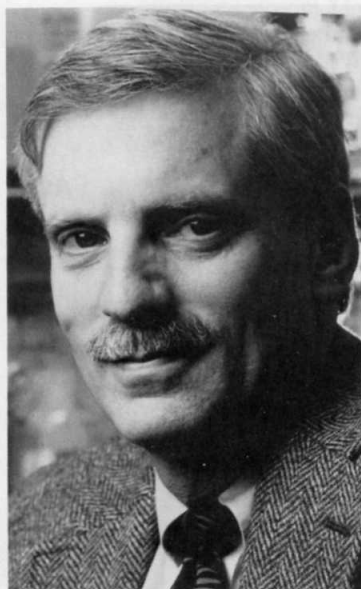
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Ideas and submissions can be sent interoffice (Box 68), by electronic mail (newsno), or by fax (212-327-7876).

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Center plans to collect data from hundreds of families



Rockefeller faculty in the center include (left to right) Jan L. Breslow, Frederick Henry Leonhardt Professor and senior physician, Rudolph L. Leibel, associate professor and physician, Markus Stoffel, assistant professor, and Michael W. Young, professor and HHMI investigator.

(continued from page 1)

information.

The new center, directed by Jeffrey M. Friedman, professor and associate investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI), includes staff and shared facilities to conduct clinical and laboratory studies, DNA banking, data analysis, and design of prevention techniques and treatments.

Researchers with diverse specialties gather

"Molecular biologists, neuroscientists, and biochemists will be among the many center members who exchange information, collaborate and conduct studies of diseases that affect millions of people the world over," Friedman said. In addition to Friedman, center members include Jan L. Breslow, Frederick Henry Leonhardt Professor and senior physician, Rudolph L. Leibel, associate professor and physician, Markus Stoffel, assistant professor, Michael W. Young, professor and HHMI investigator, and Jeffrey B. Ravetch, who will soon join the Rockefeller faculty as professor.

Center comprises clinical, genotyping, and informatics units

The center will have three units: a clinical unit, a genotyping unit, and an informatics unit. In the clinical unit, center staff, including a genetic counselor, will screen

families, referred by physicians, for eligibility in different studies. For most projects, 200 to 300 families will need to participate. The Rockefeller University Hospital will be one of the key resources for the clinical unit.

In the genotyping unit, center scientists will scan samples of patients' DNA to locate markers that identify specific genes or groups of genes associated with diseases. Comparison of selected genes from different members of the same family will allow investigators to distinguish specific versions of a gene associated with a disorder or that predisposes a person to a disease.

Additional center members in the informatics unit, including a genetic epidemiologist, will create mathematical models to interpret genetic and other data from the family studies. For example, Friedman explained, if many genes have minor influences on the development of a disorder, a model helps determine which genetic factors are strongest and may pinpoint the region of the chromosome housing the genes.

Starr gift adds to faculty development campaign

The Starr Foundation, founded in 1955 by Cornelius V. Starr, supports higher education programs as well as those involving culture, health, welfare, and social sciences. Starr began a small insurance

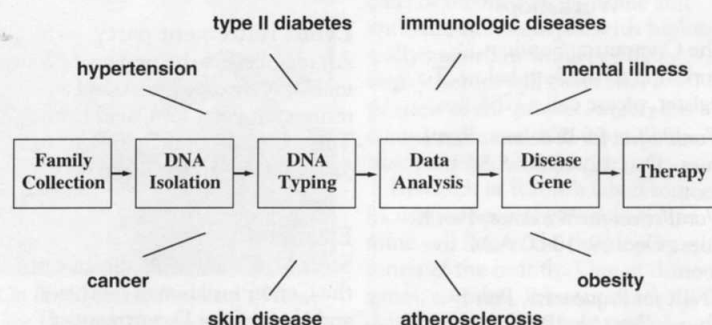
agency in Shanghai, China in 1919 and built the business into a billion-dollar, global insurance organization known as the American International Group, Inc. Today the foundation's assets total more than \$893 million.

According to Marnie Imhoff, vice president for development, the \$5 million grant counts toward the three-year Rockefeller Campaign for Faculty Development, which began in fiscal year 1995 with a goal of raising \$82 million by June 1997.

The campaign supports the Academic Plan, specifically recruit-

ment of 10 to 15 new faculty members, capital improvements, and new scientific initiatives, including the creation of multidisciplinary centers focusing on AIDS, human genetics, neuroscience, and physics and biology. To date, the campaign has received commitments of more than \$49 million, over half of the final goal. The three centers already established are the Center for Studies in Physics and Biology, the Zachary and Elizabeth M. Fisher Center for Research on Alzheimer's Disease, and The Neuroscience Center.

The Starr Center for Human Genetics



Friedman prepared a flow chart for laypeople specifying the eight diseases Starr Center scientists plan to study in the near future and outlining the steps scientists must take to develop genetic therapies for diseases. The center's clinical unit will be responsible for family collection, including the evaluation and selection of patients and biological samples for genetic studies. The genotyping unit will isolate and type DNA, while the informatics unit will analyze genetic data. Principal investigators will research disease genes and therapies.

Potpourri

Christian Steiner



Camellia Johnson, soprano (above), and Neal Goren, piano, perform spirituals and songs by Bach, Ricky Ian Gordon, Handel, Wagner, and Duprac at the Tri-Institutional Noon Recital today (Dec. 1). The concert, to be held at noon in Caspary Auditorium, is free. All are welcome.

Holiday bazaar

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, 331 East 70th Street, holds its annual holiday bazaar today (Dec. 1) from 11:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. Lunch is available from noon to 2:00 P.M., and a children's party will be held from 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. For further information call 744-5022, x355.

Friday film

Breathless, (France, 1960), directed by Jean-Luc Godard, will be shown today (Dec. 1) at 8:00 P.M. in Caspary Auditorium. The film, in French with English subtitles, fea-

tures Jean-Paul Belmondo as a small-time hood living on the edge. Admission is free.

OLR workshop

An on-line requisitioning workshop will be given Wed., Dec. 6 at 10:00 A.M. in Smith Hall A21. Call Toby Fishman, x8305, to register.

Health lecture

Andrew Lin, associate professor at the University of Alberta, Canada, discusses "Sunscreens to Moisturizers: Smart Skin Care from Summer to Winter" at the Sound Body/Sound Mind lecture Tues., Dec. 12 at noon in Caspary Auditorium.

Lyons retirement party

All members of the university community are invited to attend a retirement party for David Lyons Tues., Dec. 12 from 3:30 P.M. to 5:30 P.M. in Weiss Café.

Election

Scott M. Grundy, '68, director of the Center for Human Nutrition and chair of the Department of Clinical Nutrition at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, was elected to the Institute of Medicine last month. Also elected was Felton Earls, adjunct faculty member in the McEwen lab and director of the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods at the Harvard School of Public Health.

Holiday room discount

The Housing Office is offering a holiday special to all Rockefeller University faculty, students, and employees for the last three weekends in December and the first weekend in January. On Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays only, and subject to availability, rooms at Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Hall will be "two nights for the price of one." To make reservations, call x8500.

Grant deadlines

All applications due between Mon., Dec. 25 and Mon., Jan. 1 should be brought to the Office of Sponsored Programs Administration by Wed., Dec. 20 at 3:00 P.M. for review and signature. Voice mail messages left at x8054 during the holiday week will be promptly answered.

Children's School applications

The RU Children's School and Infant-Toddler Center are accepting applications for the academic year beginning September 1996 for children from 3 months to 5 years

old. Priority for members of the university community ends Wed., Jan. 31, 1996. For further information contact Marjorie Goldsmith, x8580.

Call for mentors

The Precollege Science Education Outreach Program needs volunteers to mentor teachers and students this summer, visit schools, and give workshops and lab tours. Anyone interested should contact Bonnie Kaiser, x7431 or e-mail bonnie.

Call for volunteers

The Sweat Shirt Shop needs volunteers to help in the shop Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M. Anyone interested may sign up in the Children's School.

Flu shots

Flu shots are available in the Employee Health Office, Hospital 118, from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. For further information contact Mary Brust or Aurea Tuason, x8414.

In memoriam Elizabeth A. Straight 1935-1995

Elizabeth A. Straight, fifth director of nursing at the Rockefeller University Hospital, died Fri., Nov. 17 at age 60 after an eight-year battle with cancer.

Straight joined the Hospital in 1960, serving as director of nursing from 1977 to 1990. Among many contributions, she prepared a history of nursing at the Hospital for its 75th anniversary in 1985. Her report noted:

"In addition to planning menus, preparing all meals, and baking the low sodium bread, the nurses washed dishes. There were no disposable supplies in 1910; all needles, syringes, instruments, and supplies were washed, sharpened, packaged, and sterilized by the nurses. The nurses had to be in at 10:00 P.M. unless they had special permission to be out until midnight to attend the theater. To go out the big gates on York Avenue without hat and gloves was frowned on.

"One 1920 nurse stated, 'It was gracious living and each day at 5:00 P.M. a maid turned down our beds and lighted a lamp. Really, it was my work, life, and home.' The nurse retired after 32 years of service."

Straight trained at St. Luke's Hospital in Greeley, Colo. and Marymount College. In 1983, she completed a master's degree in



nursing at the Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing. She served a year term as president of the National Association of Research Nurses and Dietitians.

Tara Cortes, chief nursing officer, said, "I met Liz first at Hunter College, where she was my student. I admired her respect for the traditions of nursing as well as her deep commitment to excellence in the most modern standards of care."

Memorial contributions may be made to the Elizabeth A. Straight Nurse's Education Fund at the Rockefeller University Hospital.

Computing Services Workshops

The Computing Services workshop schedule is below. To register, please call x7768.

WordPerfect for Windows, Part I: Tues., Dec. 12, 10:00 A.M. to noon;

WordPerfect for Windows, Part II: Tues., Dec. 19, 10:00 A.M. to noon;

UNIX for Sequencers, Part I: Thurs., Dec. 14, 10:00 A.M. to noon;

UNIX for Sequencers, Part II: Thurs., Dec. 21, 10:00 A.M. to noon;

Excel for Windows and Macintosh, Part I: Tues., Jan. 2, 10:00 A.M. to noon;

Excel for Windows and Macintosh, Part II: Tues., Jan. 9, 10:00 A.M. to noon.