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The Rockefeller University

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News and Notes

The Rockefeller University

May - June 1990

Volume 21, Number 5

The Once and Future Professor

President Lederberg will become University Professor Lederberg on July 1 following twelve years as this institution's chief executive. Before coming to the Rockefeller in 1978, Dr. Lederberg had spent more than half his life conducting biomedical research at the bench, in addition to serving as a professor at the University of Wisconsin for twelve years and as chairman of the Stanford University School of Medicine for twenty years. *News and Notes* recently spoke with Dr. Lederberg about his final days in office, his reflections on his tenure as Rockefeller president, and his plans for the future.

N&N: What university initiatives undertaken during your tenure are you most proud of?

JL: I've always viewed my most important task as that of a conservateur. The unique traditions of this institution—its emphasis on quality, on innovation, on the freedom to follow a wide variety of research directions—these traditions do not continue on their own. Without a lot of very careful tending, they are subject to erosion all the time. So I think my most important function has been keeping my finger in the dike, and I'm quite proud of the extent to which I've been able to do that. I'm proudest of having conserved the special identity of this place as it was in the first half of the century, when we were The Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research.

I'm also proud of all the professorial appointments and recruitment for which I was responsible. I wanted to take great care that we looked everywhere, both inside and outside the university, to always find the very best people. The University Fellows program, for example, in which Professors Jim Darnell and David Luck have been instrumental, was given priority support.

N&N: Do you see the new laboratory research building under construction as one of your major achievements?

JL: There is just no question that we're running out of space here at the university. The new building is a step we had to take if we are to stay competitive, take advantage of new research technologies, and offer good space for new people coming in.

N&N: You spent 35 years as a scientist at the



University President Lederberg (right) receives the National Medal of Science from President George Bush in a White House ceremony last October.

bench before becoming university president. How do you plan to jump back into basic research?

JL: With both feet! I've stayed in some reasonable contact with the continuing progress in molecular biology and bacterial genetics, but obviously I did not have the focus or time to follow the field in great depth. The last few months I've just made time, and it's reassured me more than ever that there are important things to do and that being away for a while may give me some advantage of distance and perspective.

The particular problem that I'm beginning to focus on—and I'm not suggesting that this is the last word on the matter—is the interconnection of what happens to DNA to control its expression and the accessibility of DNA for mutational or evolutionary change. That interconnection has been very largely neglected, and since I have a predilection for working on unpopular subjects, I thought that's almost enough reason to pursue it.

I also want to mention that I have missed my contact with undergraduate teaching and have made arrangements with the Biology

(see Lederberg, page 2)

Furlaud Elected Chairman Of The Board

"I am very enthusiastic about what the future holds for the university," comments Richard M. Furlaud, president of the Bristol-Myers Squibb Company and newly elected chairman of the university's board of trustees. David Rockefeller, who will continue as chairman of the Executive Committee of the board, comments that Mr. Furlaud's "dedication and experience will prove invaluable as he helps steer the university through the decade

(see Furlaud, page 4)

Baltimore Installation

The campus community is invited to attend a reception for David Baltimore following his installation ceremony as university president on September 13. Watch your mailboxes for announcements.



At left, during a luncheon following April's Rockefeller University Council meeting, David Rockefeller (right) presented Dr. Lederberg with a Steuben crystal vase commemorating his twelve years of service to the university.

Lederberg (continued from page 1)

Department at Columbia University whereby I can be involved, mostly one on one, with undergraduates on special research projects.

N&N: Do you see a markedly different research climate from when you became president twelve years ago?

JL: I think today there is a lot of new technology being used to address very important and what used to be too difficult questions. The real gold ring is in understanding embryogenesis. I think that has attracted an enormous focus, and the larger part of the application of these new technologies is being devoted there.

Of course, this new technology is changing both the way we approach research and what research we approach. It's a little bit curious that some time before we have a complete runout of the whole genome of *E.*

coli, which is about a few million base pairs, we now have a project looming to do the entire human genome, which is a thousandfold more complex. Ten or fifteen years ago that would have been regarded as just too ambitious.

N&N: You've commented that "the house of science will not maintain its foundation unless its work is articulated." Do you see science being articulated properly to the public? Why is this articulation so important?

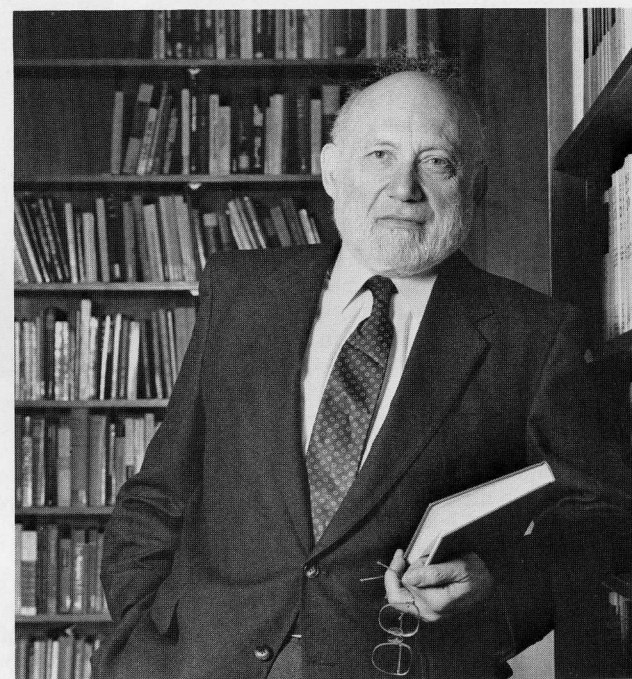
JL: I can't ask every scientist to drop what they're doing in order to explain it to the rest of world. There are some who have a knack for this, and their gift is also a responsibility to be involved in scientific exposition. However, it should be mentioned that the lack of secure funding for research has taken away a lot of the time some scientists would spend in communication with the public, with each other, and within interdisciplinary programs.

N&N: You helped build the first expert computer system, and you've said you hope to bring these systems and molecular biology together. How do you plan to approach this?

JL: I have in mind trying to look a little more closely at the conceptual structure of molecular biology. The belief structures of biology are more subtle than, say, chemistry. It is much more complex than how you put a collection of atoms with connecting links together. I call these doctrines the "half-truths we live and die by." We have to live by them because you can't be questioning every one of your assumptions all the time. However, every once in a while you've got to invert that to stay alive, and you must reexamine your premises. In the computer lingo that is called "truth maintenance." This is as much philosophy of science as it is computer application, and it's roughly the domain I'd like to dabble in.

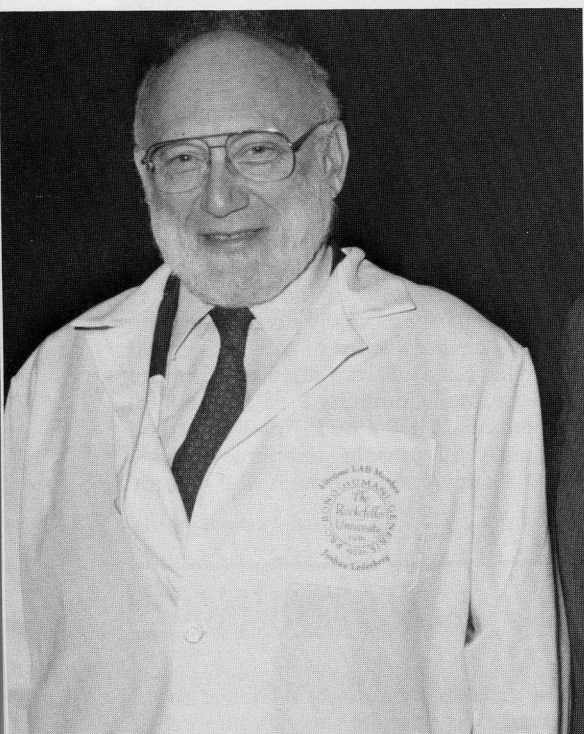
N&N: Do you have anything you'd like to say to the university in your last days as president?

JL: I've given all that I could to build this as a place for gifted people to do their most creative work. I hope that as a professor I can



Joshua Lederberg

get the benefit of the kind of institution that I devoted myself to nurturing while I was president. I intend to remain very actively involved, and I can't think of a better community of scholars for me to interact with in the future. May I also give thanks and credit to Rod Nichols, Executive Vice President, and all the others who have worked so hard to make the tasks of the president's office a congenial burden. □



Members of the Committee on Trusts and Estates presented Dr. Lederberg with a lab coat during a recent LAB (Lawyers, Accountants and Bankers) dinner.

Rockefeller Gives Its Regards to Broadway

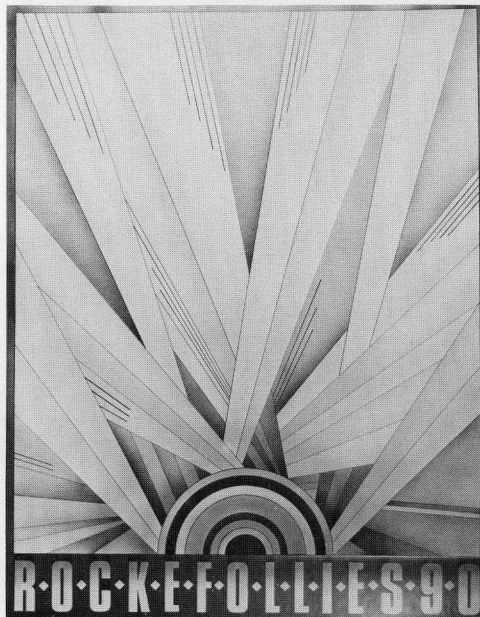
This year, members of the university ushered in spring with a little night music. The third annual ROCKEFOLLIES, held on the evening of March 22, consisted of ten acts of song, dance, poetry, and instrumental music. Paul Rosen, Senior Research Associate in the Electronics Laboratory, was Master of Ceremonies for the event.

ROCKEFOLLIES was conceived by Yvonne Holland of the Laboratory of Biophysics three years ago. After thirty years at the university she saw the need for "an informal, inclusive forum for all the performing artists at the university."

The 1990 ROCKEFOLLIES Committee members included Yvena Bouillon, Nina N. Casciano, Mary K. Cullen, Marie L. Grossi, David Heath, Yvonne Holland, Charles Laughery, Rita Nash and Albert Sargenti. Their hard work, a talented cast, and the technical assistance and moral support of various spouses and friends all contributed to a memorable and entertaining evening. This year's production was dedicated to the memories of Professors Paul A. Weiss and Alexander Mauro. □



Clockwise from top left, Erich Jarvis and Miriam Rivas perform the dramatic "Dance of the Hummingbird Prince"; Yvonne Holland swings her partner in an authentic Swedish folk dance; Christopher Min plays "The Kreutzer Sonata"; Julie Miwa on alto sax (left) performs with Leon Maleson on bass; the ROCKEFOLLIES 90 poster designed by Emilio Grossi; and Olaf Schneewind makes his violin dance to the notes of Bach.



News and Notes is published five times a year from October through July. Suggestions for articles are welcome and may be sent to *News and Notes*, Box 68, or call extension 8967. Photographs: Media Resources Service Center, except page 1, official White House photo; page 7, lower left and right, Larry Moberg; and page 8, Rockefeller Archive Center. © 1990 The Rockefeller University, New York, NY 10021-6399. Printed in the United States of America.

Honors and Awards

Professor **Robert G. Roeder** was awarded an honorary doctor of science degree from Wabash College, his alma mater, on May 13.

Professor **Norton D. Zinder** was awarded an honorary Doctor of Science degree from the University of Wisconsin in Madison on May 18.

Promotions

Philip N. Benfey, Plant Molecular Biology, to Assistant Professor.

Titia de Lange to Assistant Professor and University Fellow.

Hiroyoshi Fujita, Metabolism-Pharmacology, to Assistant Professor.

I-Hsiu Lee, Theoretical Physics, to Assistant Professor.

Svetlana Mojsov, Cellular Physiology and Immunology, to Assistant Professor.

Pamela B. Moore, Laboratory Animal Research Center, to Senior Research Associate and Director of Diagnostic Laboratory.

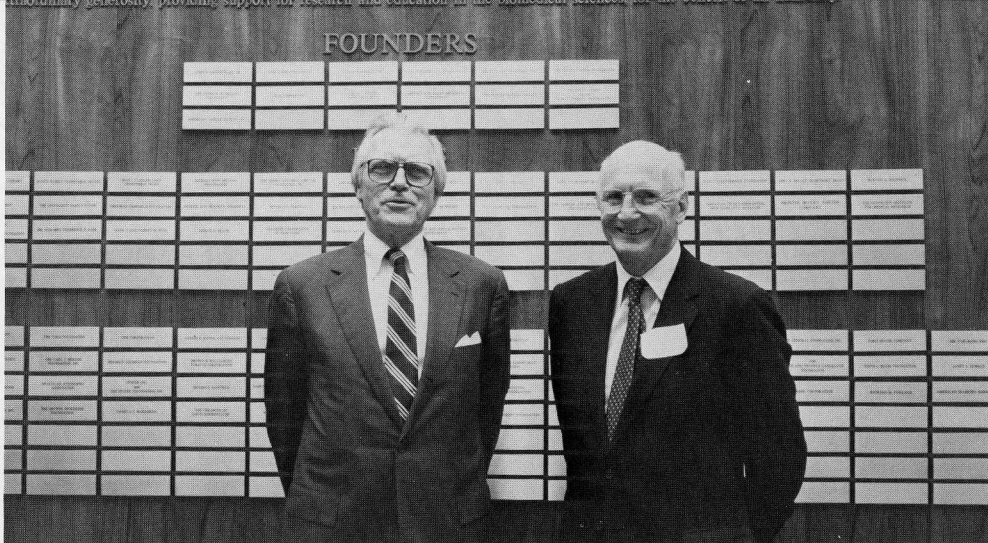
Cecille G. Unson, Biochemistry, to Senior Research Associate.

Billy J. Yates, Neurophysiology, to Assistant Professor.

Education = Antidote



Chief Pharmacist Philip Manning describes how to respond to poison emergencies to an audience of parents and toddlers from the Rockefeller Children's School. "Accidental poisoning is a significant public health problem," states Mr. Manning. "Since young children represent the highest risk group, I believe that efforts aimed at educating parents of these children about poison prevention are particularly appropriate." The lecture was one of a series delivered as part of Poison Prevention Week during the third week of March.



Trustee Alexander D. Forger (left) and Richard M. Furlaud, newly elected chairman of the board, admire the donor plaque wall outside Caspary Auditorium after a meeting of the Rockefeller University Council on April 4. This meeting focused on the University Fellows Program and marked Dr. Lederberg's last address to this group as university president.

Furlaud (continued from page 1)

ahead."

A university trustee since 1976, Mr. Furlaud begins his term as chairman July 1. "The Rockefeller has tremendous human resources—wonderful, committed people—as well as substantial financial resources and an excellent reputation," he notes. "These are very exciting times for science, and I feel the university will play an important role in the future of biomedical research."

Mr. Furlaud will succeed William O. Baker, retired chairman of the board of Bell Laboratories, who, upon reaching the university's mandatory retirement age for trustees this year, completes a decade of service as chairman of the university's board

of trustees.

Mr. Furlaud recently served with Dr. Baker as co-chairman of the Presidential Search Committee, and he is presently chairman of the board's Budget Committee. Regarding the university's fiscal health, he comments, "The university is healthy, though it is going to need additional funding in the years to come. Presently, research costs are increasing at double the rate of inflation. We have a substantial endowment, but we'll need to take steps to increase revenues by increasing both the endowment and private support, as well as government grants."

Mr. Furlaud is optimistic that the coming leadership of Dr. Baltimore will "be effective at coalescing the various constituent parts of the university," and he feels the board will play a vital role in this effort. "The Rockefeller has been very successful at harnessing biomedical science to help people," he comments. "This is a critical institution making critical contributions at a critical moment in history." □

New Trustee Joins Board

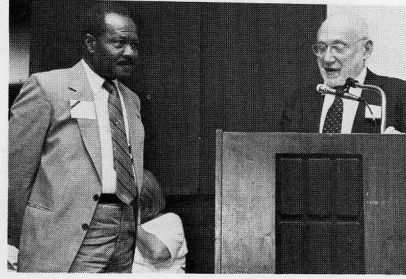
In addition to a new chairman of the board, a new trustee, John S. Reed of Greenwich, CT, was elected at the January meeting. The 51-year-old Mr. Reed is Chairman of the Board and CEO of Citicorp.

Among his affiliations, Mr. Reed is a former chairman of the Russell Sage Foundation, a member of the Board of Overseers and Board of Managers at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, chairman of the New York Blood Center, and Director of the Greater New York Fund, United Way. He is a member of the Americas Society and the Mexican Advisory Committee, a committee of 15 American bankers which negotiates for banks who have made loans to Mexico. □

Anniversary/Retirement Dinner



Bruce Merrifield



Harold A. Taitt (left) with Dr. Lederberg



Sandi Walsh (left) and Lila J. Magie



Ludwig Senden



Patricia J. Macklin



Henry N. Wood and his wife, Esther



Carol R. Valli

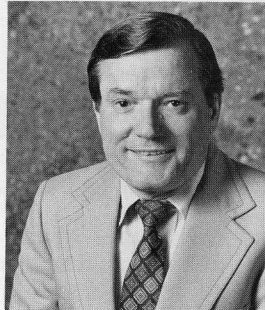
At the Anniversary/Retirement Dinner this year, the university recognized three employees celebrating forty years at the Rockefeller, nine celebrating twenty-five years, and sixteen retirees. The May 14 festivity included dinner, speech-making, and gift-giving on the 17th floor of the Tower Building.

In 1950, when Lila J. Magie, Bruce Merrifield, and Igor Tamm began working at the Rockefeller, President Truman was in the White House and North Korea invaded the South to begin the Korean War. During the time since, these three members of the university each devoted four decades of dedicated service to the university.

Employees giving a quarter century of their lives to further the university's mission

were also honored at the event. This year's twenty-five-year celebrants included Anthony Cerami, Nicola N. Khuri, Patricia J. Macklin, Pearlina Marshall, Miklós Müller, Ludwig Senden, Ellonia Simpkins, Carol R. Valli, and Huguette A. Viguet.

Finally, Dr. Lederberg expressed the university's gratitude and affection to sixteen people who are retiring from the university: Mary E. Collins, Marie A. Conroy, Anna Mary Elskus, W. Paul Hurlbut, James S. Murphy, John J. O'Donnell, Mario Perz, Thomas J. Ralin, Carlo Renaud, Martin A. Rizack, Oswald O. Robinson, Robert L. Schoenfeld, Joseph E. Simpson, Harold A. Taitt, Marika A. Tershakovec, and Henry N. Wood. □



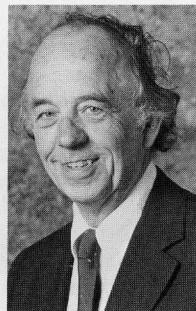
Thomas J. Ralin



Marika A. Tershakovec



Pearlina Marshall



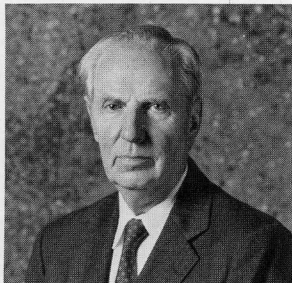
W. Paul Hurlbut



Robert L. Schoenfeld and his fiancée, Lami Stechel



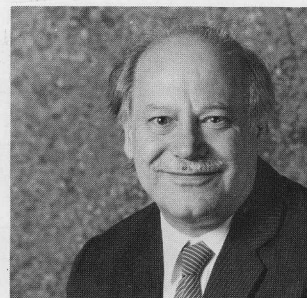
Huguette A. Viguet



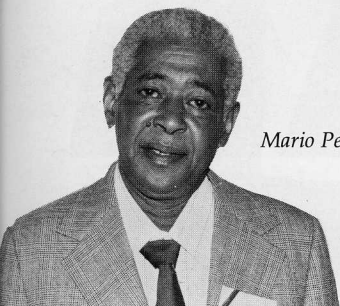
Igor Tamm



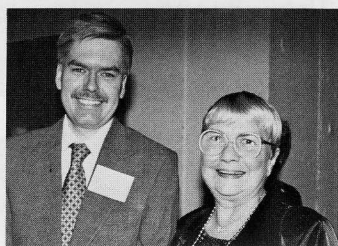
Nicola N. Khuri and his wife, Elizabeth



Miklós Müller



Mario Perz



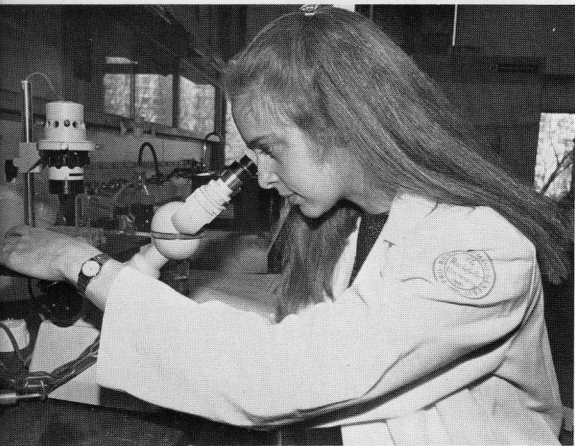
Ellonia Simpkins (right) and her daughter, Ann



Assailing Psoriasis

Psoriasis is a chronic and debilitating skin condition that afflicts more than four million Americans. However, it is a disease that may one day be controlled because of research now being conducted in the Laboratory of Investigative Dermatology by Associate Professor Alice B. Gottlieb and Research Associate Rachel Grossman.

Psoriasis is caused by an immunological defect characterized by inflammation and cell overgrowth. "I think a large segment of the population is predisposed to psoriasis, but we never get the disease until after some



Associate Professor Alice B. Gottlieb

other event occurs—exposure to certain drugs, chemicals, viruses, skin injury, or when an immunomodulating event like AIDS takes place," says Dr. Grossman.

During the course of this immune over-response, cells secrete substances which trigger division. Subsequently, the dividing cells make additional secretions which further arouse the inflammatory response, creating a positive feedback cycle.

With this in mind, Drs. Gottlieb and Grossman began searching for the substance that could affect both inflammation and overgrowth of skin cells. They wondered what substance is associated with a host response to injury and infection. What substance can be made by white cells as well as skin cells?

The two researchers found their answer in a cell growth factor called interleukin-6 (IL-6). IL-6 is manufactured by a variety of cells in response to tissue injury and infection and has properties which can activate the immune system, causing inflammatory reactions. Additionally, IL-6 can cause skin cell proliferation.

The researchers obtained psoriatic plaques, or involved areas of skin, from 35 psoriatic patients treated at The Rockefeller University Hospital. By monitoring IL-6 production, they showed that these plaques contained considerably more IL-6 than unaffected skin from the same patient and skin from a control group of individuals.

This finding is of therapeutic importance because once the role of IL-6 is known, inhibiting agents can be developed and used



Research Associate Rachel Grossman

as more long-lasting treatments. The researchers are also working to put together data to determine if IL-6 blood levels correlate with disease severity, psoriasis subtype, the presence of psoriatic arthritis, and the degree of response to different types of existing treatments.

Drs. Gottlieb and Grossman stress the important role of The Rockefeller University Hospital in their work. "We had the ability to study patients for prolonged periods of time and to collect research biopsies and plasma samples before, during, and after treatment," says Dr. Gottlieb. "This is not possible at a regular hospital where psoriasis patients may not be eligible for admission or, if they are, may not be allowed to stay for more than a week." □

Lorente de No Dies of Cancer

Professor Emeritus Rafael Lorente de No, a neuroanatomist and neurophysiologist at the university for over three decades, passed away on April 2 in Tucson, Arizona, following a prolonged struggle with cancer. He was 87 years old.

Born in Spain in 1902, Lorente developed an early interest in histology, publishing his first scientific paper at the age of seventeen. He earned his M.D. from the University of Madrid and worked at the famed Cajal Institute in Spain and at the University of Uppsala in Sweden before immigrating to the U.S. in 1931 to work at the Central Institute for the Deaf in St. Louis. In 1936 he came to the Rockefeller, where he served as Professor of Physiology from 1941 until he retired in 1970. He was a visiting professor at UCLA from 1972 to 1983.

Dr. Lorente, one of the first researchers to apply the scientific method to the study of the central nervous system, conducted research into the electrical and chemical basis of nerve functions. Working with Professor Hiroshi Asanuma, he investigated the intricacies of the cerebral cortex in the brain. At a 1963 meeting of the National Academy of Sciences, he introduced experimental evidence that every portion of a nerve fiber transmits electrical nerve impulses, a finding that is still debated. His research has been seminal to advances in otolaryngology (studies of the ear, nose, and throat) and to studies of the nervous system in general.

Dr. Lorente is survived by his daughter, Edith Lorente de Rham, and his grandson, William de Rham. □

Trager Turns 80

Professor Emeritus William Trager (*below*), celebrated his eightieth birthday with former students, colleagues, and family on March 16 in the Tower Building. More than 100 people gathered to honor Dr. Trager on this special occasion, noting his more than 50 years at the university researching parasitic protozoa.



Simpson Jets to Jamaica

Joseph Simpson (*above, left*) retires as Security Guard of The Rockefeller University after sixteen years of exemplary service. A party was held in his honor March 28 and was attended by his colleagues and many friends at the university. Mr. Joseph Nekola (*right*), Director of Security, presented Mr. Simpson with a check for a round-trip ticket to Jamaica, his homeland.





COMMON CROW

Birds Everyday: Niches for Campus Naturalists

Birds that neighbor in New York City are hardy, adaptable, and clever. Like the city's people, city birds must creatively adapt to harsh, noisy, insecure, and unnatural habitats. Some 175 species of birds typically pass through Central Park each year. A few stay on. Our increasingly bosky campus attracts more birds and new birds.

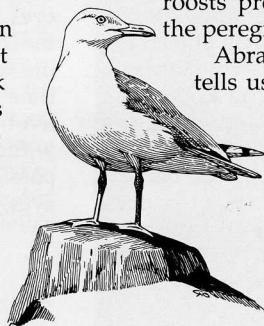
Campus birds are now in full song, sparkling plumage, and tending to their nests. Secluded gardens and building recesses, nearby towers, the East River, and skies above are good habitats for nearly two dozen avian neighbors. Get acquainted with these birds as they go about their daily lives. Linger, look, and listen.

Our most stunning and looked-for bird is the peregrine falcon. Nearly extinct twenty years ago due to the pesticide DDT, the rare peregrine is making scattered comebacks. A special joy of peregrine watching comes from seeing them take steep 100 mph power dives to snatch food, especially pigeons, from the air.

Our handsome pair remain hidden and protected on an airy perch next door at New York Hospital. Last year's fledglings were quite visible when a male fell down their smokestack, and a female tumbled into a Rockefeller men's room. Unhurt, they were returned to the nest. Toward the end of June, look in unexpected places for this year's fluffy, unsteady youngsters as they learn to fly and dive.

In late summer, starlings

can be seen and heard in their sycamore tree roosts near the university's parking lots. Their raucous chatter can offend some, while others find it inspirational. Mozart, for example, composed a graveside poem for his pet starling who could whistle a fragment from Piano Concerto No. 17 in G major. Undoubtedly, we have much to discover about the sociable nature and vocal repertoire of these birds. Jeffrey Cynx, Assistant Professor in the Nottebohm Lab, notes that adult winter starlings have black beaks and white speckled coats. Spring and summer starlings have uniforms of iridescent black with yellow beaks. First-year starlings appear dun-colored. Rachel Carson, author of *Silent Spring*, dubbed starlings "commuters in reverse," sleeping in cities and working in suburbs. Note, too, how the roosts provide well-filled larders for the peregrines.



HERRING GULL

Abraham Lincoln's favorite song tells us to "Listen to the Mockingbird." One cheerful, engaging minstrel, grayish and slimmer than a robin, stands guard near our main entrance. When flying, its white wing patches and outer tail feathers are visible. This is what Biomedical Fellow Anne Hermanowski-Vosatka of the Cohn-

Steinman Lab sees when the bird attacks her dog, Snug. The bird is an aggressive defender of its holly-tree territory and nest site, and takes sneak dives onto the head of any animal that gets too close. Famed for its rapturous singing and mimicking of other birds, the mockingbird's song cycles are delightful accompaniments to an alfresco lunch.

Our most ubiquitous species, the house (or English) sparrow, is the tough bird on the block. Belligerent, boisterous, and prolific, the males, with signature black bibs, constantly cheep and squabble over females and territory. They also manage to get entangled with all their bird neighbors.

Gregarious colonies of grackles nest in the ivy-covered walls of Founder's Hall and

feed their young on the circular flower beds below. These sleek, blue-black birds have rusty, creaking voices. On a squawk's notice, if their nests are besieged, they will mob the invaders, typically house sparrows.

In the sycamores, the red-breasted robins sing short carols. Compare the black-headed males with the brown-headed females.

Nearby are brownish house finches. The males look like they were dipped in strawberry juice and sing, often nonstop and in flight, an unctuous, variable warbling song. From the lawns and roof edges, you can hear the sorrowful who-whoing of the soft-brown mourning dove or the muffled coos of its larger blue-black cousin the rock dove, or pigeon.



MOURNING DOVE

Do not be surprised by hardy caw-caws from the few boisterous crows taking regular patrols through our tree tops. Along the East River, watch the black, snake-necked double crested cormorant swimming and diving close to shore, while, above, you can hear the calls of laughing, ring bill, and herring gulls.

American naturalist Henry Thoreau advised, "You need only sit quietly long enough in some attractive place" until its inhabitants show themselves. Even in our urban setting, you do not need a leader, a group tour, expert identification skills, or binoculars. With patience, you can discover where our birds live, what they eat, and how they interact with other birds and animals. You may find their nests, see courtship and territorial defense, and hear lovely songs and calls. Every niche holds adventure. □



ROCK DOVE

—by Carol L. Moberg

PEREGRINE NEST IS LOCATED ON THIS NEW YORK HOSPITAL PARAPET. ADULT PEREGRINES CAN BE SEEN FROM OUR CAMPUS ESPLANADE.

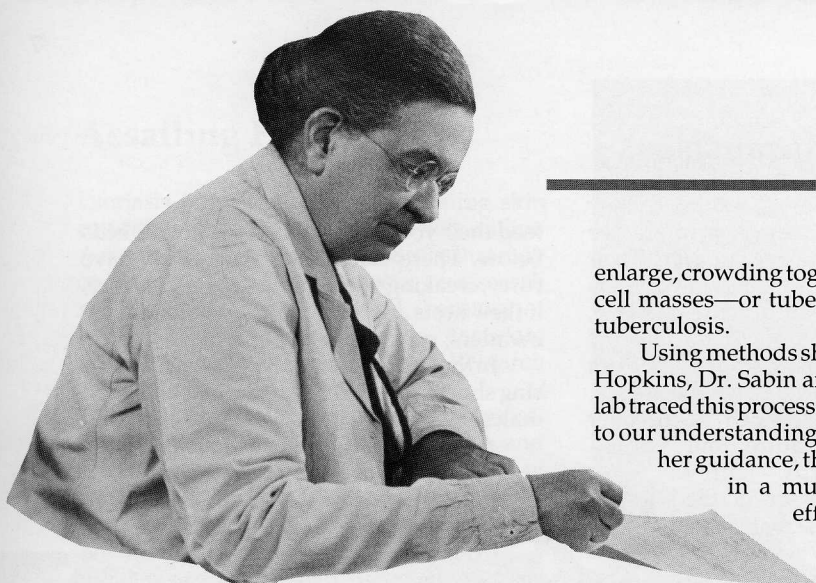
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PEREGRINE FALCON (PHOTOGRAPHED IN CAPE MAY, NJ)



Rockefeller Retrospective

Woman of Firsts



It came as no surprise when, in 1925, Simon Flexner, director of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, invited Dr. Florence Sabin to become the first woman faculty member. She had already made numerous discoveries regarding the brain and the lymphatic system, and had developed techniques for studying living cells at Johns Hopkins Medical School.

At Rockefeller, Dr. Sabin continued her research on blood cells, concentrating on their role in tuberculosis, a significant health threat to Americans in the early 1920s. Tuberculosis is caused by *mycobacterium tuberculosis*. When masses of these bacteria lodge in the tissues, they create pockets of inflammation which attract monocytes, or large white blood cells. These monocytes ingest the bacilli and

enlarge, crowding together to form the lumpy cell masses—or tubercles—characteristic of tuberculosis.

Using methods she had invented at Johns Hopkins, Dr. Sabin and her associates in the lab traced this process in detail, greatly adding to our understanding of tuberculosis. Under her guidance, the institute participated in a multi-institution research effort, sponsored by the National Tuberculosis Association, to discover which chemical substances formed by the bacteria cause cellular damage and trigger the immune response.

Directing a lab of young scientists, Dr. Sabin's energy, enthusiasm, and intellectual integrity inspired a profound respect and appreciation for the scientific method. "The great joy and pleasure she derived from her work was like a contagion among those around her so that all were stimulated in much the same manner that she was," remarked one of her laboratory members.

Dr. Sabin remained at the Rockefeller until 1938, when she became emeritus and returned to her home state of Colorado. However, at an age when many are content to settle down, Dr. Sabin took on a post-retirement career as a public health officer in

Denver. In this position, she earned a place as one of that state's honored daughters. In fact, following her death in 1953, Colorado declared Dr. Sabin one of its two foremost citizens and submitted a statue of her—as she looked when working at the Rockefeller—to the Statuary Hall in Washington, DC.

Throughout her scientific career Dr. Sabin was concerned with equal rights for women. Her success as a researcher, teacher, public health official, and civil rights advocate provided an example for many reform-minded women of the era. Indeed, she was a woman of "firsts"—the first woman appointed professor at Johns Hopkins Medical School, the first woman to become a full faculty member at the Rockefeller, the first woman president of the American Association of Anatomists, and the first woman to become a life member of the National Academy of Sciences.

Dr. Sabin, with her kindly face, keen eyes, and warm smile had visions beyond the confines of her laboratory. The aim of her life was best expressed in her own words: "A time will come when men and women will live out their allotted span quietly, peacefully, without illness, free from pain, until they pass gently, as a tired child closes sleepy eyes, from this world to the next." □

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