

John Crossman (BS '62)



THE GIFT OF OPPORTUNITY

For John Crossman (BS '62), a scholarship made the difference that allowed him to attend Caltech. His education as an engineering major went beyond the realm of the slide rule. He gained a framework for approaching problems—and, really, for approaching life itself. What Crossman learned helped set his course for a career adventure that carried him half a world away from the Boston-area neighborhood of his youth.



CALTECH LEGACIES

Larry Curfman (BS '60) arrived at Caltech by train from his native Wichita, Kansas, at only 16 years old. As an undergraduate, he studied chemistry (although his housemates at Ricketts remembered him for his jazzy piano stylings). His next stop after graduation was Harvard Law School—a surprising choice for a chemistry alum until you consider Curfman's reputation as a student who excelled in his humanities electives at Caltech.

After settling in the San Francisco Bay Area, Curfman built up a successful three-decade career in trial and arbitration law, as well as a loving 29-year marriage with the former Betty Hunt, a Stanford-trained school counselor. Larry is remembered by friends as evincing some telltale characteristics of a Techer: He was logical, methodical, capable of absorbing intense quantities of information, and eager to investigate, drilling down to the core of a given problem.

The Curfmans manifested their passion for higher education and their loyalty to their alma maters by planning gifts to Stanford and Caltech. Larry passed away in 2002, and Betty in 2015. Their memory endures on campus thanks in part to a gift from the Lawrence E., III and Elizabeth H. Curfman Trust to fund research and education at Caltech.



Betsy Crossman

He recently used an IRA charitable rollover to endow a scholarship named for him and his late wife—Caltech's John and Betsy Crossman Scholarship. This fund will generate resources to help Techers of today and tomorrow pursue the same types of educational opportunities that he did.

"It just seemed natural to give back," says Crossman, now retired in Northern California after a career that included more than three decades in the automotive industry.

Between his junior and senior years, Crossman took on an internship with Ford in Detroit, where he "pretty much decided that was the company for me." Applying the focus that is a hallmark of the people of Caltech, he joined the Ford team when he was a new graduate and newlywed.

A major turning point in his family's life came when Crossman, then a manager with Toyota, decided at age 38 to move to Tokyo and study the Japanese language full-time. Happily, Betsy and their young sons took to life on the other side of the Pacific Rim. John credits his experiences at Caltech for influencing his interest in striking out as an adult to learn a very different language—and his success in that endeavor.

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YOUR LEGACY: SUPPORTING STUDENTS

You can make a difference in the lives of Caltech undergraduates with a gift that lasts for generations. A contribution of \$100,000 will endow a scholarship that provides resources for student aid year after year. The scholarship can bear your name or that of a loved one, and an annual reception brings donors together with the students who have benefited from their generosity. Most Caltech students depend on aid—scholarships help them reach their academic goals.



THIRTY-FIVE YEARS, AND COUNTING

Since 1981, Rhonda MacDonald (BS '74) has made at least one gift a year to Caltech—and through her estate plans, that record will continue far into the future. With her gifts to commemorate class reunions and also pay tribute to the late George W. Housner, Braun Professor of Engineering, Emeritus, she has helped Caltech provide exceptional educational opportunities for students.

Rhonda MacDonald (BS '74) and Steven Lucas

From the moment she came to campus, MacDonald helped make history at Caltech. She was among the first women to graduate from the Institute. Over the years MacDonald has continued to be part of the Caltech story, giving generously of her time. She served on the Board of Directors of Caltech's Alumni Association, where she has held various positions including president. She is an active member of the Caltech Gnome Club, a supporter of the Caltech Y, and life member of the Alumni Association. She and her husband, Steven Lucas, are also members of the Caltech Associates. And with MacDonald's connection to Caltech comes an affinity for its current students, such as the members of the Caltech Robotics Team.

"Each year the team designs and builds an entirely autonomous underwater vehicle that navigates obstacles, identifies and shoots at targets, and manipulates objects," says MacDonald, who had opportunities to meet

the students on this year's competition-winning team. "In addition to developing mechanical, electrical, or programming technical skills, the students learn how to work as members of a team as they prepare their entry for competition in an annual event. As a former manager in industry, I know how important it is for engineers to develop these teamwork skills, so I enthusiastically support the team. I am so excited for them and am so proud of their accomplishments!"

Now, she and her husband have designated Caltech a beneficiary of their retirement plan, benefiting Caltech's scholars for years to come. Through provisions in their estate plan, MacDonald and Lucas will establish an endowment, the Rhonda Lynne MacDonald Undergraduate Scholarship Fund, that will provide financial support for undergraduate students, with a preference for those studying mechanical or civil engineering.

Caltech observes a need-blind admissions policy, which means that ability to pay has never been a deciding factor in Caltech's selection of first-year students. Today, more than half of Caltech's undergraduates receive scholarship assistance.

"I would not have been able to attend Caltech without significant financial aid, so I recognize the critical importance of such aid," MacDonald says. "I want to do my part to enable future generations of bright engineering students to attend Caltech."



EVERY GIFT COUNTS—MAKE YOURS COUNT THIS CALENDAR YEAR

Spur world-changing research and prepare students to become leaders in science and society, all while receiving valuable tax benefits!

Here are some general guidelines to ensure that your gift to Caltech is eligible for a deduction this calendar year:

- When you give **cash and checks**, the postmark on your envelope is the date your gift is recorded.
- For contributions made by **credit card**, what counts is the day the charge is posted to your account. If it is coming down to the wire, allow a few days before the end of the year for the payment to be authorized.
- The transfer of **appreciated stocks, bonds, and other securities** may take several days—or several weeks if actual certificates are donated—from when you initiate the process with your broker to when Caltech receives your assets.
- If you are 70½ or older, you may make a tax-free contribution up to \$100,000 through your **IRA charitable rollover**. You should contact a Caltech gift officer as soon as possible to have this gift count for 2016.

To learn more about benefits, deadlines, ways to give, and the impact of your philanthropy, please contact the Office of Gift Planning at **(626) 395-2927** or giftplanning@caltech.edu.

RECOGNIZE THIS ALUMNUS?



Enroll at Caltech? Impossible. The young man had the intelligence and the desire, but he knew that each term at Caltech cost \$100. That was beyond his means. As his graduation from San Diego High School neared in 1938, he decided on the University of California, Berkeley.

Then a visit with his aunt changed his life. She knew about Caltech and thought well of it, so she wondered why her nephew was not planning to be in Pasadena in September. When she learned that money was the issue, she offered to support him.

He passed Caltech's qualifying exam and soon was off to Frosh Camp. His aunt faithfully paid his tuition, room, and board throughout his education. He relished those years learning the latest mechanical engineering theories and testing them in the campus labs. In his scant free time, he volunteered for Dabney House, the Caltech Y, and the physics department.

After graduating in 1941, he soon immersed himself in the war effort, connecting with a Caltech group that was inventing a kind of airborne torpedo that helped turn the tide against Axis submarines. Then he joined the powerful Caltech-U.S. Navy rocket design program in China Lake, California,

making contributions that ultimately led him to a successful career in the private sector and in leading his own company. For his achievements, he won Caltech's Distinguished Alumni Award.

He and his wife, Delpha, have remained close to Caltech, although they now live in Nevada. Both are life members of the Caltech Associates, and "Del" served as the group's vice president. He is a life member of the Caltech Alumni Association and has attended every class reunion except his 50th. The couple has supported a variety of campus initiatives that benefit students.

In 2016, they traveled from Reno to Caltech to celebrate his 75th reunion, and they wrote a special gift to Caltech into their will. It will double the impact of a scholarship fund they endowed in 1979. Designated for students who have special leadership abilities and who need financial aid, it already has made Caltech affordable for dozens of students. The couple has dearly enjoyed luncheons with many of them.

Through his and Del's gift, **Robert L. Noland** (BS '41) will recreate for others far into the future one of the most thrilling moments of his life: the day his aunt made a life-changing education possible for him.



Del and Robert (BS '41) Noland



Torchbearer

In recent months, the following have joined the Torchbearers of Caltech.

HONOR ROLL:

Leslie G. Fishbone (BS '68)

*Rhonda L. MacDonald (BS '74)
and Steven Lucas*

Alan M. Brothers (Ex '73)

ESTATE GIFTS

The generosity and foresight of alumni and friends are crucial to Caltech's success. Below are just two of the many individuals who have supported Caltech through estate gifts.

From the estate of **Dennis Dewenter**, Caltech received more than \$6 million to establish the Dewenter Family Scholarship.

From the estate of **Ernst Gehrels Jr.**, Caltech has received a total distribution of more than \$1 million in unrestricted funds allocated to the Presidential Priorities Fund.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE, JUST IRA AND YOU

If you would like to direct your IRA disbursements to support a cause that is important to you, there is good news. Last year, the IRA charitable rollover provision became permanent. If you are 70½ or older, you may transfer up to \$100,000 directly from your IRA account to a charity, and that contribution will not be included in your gross income. For more information about making a qualified charitable distribution to Caltech, contact the Office of Gift Planning at (626) 395-2927 or giftplanning@caltech.edu.

THE GIFT OF OPPORTUNITY

“Curiosity was the key, and Caltech nurtured it,” Crossman says. “My interest in finding out about things, and my ability to find out about things, grew. For those aspects, I’m pretty sure Caltech is high on the uniqueness scale.”

Crossman also noted that the analytical skills he developed as an undergraduate helped him review the kanji that make up Japan’s writing system. He developed his own system of studying that placed the characters in families based on their basic form and clues to their pronunciation.

He continued with Toyota in Japan and later in Los Angeles, before returning both to the Ford Motor Company and to Japan. Ultimately, he and his family spent more than 25 years living in Japan. Crossman remembers his time overseas as “exciting—fantastic and fascinating.” To this day, he visits the island nation whenever he can.

To others considering a philanthropic commitment for scholarships, Crossman says, “Think of the students who will be able to finish Caltech, move into the world, and do great things—you will be helping to sponsor that.”

And for the future Crossman Scholars preparing at Caltech to launch their own life’s adventures, he offers this advice: “Work hard. Caltech will never be an easy school, and should not be. If you’re like me, you may not use much of the actual engineering or science, but the good thinking will be 100 percent required.”

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RECOGNIZE THIS ALUMNUS?

A Dabney man, he was active in almost all house affairs, Newman Club, and the frosh YMCA. He served as Exhibit Day chairman for the physics department, was a member of ASME, and debated as a frosh.

Adapted from Big T 1941. See inside for more.



CLASS OF
'41

TECHNIQUES

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