

TECHNIQUES

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*Dennis and Jill Le Croisette:
One couple's gift to a friend advances discovery at Caltech*

Caltech

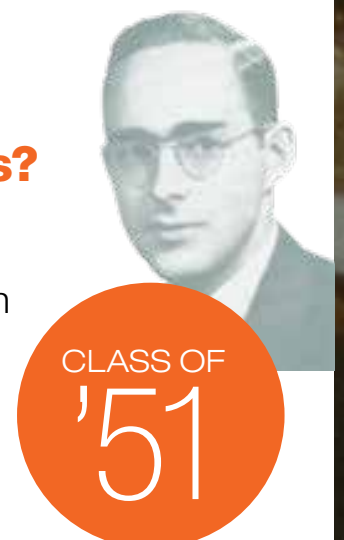
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Recognize This Alumnus?

His mission:
to provide research
opportunities for
undergrads.



One Act of Generosity Begets Another

Barbara Swain struck up a friendship with then-JPL scientist Dennis Le Croisette and his wife, Jill, shortly after they became Pasadena neighbors in 1977. Their rapport would abide for the rest of the couple's lives.



Barbara Swain

The Le Croisettes provided for Swain from their estate, and she honored them with a contribution to Caltech, an institution close to her heart.

"I love this place," she says. "I think it's the star on the Crown City's crown. It really makes me feel good to be part of it."

To support an institution she has long admired while bolstering her financial security, Swain created a charitable gift annuity, which offers fixed payments for life.

"It was a win-win situation," she says. She appreciates the attractive income stream guaranteed by the annuity, and, she adds, "The gift honors the people who really are the source of it." (For more about charitable gift annuities, see the sidebar on page 2.)

QUITE PROPER

The bond between Swain and the Le Croisettes took shape intuitively.

"I just *got* them," she says. "It was never a lot of time spent. It was just an affinity, a comfort level. We knew the door was always open."

"I love this place," she says. "I think it's the star on the Crown City's crown. It really makes me feel good to be part of it."

Swain appreciated the Le Croisettes' "proper" demeanor and dry humor, and she smiles recalling their fondness for the culture of the U.K., where Dennis grew up. He would host authentic English teas on special occasions, with Jill preparing elaborate spreads.

The friends stayed in touch after the Le Croisettes retired to Carlsbad, California, in 1985. And after Dennis died in 2006, Swain was there to comfort Jill. The friendship continued through Jill's death in 2015.

TRUE ROMANCE

The Le Croisettes' love story began with a 1958 faculty party at the University of Kansas, where Jill McLean, an academic librarian from Australia, met an intriguing new professor.

"I think she thought, 'This is it,'" Swain says.

When Dennis moved on to Drexel University in Philadelphia the following year, Jill found the closest job she could—at Brown University in Rhode Island. After about a year of commuting 300 miles to visit, they married in 1960, and Jill went on to earn a master's degree at Drexel.

"My view is that they were destined for each other," Swain says.

FROM OUTER SPACE TO INNER SPACE

Making a gift to advance science with her provision from the Le Croisettes' estate strikes Swain as a fitting tribute to Dennis. A physicist, he made his mark in both space exploration and biomedical imaging.

When he joined JPL (which Caltech manages for NASA) in 1963, he took on the demanding task of building instrumentation for NASA's Surveyor program. He helped oversee the first broadcast from a television camera on the moon and later managed instruments for the Mariner and Voyager missions.

He went on to manage biomedical engineering at JPL and also took on positions as a clinical professor of radiology at USC and adviser to the National Institutes of Health.

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A High-Flying Career and a Plan to Give Back

During many years at the helm of both commercial and military aircraft design at Boeing, John K. “Jack” Wimpres (MS '48) left an indelible mark on aerospace, earning an American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics Aircraft Design Award for leading development of an experimental short take-off and landing military transport.



Jack Wimpres

“I worked at Boeing at a really great time,” the Washington State resident says. “I worked on their first jet airplanes and from there watched the whole Jet Age develop.”

Wimpres believes he was able to excel thanks to his Caltech training—full of challenges that prepared him for success. Grateful that his military service subsidized his education, he is driven to create opportunities for young people.

In that spirit, he created the John and Doris Wimpres Scholarship with proceeds from a charitable remainder trust he and his late wife established in 1997. Recently, he made a contribution to augment that award so that it benefits even more Caltech undergraduates year after year.

“I feel an obligation to help other people because I think of how tough it would have been for me to go to school and work to pay my college expenses at the same time,” he says. “I couldn’t have done it, and it must be tough for students today. So they deserve the help I can give them.”

Indeed, pursuing his master’s after a World War II stint in the Navy and a couple of years of working in industry, Wimpres found Caltech “overwhelmingly hard” at first.

“After my first week, all I could say was, ‘Boy, only 32 more weeks to go,’” he recalls.

Between the confounding math underlying aerodynamics, the fact that he enrolled in several courses designed for more advanced students, and the Institute’s sky-high academic standards, Wimpres experienced his share of struggles. Among them were tests where faculty furnished answers and asked students to show the steps that would lead to those solutions.

“You’d think, ‘Geez, they tell you what the solution is, that ought to be easy,’” he says. “But boy, it isn’t!”

Fortunately, Wimpres received guidance from faculty members who were as supportive as they were demanding. The head of the aeronautics graduate program, Ernest Sechler (BS '28, MS '30, PhD '34), made a special effort to encourage him.

“I found that once you were accepted at Caltech, they worked hard to get you through,” Wimpres says. “Dr. Sechler did that for me.”

Recruited by Institute alumnus Lloyd Goodmanson (BS '40, MS '41), Wimpres joined Boeing in Seattle as a junior aerodynamicist after graduation. As his responsibilities shifted and grew over the decades, he became chief aerodynamicist, later served as chief technical engineer for the Boeing 757, and closed out his career as head of product development for a division of Boeing’s commercial airplane company.

“I feel an obligation to help other people because I think of how tough it would have been for me to go to school and work to pay my college expenses at the same time.”

The signature Caltech focus on fundamentals benefited him throughout this journey.

“Caltech showed me that I could learn anything if I was willing to spend the time on it,” he says. “That was important to me as an engineering manager, because I knew nobody could snow me. I learned to work in fundamentals, so I could tell whether an answer made sense.”

Wimpres is still enthusiastic about Caltech’s intellectual environment, and he’s proud to support promising students as they work with outstanding faculty in a close-knit community.

“The small size of Caltech leads to this great synergy,” he says. “Scientists and engineers meet at lunch and discuss each other’s problems. People get great ideas they’ve never thought of for the problems that stumped them. That’s such a unique attribute.”

Giving May Be Its Own Reward—But It Doesn’t Have to Be the Only Reward

Charitable gift annuities offer you the chance to give *and* receive. In this case, you give \$25,000 or more to help Caltech’s faculty and students change the world with science and technology, and you receive guaranteed fixed payments for life.

All that is required is a simple contract between you and Caltech. In addition to the stream of income, there are tax benefits: You can claim a charitable deduction in the year that you create the annuity, and annuities funded with appreciated securities could offer significant relief from the burden of taxes on capital gains.

The payment rates will vary depending on your age. With recent increases in interest rates recommended by the American Council on Gift Annuities, annual payments are higher now than they were this time last year.

SAMPLE PAYOUT RATES FOR ONE ANNUITANT*	
AGE	RATE
65	5.1%
70	5.6%
75	6.2%
80	7.3%
85	8.3%

*The information in this table is for illustrative purposes and is not intended as tax or legal advice. Rates are subject to change.

If a charitable gift annuity sounds like the right way for you to make an impact with Caltech, start the conversation today by calling (626) 395-2927 or emailing giftplanning@caltech.edu.

Recognize This Alumnus?



Hailing from Spokane, Washington, this Caltech alumnus and music maven enlivened *The California Tech* with reports on classical and opera performances. He was relegated to right field in freshman baseball but finished with a .500 batting average in all of two at-bats. Elected pope of Dabney, he served up witty recitations to his housemates after dinner.

TO BOSTON AND BACK

Following commencement, this alumnus decamped to MIT for his PhD in physics. He stayed for several years as an instructor and assistant professor, kindling what became a lifelong devotion to providing undergraduates with research opportunities.

He came to JPL in 1964, rising from researcher to section manager and, later, deputy in the Education Office. During his 47-year JPL career, he championed student involvement at the arroyo facility.

PHOENIX FROM THE FLAME

This alumnus became secretary and treasurer of the Caltech branch of the honors society Sigma Xi. He and chapter president Fred Shair, a Caltech chemical engineer, were the last two active members as interest in the society cratered. But out of it grew a fixture of Caltech culture.

In 1979, Shair started something new: Caltech's Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) program.

SURF'S UP

Together with Caltech staffer Carolyn Ash, who had helped with Sigma Xi, this alumnus got involved with SURF right from the start. As a recruiter for JPL's cooperative education program, he saw the initiative as a promising option for the lab. Eventually, through the efforts of JPL director Lew Allen and chief technologist Terry Cole (PhD '58), Caltech students were offered the opportunity to pursue SURF projects there.

This alumnus took on administrative tasks connected with hosting the students. Those responsibilities stayed with him when he moved to JPL's Education Office, now the permanent home of SURF at JPL.

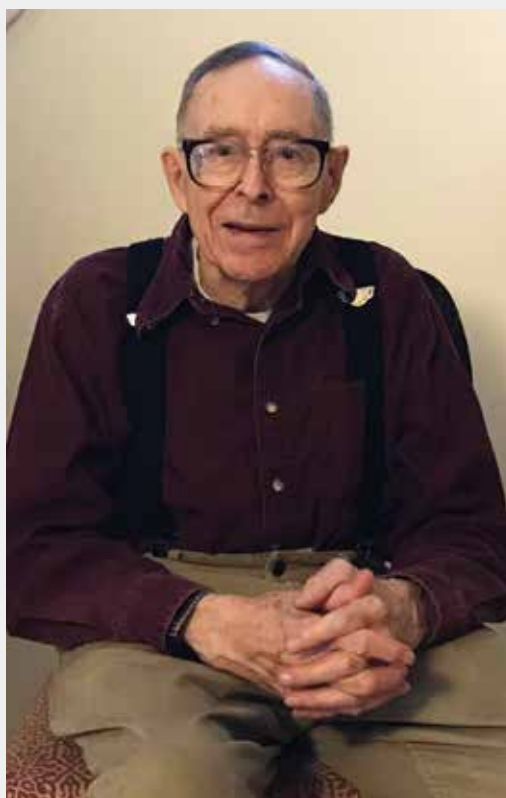
IN SERVICE TO STUDENTS

Today, **Bill Whitney** (BS '51) sits alongside Shair and Ash as the longest-serving members of the SURF Board. (Whitney takes credit—or blame—for coming up with the punny but straightforward name.) The Caltech Student-Faculty Programs Office (SFP) has benefited from decades of his guidance, advocacy, and philanthropy.

One example of his impact is a lecture series he dreamed up to help students explore the pragmatic aspects of parlaying undergraduate research experiences into science and engineering careers. The talks—originally called “Can You Do Research for a Living?”—continue as the William Whitney Workshops on Professional Development.

To perpetuate this legacy, he recently created the William M. Whitney Endowment for Academic and Professional Development at Caltech, which will grow with a gift from his estate. The fund generates resources for SFP events such as the Whitney Workshops.

Whitney says his passion for promoting undergraduate research boils down to helping young people realize their potential just as their enthusiasm peaks. “Kids can do wonderful things with this motivation,” he explains. “There is a lot they don't know, but let them get involved with research early, and they will learn the skills, tools, and concepts on the job.”



Torchbearers

In recent months, the following people have joined Caltech's Torchbearers Legacy Society.

HONOR ROLL

*Robert Breidenthal Jr. (MS '74, PhD '79)
and Susan Crane*

Nancy Bryan

Michael (BS '68) and Cathy Casteel

Donald Dick (BS '64)

Kevin Gromley (BS '77) and Nancy Scott

Calvin (MS '75) and Sharon Harr

Joseph Nilsen (MS '79, PhD '82)

*George (BS '84, MS '89) and
Kristin Pitt III*

*George (BS '72) and
the Reverend Hannah Rappolt*

Henry Rasof

Gerry (PhD '66) and Sally Schwartz

Barbara Swain

William M. Whitney (BS '51)

ESTATE GIFTS

From the estate of **Eugene Mann**, Caltech received \$10,000 directed to the Division of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering.

From the estate of **Arthur Muir**, Caltech received \$25,000 in unrestricted support.

From the estate of **Thomas Schumann**, Caltech received more than \$600,000 in unrestricted support.

A DINNER TO REMEMBER

Swain has a multifaceted connection to Caltech all her own. Since the late 1950s, she has found friends among the Institute's scientists and engineers. And one of her nephews—the late Jim Hunt (PhD '80)—built a career in academia after studying environmental engineering at Caltech.

Her work life also introduced her to a notable alumnus—Gordon Weir (BS '40, MS '41), local NBC meteorologist. In 1963, Swain became home-economics director for the dairy company Knudsen, which sponsored Weir's weather report. As he became part of Swain's social circle, she got a special view of Caltech's impact.

"The first time Gordon brought me to dinner at the Athenaeum, he pointed out three Nobel winners in the room," she says. "That's pretty heady!"

BON APPETIT!

Swain's contribution to Caltech not only reflects Dennis Le Croisette's scientific legacy, but also focuses on a topic with special resonance for her. Her charitable gift annuity will support research into bacteria that live in the human digestive tract—a subject she learned about when a friend brought her to a Caltech Associates event.

"I feel connected to this research," Swain says. "I see its importance to the world. After all, food is my life!"

Always an avid traveler, Swain studied cooking in France as a private student of Simone Beck, a colleague of Julia Child's, while PBS was airing the first season of Child's show *The French Chef*. Swain built on her career in home economics to publish the 1978 cookbook *Cookery for One or Two*. To this day, she is a passionate advocate for clean and natural food.

Happy to support science that sparks her interest while also securing an income stream, she remains grateful to the Le Croisettes.

"It's the gift that just keeps giving to me," Swain says.

Contact Us

Techniques is published by Caltech's Office of Gift Planning. For more information about the stories featured in this issue, or if you have questions about deferred or other planned gifts, please contact us.

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