

# TECHNIQUES

A publication of  
Caltech's Office of Gift Planning

SPRING 2023



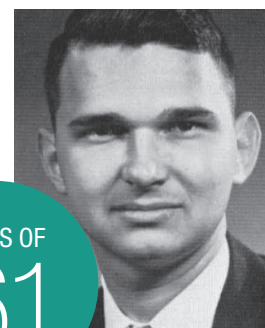
Left to right: Jolly Patro (Class of 2023) with Gene Wilson; Professor Viviana Gradinaru; Dale Burger (BS '56) with Luke Kottom (Class of 2026)

## WHAT'S INSIDE

- pg.2 Building a Bridge between Ideas and Solutions
- pg.4 Supporting Future Students
- pg.5 Giving Thanks to Torchbearers
- pg.7 The Initiative for Caltech Students
- pg.7 A Gift That Pays You Back

## RECOGNIZE THIS ALUMNUS?

pg.6



CLASS OF  
'61

Caltech

## Building a Bridge between Ideas and Solutions

**G**wendolynn “Lynn” Taber says she always felt like a teenager when she was near John Taber (BS ’46). She was 65 years old when she met John, 76, on a hiking expedition in New Zealand in 2002. After spending the day outdoors, the pair would go shopping and eat dinner together. John even bought her a scoop of ice cream.

Both had been married before and raised large families in Southern California, but they found themselves in love. “I lost my first husband, and I didn’t want to go through the heartache,” Lynn says. “But John made me feel like a 16-year-old girl again and I fell really hard for him.” They married two years later and remained together until his passing in 2022.

### A SENSE OF BELONGING

To love John was to love Caltech, Lynn discovered. Early in their relationship, John drove her to Pasadena and walked her around campus. As they looked at places that were meaningful to him, John talked about his student days. His Caltech education prepared him for a career developing satellite communication systems for TRW (now Northrop Grumman). To honor his contributions, NASA awarded him its Exceptional Scientific Achievement Medal in 1974. Yet John’s connection to the Institute ran deeper than academics. The Caltech community offered him a sense of belonging, Lynn says.

“Growing up, John always felt different from everyone else,” Lynn explains. His analytical mind and precise nature contributed to his brilliance, but could be difficult for others to understand, she adds. “Finding Caltech was a miracle for him. The other students saw the world just as he did.”

Once John found his tribe, he remained fiercely loyal to it. For roughly half a century, he met regularly with a handful of classmates for dinners and outings. He attended nearly every Seminar Day throughout his 18-year marriage to Lynn, and many more before. Together, Lynn and John attended Caltech Associates events where they dined with Nobel laureates, learned from Caltech researchers, and toured research facilities such as the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO). Soon, Caltech was not just John’s community, but Lynn’s, too.



*John (BS ’46) and Lynn Taber*

“Caltech events include alumni but also a lot of other really smart and interesting people,” Lynn says. “They made me feel so welcomed.”

### A RISK WORTH TAKING

As John was planning his estate, Caltech was again on his mind. He wanted to give back to his alma mater in a way that would make both the Institute and the world better. After talking with staff in Caltech’s Office of Gift Planning, John used his IRA to establish the John and Gwendolynn Taber Discovery Fund. Designed to support research at its earliest stages, the fund empowers scholars in the Division of Engineering and Applied Science to take bold risks. It was John’s hope that his gift would serve as a bridge between ideas and world-changing solutions.

“Doing standard science and engineering is easy,” Lynn says. “Trying something completely new is harder. Yes, of course, there’s more risk involved, but without risk, what do we have?”

---

“Finding Caltech was a miracle for him. The other students saw the world just as he did.”

---

## Torchbearers Legacy Society

Membership in the Torchbearers Legacy Society is extended to those who have provided for Caltech in their wills or living trusts, designated Caltech as a beneficiary of their life insurance or retirement accounts, or completed deferred gifts for the benefit of the Institute.

In recent months, the following people have joined the Torchbearers.

Leonard Doberne (BS '70) and Cheryl Tau  
Leslie L. Durland (MS '71)  
Michael E. Fournery (MS '59, PhD '63)  
John Hallstrom (BS '51)  
Lee Kondor (BS '73)  
Allan (BS '60, MS '61) and Connie Laderman  
Gary Stupian (BS '61)  
Joseph White (BS '82)

### ESTATE GIFTS

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

**William I. Rumer** (BS '49, MS '50) provided unrestricted support to the Institute.

**Eugene and Kathryn Mieczko** established the Eugene Leon Mieczko Endowed Chair (EAS).

**Henry Rasof** created the Bernard Rasof Memorial Award in Aeronautics/Mechanical and Civil Engineering.

**Robert E. Ireland** contributed to the Chemistry Discretionary Fund and the Athenaeum General Support Fund.

**Robert and Marianne Bamford** provided unrestricted support to the Institute.

## Supporting Future Students

While Richard Campbell (MS '77) only spent one year at Caltech, the Institute had an outsized impact on his life and career. So much so that he recently set up a bequest to support scholarships.

“Caltech really took good care of its students,” says Campbell, who came to the Institute on a full fellowship. “And I always felt that if I was in a position to give back, I would.”

Undergraduate scholarships are a high philanthropic priority for the Institute. Campbell’s bequest intention will advance the newly launched Initiative for Caltech Students, which raises funds to create an even more exceptional student experience.

Now, recently retired from a fulfilling career in the renewable power industry, Campbell is a proud member of the Torchbearers Legacy Society, a group of alumni and friends who invest in the future of the Institute by including it in their estate plans.

“Caltech is one of only two organizations I have singled out for giving,” he says.

He notes that it wasn’t necessarily what he learned at Caltech that made him successful, but rather the people he met and the reputation of the Institute that gave him a boost.

“By competing with some really smart people, I developed a level of confidence that helped me in my professional life,” Campbell says. “No matter what the problem was, I could just go in, attack the problem, and do my best. And when people found out I went to Caltech, that gave me a level of credibility that was unbeatable.”

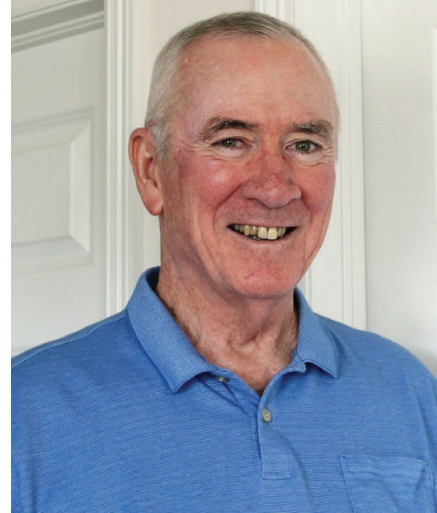
In fact, his career started with an introduction from his Caltech adviser, the late chemical engineer Bill Corcoran, to Ben Holt, a pioneer of geothermal energy plants. Campbell went on to work for Holt’s company for nearly 23 years, becoming a trailblazer in the field himself. He designed two world-first geothermal power plants: one is an air-cooled binary-cycle power plant at Mammoth Lakes, California, and the other is the only geothermal plant to operate in the state of Texas. In recognition of these and other accomplishments, Campbell is the only person to have received the industry’s most prestigious honor, the Joseph W. Aidlin Award, and the Ben Holt Geothermal Power Plant Award.

In 2021, the pandemic pushed him into retirement earlier than he would have preferred. Campbell, who lives outside of Denver, Colorado, says he struggled with this until a friend gave him some sage advice: Don’t let your work define you.

“That was a profound statement to me,” Campbell says. “I’ve got some great hobbies, and I’ve got my whole family here—three kids, and each has a son—so I just changed my mindset, thanks to my friend.”

Fortunately for Caltech, Campbell’s free time also gave him the opportunity to reflect on the benefits his affiliation with the Institute allowed him to enjoy—something he recommends all alumni do.

“I’m paying it forward, and I hope others will, too,” Campbell says. “I was given a really nice gift when I needed it. And now that I can afford it, I’m going to give that same gift to future students.”



## Giving Thanks to Torchbearers

Caltech students, faculty, and academic leaders celebrated the generosity and impact of Torchbearers at a special luncheon on April 15. The event was hosted by President Thomas F. Rosenbaum, holder of the Sonja and William Davidow Presidential Chair and professor of physics, and Katherine T. Faber, the Simon Ramo Professor of Materials Science, at their residence.

Viviana Gradinaru (BS '05), the Lois and Victor Troendle Professor of Neuroscience and Biological Engineering and director of Caltech's Center for Molecular and Cellular Neuroscience, was the featured faculty speaker. She initially trained in physics, she said, but became fascinated by the brain. As a Caltech undergraduate, Gradinaru sought to understand how neurodegeneration and other loss of brain function affects our view of ourselves and each other. Today, she seeks to uncover the mechanisms that enable molecules to bypass the nearly impenetrable blood-brain barrier. This research could lead to the design of more effective and noninvasive therapeutics for neurological disorders.

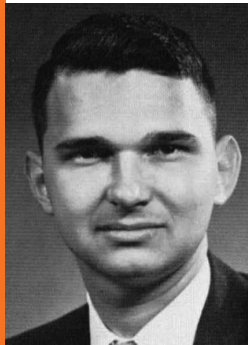
Among the nine undergraduates who attended the event was Aditi Seetharaman, a senior majoring in bioengineering. Seetharaman spoke to Torchbearers about how her participation in the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships program and service as president of Venerable House have helped shape her into a researcher and a leader. This fall, she will pursue a graduate degree in biomedical engineering at Washington University in St. Louis.

"I've had a very rewarding four years at this school," Seetharaman said. "Because of you and your fellow donors, other students are enjoying this opportunity as well. Thank you for making Caltech as great as it is."

*From top: Professor William A. Goddard (PhD '65) and Glenn Orton (PhD '75); Jeanne and Victor Orphan; student speaker Aditi Seetharaman (Class of 2023); Jane and Don (BS '57) Pinkerton*



## Recognize This Alumnus?



This alumnus grew up in Alhambra, just a 10-minute drive from Caltech. He saw his high school's most talented students pursue their passion for science and engineering at Caltech. As an aspiring physicist, he was eager to join them.

"Caltech was the place to be for science," he says. "At the time, I may have had only a vague idea of what a physicist did, but I knew that if I wanted to excel in the field, I had to go to Caltech."

This alumnus lived at home rather than on campus and immersed himself in courses and lab assignments during the school year. He spent his summers working in Caltech's Synchrotron Laboratory along Olive Walk. The synchrotron was a useful atom smasher in its day. Its motor generator set, which incorporated a large flywheel for energy storage, shook the buildings on the north side of campus, he recalls. He performed data analyses, created nomograms (graphic representations of equations), and did any other tasks the lab's graduate students and postdoctoral scholars asked of him. Although he eventually decided not to pursue high-energy physics, he says the time he spent in the Synchrotron Laboratory offered an exciting glimpse into physics research.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in physics, this alumnus earned master's and doctoral degrees at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. He worked as a postdoctoral scholar at Cornell University before landing a job as a scientist with The Aerospace Corporation. For 53 years, he used a wide range of tools, such as electron microscopy, focused-ion beam systems, and X-ray tomography, to support military space programs. For a brief time, he even performed forensics research to assist local law enforcement agencies.

Throughout his career, this alumnus found time to give back to his alma mater. He served as president of the Caltech Alumni Association in the early 1990s, helped plan Seminar Day from 2012 to 2020, and sat on the board of Caltech's Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships (SURF) program. On behalf of The Aerospace Corporation, he also recruited Caltech students for internships and jobs and directed funds to SURF.

As this alumnus transitioned to life as a retiree, Caltech remained top of mind. He moved into a retirement community in Pasadena so he could easily visit campus.

**Gary Stupian (BS '61)** also decided to create a lasting legacy at the Institute. He designated a substantial portion of his estate to Caltech, which he hopes will enable future generations of students to conduct hands-on research and follow their curiosities.

"Caltech prepared me for the rigors of graduate school and helped me succeed in a meaningful career," Stupian says. "Now it's time for today's and tomorrow's scientists and engineers to leave their mark on the world. I hope this bequest makes it easier for them to achieve their dreams."



## The Initiative for Caltech Students

How do we consistently prepare graduates who push the limits of what's possible? We start by assembling the most talented, ambitious minds. We give them freedom to follow their imaginations and pursue inquiry into uncharted territories. We help them build the confidence to persevere. And we provide a best-in-class academic environment where they cultivate the technical, life, and career skills they need to lead the way in every field of human endeavor.

The Initiative for Caltech Students is a new fundraising campaign to ensure that students at all levels enjoy a multifaceted educational experience that is as rigorous, collaborative, and innovative as Caltech's research enterprise. We are creating more scholarships and fellowships, and an even broader array of resources and programs to support learning, leadership, and well-being.



### THE GOAL IS TO RAISE \$250 MILLION:

- \$100 million for undergraduate scholarships
- \$60 million for graduate fellowships
- \$30 million for health and wellness
- \$25 million for career advising
- \$35 million for co-curricular activities

Your gift to this campaign is a powerful investment in our greatest asset: our students. Join us in preparing tomorrow's leaders to fulfill their dreams of transforming the world.

To learn more about the Initiative for Caltech Students and its impact on students, visit [initiativeforstudents.caltech.edu](https://initiativeforstudents.caltech.edu).

## A Gift That Pays You Back

A charitable gift annuity (CGA) is a giving vehicle that prioritizes your financial well-being as well as Caltech's. And consider this: As of January 2023, annuity rates have increased, meaning more income for you. The new rates, recommended by the American Council on Gift Annuities, help beneficiaries better keep pace with recent upticks in interest rates and historic inflation.

With a CGA, you make an irrevocable gift of cash or securities to Caltech. In exchange, the Institute provides you or a loved one with a reliable stream of income for life, regardless of market performance. At the end of the annuity, the remaining principal will support generations of Caltech faculty and students as they tackle some of the world's greatest scientific, engineering, and societal challenges. You may designate your gift to a specific area that aligns with your interests.

Donors who are at least 60 years old can establish a traditional CGA and begin receiving funds immediately.

### Sample annuity rates for a \$100,000 gift:

AGE	ANNUITY RATE	ANNUAL ANNUITY
90	9.7%	\$9,700
85	8.7%	\$8,700
80	7.6%	\$7,600
75	6.6%	\$6,600
70	5.9%	\$5,900
65	5.4%	\$5,400
60	4.9%	\$4,900

The minimum amount required to fund a charitable gift annuity is \$25,000.

*Please note that this information is provided for illustrative purposes and is not intended as tax or legal advice. Rates are based on those suggested by the American Council on Gift Annuities and are subject to change.*



Office of Gift Planning  
Mail Code 5-32  
Pasadena, CA 91125

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Pasadena, CA  
Permit #583

## 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 call or email us.

PHONE: **(626) 395-2927**

EMAIL: **[giftplanning@caltech.edu](mailto:giftplanning@caltech.edu)**

WEB: **[giftplanning.caltech.edu](http://giftplanning.caltech.edu)**

### **Jim Ehlers**

Executive Director

### **Natalie Piega**

Deputy Director

### **Rick Robertson**

Senior Director of Development

### **Lizzie Knol**

Senior Gift Planning Officer