

TECHNIQUES

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Caltech's Office of Gift Planning

SPRING 2025



Undergraduate spring luncheon attendees, from left, top row: Michael Sowell, Max Oberg, Evan Portnoi, Michael Gutierrez; front row: Adele Basturk, Ria Patel, Jordan Threat, Priscila Marquez. Credit: Chris Flynn/Caltech

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Caltech

A Caltech Marriage and a Commitment to Student Research

Dan Harris (PhD '73) was 20 years old when he arrived at Caltech in September 1968 to work on a PhD in chemistry with Harry B. Gray, the Arnold O. Beckman Professor of Chemistry. In December, Dan met freshman Sally Mais at a mixer at Caltech with students from Pomona College. Two years later, they were married on Thursday, October 1, which was the first day of fall classes at the Institute. Dan had two guests at the wedding, including classmate George Rossman (PhD '71). Sally invited her roommate to be her guest.

Following the ceremony, Sally accompanied Dan as they drove to Caltech, where he was teaching Chem 2. The academic year of 1970-71 was noteworthy as the first year in which women were admitted as undergraduates to the Institute. However, there were no women registered for Chem 2 that term. When class settled down at the start of the lecture, there were 35 men in the lecture hall, plus one woman in her white dress near the middle of the room.

Dan surveyed the scene of anxious students about to begin their Caltech careers and voiced this spontaneous thought: "I see that there is only one woman in this room today, and the only way I got her to come was to marry her two hours ago." The class broke into applause.

The couple has supported student research at the Institute for over three decades. In 2025, they established a charitable gift annuity (CGA), which

provides fixed quarterly payments for life. Upon death, the remainder of the funds shall be used to support Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships (SURF). The CGA was funded with a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) from their individual retirement accounts.

In the past, Dan and Sally endowed four SURF students in honor of Gray, the founding director of the Beckman Institute; Rossman, now a professor of mineralogy at Caltech; and two other colleagues. They fund a fifth SURF student annually and endowed the Yvonne Amelia Goddard Scholarship in 2020 to provide support for undergraduates.

While Dan was a research chemist and program manager for the US Navy at China Lake, California, he and Sally authored chemistry textbooks. Their first book, *Symmetry and Spectroscopy*, was written for Chem 2 when Dan was a graduate student. They published 19 books between 1978 and 2024 all while raising two sons, both of whom would go on to study at Dan's undergraduate alma mater, MIT.

Textbook proceeds enabled their generosity in student support. Dan and Sally appreciate the philanthropic sentiment expressed by the quotation: "What I gave, I have; what I spent, I had; what I kept, I lost."

This article was written by the Harris family and edited for inclusion in *Techniques*.



The couple has supported student research at the Institute for over three decades.



Photos: Sally and Dan Harris (PhD '73) on their wedding day (top) and a recent image (below).

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:

Daniel (PhD '73) and Sally Harris

Reid (PhD '00) and Lanny Harrison

Kenneth (PhD '63) and Michele Kellermann

Lily Wu (BS '85) and John Moffly

Albert (BS '72) and Angelina Yen

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.

Herman Barnett, Jr. established the Barnett Graduate Fellowship.

Richard H. Cox (BS '42, MS '46) contributed unrestricted support to the Institute.

William K. Davis (BS '60) established the William K. Davis Fellows for graduate fellowships in the Department of Electrical Engineering.

Lester D. Earnest (BS '53) contributed unrestricted support to the Institute.

Rodman Jenkins (PhD '50) contributed unrestricted support to the Institute.

How Charitable Gift Annuities (CGAs) Work

Dan and Sally Harris leveraged a CGA to provide themselves with a fixed source of income while supporting future generations of Caltech students. Rick Robertson, executive director of the Office of Gift Planning, answers some common questions below that he receives regarding CGAs as a life income gift option.

Q. What are the benefits of a CGA?

A. In exchange for a gift of a qualified charitable distribution (QCD), cash, or securities valued at \$25,000 or more, Caltech will provide individuals reliable, fixed payments for life. When the gift annuity ends, its remaining principal passes to Caltech to support initiatives important to the donor.

Depending on the amount donated, a QCD lowers or completely offsets the donor's required minimum distribution (RMD) for individual retirement accounts (IRAs), and donor and/or spouse receive fixed payments for life.

A gift of cash or securities gives the donor an immediate charitable deduction, and part of each payment is tax-free, increasing each payment's after-tax value.

Q. Is this easy to set up?

A. Yes, a CGA is a simple contract between the donor and Caltech.

Q. Who can receive payments?

A. The donor chooses who will receive payments from the gift annuity. Often it can include a spouse or other close family member.

Q. How reliable is this payment?

A. Payments are backed by the general resources of the Institute and remain secure and dependable regardless of market conditions.

Q. Does the payout rate depend on age?

A. Yes, the older the income beneficiary, the larger the payment provided by Caltech. The minimum age is 60.

SAMPLE RATES AND PAYMENTS FOR A \$100,000 GIFT

AGE	ANNUITY RATE	ANNUAL ANNUITY
90	10.1%	\$10,100
85	9.1%	\$9,100
80	8.1%	\$8,100
75	7.0%	\$7,000
70	6.3%	\$6,300

CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY PROCESS



Lighting the Future

Torchbearers, students, faculty, and staff came together at the Athenaeum on April 26 for the annual Torchbearers Legacy Society Appreciation Luncheon to celebrate the Caltech community.

“What you do as Torchbearers is going to light the future for Caltech,” said President Thomas F. Rosenbaum, holder of the Sonja and William Davidow Presidential Chair and professor of physics, who hosted the event with Katherine T. Faber, the Simon Ramo Professor of Materials Science.

Senior Michael Sowell, a planetary science major and Dabney House resident, thanked those in attendance for their “incredible kindness, generosity, and support of young scientists.”

Dean of Undergraduate Students and Professor of English Jennifer A. Jahner gave a presentation entitled “Uncertainty Lessons: What the Deep Past Teaches Us About Living Now.” Jahner, whose research includes working with classical and medieval tools and texts, spoke of how the quest for meaningful data science has shaped Western scientific thought.

Of Caltech, Jahner said, it is “...involved in a really special project about the future. It’s about shaping not just the tools, the technologies, the models, but the minds that are going to be thinking in new ways, in really innovative ways about the challenges that we face.”

From top: Toni Perpall, David Drake (BS '74), President Thomas F. Rosenbaum; Sylvia Nielsen, Don Pinkerton (BS '57); Lanny Harrison, Carver Mead (BS '56, MS '57, PhD '60), Reid Harrison (PhD '00); Gordon Glattenberg (BS '58), Elyse Ruth, Evan Portnoi. Credit: Chris Flynn/Caltech



Recognize This Alumna?



Born in Taiwan, this alumna moved to New York at the age of two. As a student, she gravitated toward physics, and when a high school science teacher recommended Caltech, she decided to check out the Institute.

“They sent a full professor, Jerry Pine, to interview applicants,” she remembers. “He not only interviewed me, but he actually set up a meeting with my physics teacher, who was completely bowled over.”

That level of attention, along with meeting students who would become lifelong friends during a Prefrosh weekend, convinced this alumna to move across the country to pursue a bachelor’s degree in engineering.

In her first year, she failed a physics final exam in a course taught by Pine, who also served as her first-year advisor. While some answers were technically correct, Pine wanted to see a more thoughtful approach in her logic. The lesson she learned from that experience stayed with her.

“Years later, I was able to change careers by being able to think things through and to pick up new skills,” she says. “Those are all seeds that Jerry Pine sowed when he failed me.”

This alumna also served as editor of the *California Tech* and delved into her Chinese background through humanities courses. As a senior, she received the Thomas J. Watson Scholarship, which enabled her to visit China for a year post-graduation.

“That turned out to be a life-changing year for me, just like coming to Caltech was life changing,” she says.

After spending the first two years of her career as a microchip designer in Silicon Valley, she found herself back in Asia, working in Hong

Kong as an engineer. In 1988, she moved to Beijing to work as a sales engineer and met her future husband. When he was transferred to Hong Kong in 1992, she went with him, transitioning to work on the finance and investment side of the technology industry. Today, she lives in the Bay Area and remains active in the technology sector investing in Asia and the US.

In honor of her upcoming 40th class reunion, **Lily Wu** (BS ’85) and her husband, John Moffly, recently included Caltech as a beneficiary in their estate plans to help support the next generation of scholars.

“Caltech has given so much to me,” Wu says. “I want to make sure that other people have the kind of opportunities that were given to me.”

She says that financial aid helped her to graduate unburdened by loans, and she hopes to extend that support to students today.

“Everything starts with education,” Wu says. “It’s so much more than what we know, it’s how we live.”



Lily Wu (BS ’85)

Good News from Caltech

THE INITIATIVE FOR CALTECH STUDENTS CAMPAIGN RAISES \$255.5 MILLION

Through the generosity of more than 2,700 donors, Caltech's first fundraising campaign focused solely on benefitting students raised \$255.5 million, helping ensure that the student experience complements the Institute's rigorous academic programs. The Initiative for Caltech Students exceeded its goal by \$5.5 million when it concluded on March 31, 2025. Alumni played an essential role, representing more than 61 percent of giving. Their support, along with that of many other donors and parents, funded undergraduate scholarships, graduate fellowships, health and wellness, career advising, and co-curricular opportunities—from the arts and athletics to student clubs.

The campaign marks a significant second phase in the Institute's ongoing investment in the comprehensive student experience. The student initiative follows Break Through: The Caltech Campaign, which concluded in 2021 and raised more than \$415 million for scholarships and fellowships. With a long-term goal to eliminate the need for student loans, the Institute will continue to raise funds for scholarships and fellowships and programs that support student well-being, career development, and campus life. To learn more—and to see how you can support Caltech students—visit initiativeforstudents.caltech.edu.

MEET DIANA SAA AND MARY SMITH

Diana Saa, pictured left, joined the Office of Gift Planning in March 2025 as a development assistant supporting day-to-day activities, including administrative assistance, coordination of staff travel, and Torchbearers events and marketing. Diana has over 15 years of experience in philanthropy, event management, and administrative work. She has previously worked with Providence Saint Joseph Foundation, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, and UCLA.

Mary Smith, pictured right, joined the Office of Gift Planning in December 2024 as an associate director, where she facilitates all aspects of estate administration and provides oversight of data and reporting related to the trusts and bequests program. Prior to joining Caltech, she worked in Wells Fargo's Trust department for 20 years. She is a certified trust and fiduciary advisor and a certified specialist in planned giving. Mary's favorite part of her job is learning about the extraordinary people associated with Caltech.





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