Linda and Bruce Cohen believe that education and opportunity go hand-in-hand. After receiving his bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees at Michigan State University, Bruce Cohen worked for eight years as a member of the university’s faculty and administration. He went on to author and co-author 12 books in sociology and criminology, several of which have been printed in multiple languages and marketed worldwide. Linda, who holds a bachelor’s and two masters’ degrees, taught mathematics in New York state for two decades.

The couple’s acuities in higher education set the stage for what would become a successful business venture. In 1979, while on a cruise together, a light bulb went off for Bruce. He envisioned continuing professional education seminars being held in conjunction with cruises, far away from the distractions of peoples’ busy offices. Joint meetings would be held at hospitals with local professionals while in port, sharing innovative thoughts and procedures.

The idea soon became a reality, and International Conferences was born. What began with one seminar to the Mediterranean for attorneys soon grew to more than 24 annually on six continents for physicians, nurses, dentists, and attorneys. The Cohens’ successful, Florida-based company logged more than 20,000 participants by the time they sold it in 2006.

“Continuing medical education was very good to us for 27 years, so we wanted to give back to the field of medicine,” says Bruce Cohen. “We were looking for a prestigious institution with a fine reputation for teaching and research, a superior faculty, and a strong endowment. We found that at Harvard Medical School.”

Opening doors

With their generous gift, the Cohens established a charitable gift annuity that will ultimately support innovative medical education programs at HMS. Their gift will establish the Dr. Bruce J. Cohen and Linda W. Cohen Endowed Professorship in the field of Medical-Legal Issues and Medical Ethics, as well as create an endowed fund for continuing medical education.

“We found that medical students don’t typically take courses in legal medicine, so it is our hope that this endowed professorship will help fill this void,” says Bruce Cohen.

“We envision our gift will provide an educational opportunity for medical students, supported by continuing medical education in legal medicine when they’re in practice.”

For HMS Dean Jeffrey S. Flier, MD, who met the couple during their summer visit to Boston, there was an immediate connection. “Innovation is key to education and discovery at Harvard Medical School, just as it has been key to the Cohens’ educational business model,” says Flier. “They are wonderful partners, and their support will lead us in exciting new directions.”

The feeling is mutual for the Cohens. “The enthusiasm of everyone we have met has been inspiring,” says Linda Cohen. “It has opened intellectual doors.”
As I look back at the last six months of our fiscal year, which closed June 30, I am humbled by the incredible support of our growing community of alumni and friends. Your generosity has had a tangible impact on all three of our priority areas: education, discovery, and service to humanity.

In this issue of The Benefactor, we celebrate the generosity of Linda and Bruce Cohen, whose generous charitable gift annuity will name a Quad Professorship focused on medical-legal issues and ethics, as well as an endowed fund supporting continuing medical education. And we applaud our more than 2,477 alumni who gave to the Alumni Fund, which Dean Flier has designated to support financial aid.

In the area of discovery, we celebrate several impactful gifts, including more than $3.2 million from the Helmsley Charitable Trust to advance research into Crohn’s disease, $3 million from Ghahreman Khodadad and his family to shed light on aggressive behavior, and a generous gift from an anonymous donor to explore human origins.

And finally, our commitment to serve humanity has been amplified by a generous gift from Joel and Stella Freedman to advance health care policy.

It is an exciting time at Harvard Medical School. I look forward to what we can and will accomplish together.

Sincerely,

Susan Rapple
Dean for Resource Development

The Inaugural Celebration of the Endowed Professoriate recognized incumbents to Quadrangle Professorships established since Harvard Medical School’s founding in 1782. The event celebrated en masse the School’s professoriate, which has helped shape the course of medical education and research over the last 230 years. Here, Pamela Silver, PhD, named the Elliott T. and Onie H. Adams Professor of Biochemistry and Systems Biology in 2011, accepts her citation from Dean Jeffrey S. Flier, MD.

“The distinguished lineage of incumbents and scholarship amassed beneath these venerable titles tells the story of the Medical School’s leaders, its evolution, and its greatest achievements,” said Flier, fourth incumbent of the Caroline Shields Walker Professorship in Medicine, a title reserved exclusively for deans of the Faculty of Medicine.

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Khodadad family sheds light on selfish, aggressive behavior

Ghahreman Khodadad, MD, had a vision to end human suffering and an idea of how to do it. Given the synergy with Harvard Medical School’s mission to alleviate human suffering caused by disease, partnering with HMS was a clear choice.

Khodadad and his sons, Victor and Rhazi, paired with HMS as their philanthropic partner with a $3 million commitment to establish the G.V.R. Khodadad Research Fund for the Study of Excessive (Pathological) Selfishness and Aggressive Behavior. Under the direction of Cliff Tabin, PhD, chair of the Genetics Department, the endowed fund will propel research into the neurogenetics of this extreme behavior and elicit a better understanding of its roots and machinery.

“I have a love of science. And the people here are priceless,” says Khodadad. “This makes for a wonderful partnership.”

Pinpointing pathways

“The hope is to identify molecular and cellular pathways that regulate the transition from normal, adaptive aggression to unchecked pathological aggression and violence,” says Susan Dymecki, MD, PhD, professor of Genetics.

The G.V.R. Khodadad Research Fund supports research in the Dymecki Laboratory, where Vera Niederkofler, PhD, is mapping neural circuits and genetic pathways associated with behaviors of pathological aggression in mouse models. Initial studies focus on identifying specialized types of brain serotonin neurons that influence aggression levels and delineating the neural circuits and brain regions under their control.

“Funding from the Khodadad family is making an extraordinary impact,” says Tabin. “This money supports research that will identify the specific brain cells involved in creating aggressive behavior. We hope that understanding will eventually lead to new interventions, ultimately decreasing violence and selfish behaviors in humans.”

“Selfishness and aggression inflict so much pain on humanity,” says Khodadad. “It impacts society as a whole—victims and their loved ones, witnesses, and participants. By learning how behavior is produced, perhaps we can find ways to help people.”

A retired neurosurgeon, Khodadad has always been fascinated by the anatomy of the brain and how this organ controls human behavior, with his interest dating as far back as a summer job at a psychiatric hospital. He later attended the Tehran School of Medicine in Iran and spent the majority of his career in the University of Cincinnati’s Department of Neurosurgery, where he is now a professor emeritus.

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McDougle named Nancy Lurie Marks Professor in the Field of Autism

An internationally recognized expert in the research and treatment for neurodevelopmental disorders was named the first incumbent of the Nancy Lurie Marks Professorship in the Field of Autism. Christopher J. McDougle, MD, recently joined the faculty at HMS and is directing the Lurie Center for Autism at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH).

Established by Nancy Lurie Marks and her foundation, this professorship continues her legacy of helping to build a more connected community of physicians and researchers dedicated to better understanding autism. Her ongoing commitment, through both philanthropy and advocacy, has significantly impacted the lives of autistic people and their families.

Left to right: Peter Slavin, MD ’84, president of MGH and professor of Health Care Policy at HMS; Jerrold F. Rosenbaum, MD, psychiatrist-in-chief at MGH and the Stanley Cobb Professor of Psychiatry at HMS; McDougle; Clarence Schult, PhD, director and chief scientific officer of the Lurie Marks Family Foundation, professor of Chemistry at Princeton University, and chair of the National Alliance for Autism Research; and Nancy Lurie Marks celebrate the professorship in April.
The ALS Drug Discovery Initiative (CADDI) at the Harvard NeuroDiscovery Center. The result is a unique enterprise that spans multiple disciplines, laboratories, and universities, including the Collaborative ALS Drug Discovery Initiative (CADDI) at the Harvard NeuroDiscovery Center. Under the leadership of Center Director Adrian Ivinson, PhD, the CADDI was launched in 2008 with support from the ALS Therapy Alliance and other donors to generate lead compounds for future development into ALS therapeutics.

“The ALS Drug Discovery Initiative has greatly accelerated drug screening for compounds that block molecular events in motor neuron cell death,” says Robert H. Brown Jr., DPhil, MD ’75, president of the ALS Therapy Alliance and chair of the Department of Neurology at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. “This has had two important outcomes: the identification of compounds that may be useful in ALS and proof-of-concept for this general methodology, which has led to subsequent NIH funding.”

Now, the Alliance has given $350,000 to CADDI to continue the momentum, with a renewal of another $350,000 expected next year—brining the total funding to more than $1.7 million to date. This new gift will ensure that Harvard can continue to explore drug discovery ideas, advancing those that are most deserving so they can attract interest from federal and commercial groups for further development. According to Ivinson, this represents one of the most effective and efficient ways to strengthen the drug pipeline.

“The brain is particularly difficult to understand,” explains Ivinson, “so over the last 10 years companies have been pulling out of drug discovery for neurological diseases like ALS. The idea of our drug discovery program is to take risks, find the projects that survive, and then pass those opportunities along to drug companies for further development.”

Brown says the ALS Therapy Alliance is hopeful that these studies will advance the development of specific therapies toward a possible cure one day.

**Driving drug development for ALS**

In research, collaboration is key. It was with that impetus in mind that the ALS Therapy Alliance was established in 2000 to facilitate research projects and partnerships among a diverse group of scientists and clinicians at multiple institutions to cure amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

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**Freedmans focus on health care’s future**

Shaping a new vision for the health care industry is job one for Joel Freedman. As president and co-founder of Los Angeles-based Avanti Hospitals, LLC, his company has proven that costs can be lowered and quality improved at the same time.

Though Avanti’s reach is limited to a few markets in California, Freedman believes that broader success in the health care sector is possible. But it will require a transformation of the health care financing and delivery systems, hinging on wise regulation, good data, and an innovative private sector. With that in mind, he joined HMS’s Health Care Policy Advisory Council to drive the data and discourse that will, in turn, help regulators make fully-informed decisions.

“Noble regulation has led to unintended results,” says Freedman. “Harvard Medical School’s Department of Health Care Policy is committed to helping politicians avoid mistakes and move in more positive directions. We’re focused on the top of the health care food chain, which is where my time and contributions can have the greatest impact.”

He and his wife, Stella, have given $100,000 to support research in the Department of Health Care Policy. A portion of their gift advances research into value based insurance design under the direction of Michael Chernew, PhD, a professor in the department.

“The leadership at Harvard Medical School is not driven by the dollar, but by a desire to help people live longer, healthier lives. That’s not something you see on a regular basis,” said Freedman.

**MENTAL HEALTH LEADER INAUGURATED AS MCNEIL FAMILY PROFESSOR**

In April, Ronald Kessler, PhD, was installed as the inaugural incumbent of the McNeil Family Professorship in Health Care Policy at Harvard Medical School. An expert in the field of mental health policy, Kessler has been a faculty leader at HMS since 1996 and is the principal investigator of the National Comorbidity Survey, the first nationally representative survey of the prevalence and correlations of psychiatric disorders in the U.S.

The professorship was established in honor of the family of Barbara J. McNeil, MD ’66, PhD, the Ridley Watts Professor of Health Care Policy and founding and current chair of the Department of Health Care Policy at HMS. McNeil has served in many capacities at the school, from professor to interim dean. Upon her retirement from HMS, the professorship was established in honor of the family of Barbara J. McNeil, MD ’66, PhD, the Ridley Watts Professor of Health Care Policy. A portion of their gift advances research into value based insurance design under the direction of Michael Chernew, PhD, a professor in the department.

“FaMiLy prOFessOr inauGuRaTed as MCneiL MentaL HeaLtH Leader 2012 fall”

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Helmsley Trust pilots Crohn’s disease research program

Leona and Harry Helmsley were well-known as entrepreneurs. The couple owned, developed, and operated an unparalleled empire of real estate and hotel properties. Equally well known was their commitment to philanthropy. They gave generously to innumerable causes that were closest to their hearts, primarily in the fields of health and medicine.

It was no surprise, then, that Mrs. Helmsley bequeathed nearly her entire fortune to the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust, creating a legacy that continues to enhance the lives of millions. The couple’s indelible mark can be felt at Harvard Medical School, where the trust has recently given more than $3.2 million to fuel research on Crohn’s disease.

This marks the second such gift supporting the Helmsley Pilot Grants Program, established with an initial gift of $2.2 million from the trust in 2010. According to Laurence Turka, MD, co-director of the Harvard Institute for Translational Immunology (HITI) and professor of medicine at HMS, the impact of this unique program is palpable.

“”The Helmsley Pilot Grants Program in Crohn’s Disease allows Harvard to tackle a common and devastating illness, one that can affect people their entire lives,” says Turka.

“It has allowed us to bring people together in new ways to create a strong, pan-Harvard community of researchers, working to bring their collective expertise to bear on this disease.”

Promising projects
After convening a focus group of experts to identify critical roadblocks in the field of Crohn’s disease, HITI reviewed research proposals based on those questions and selected seven projects for funding. Among the most promising was a joint investigation by Matthew Meyerson, MD, PhD director of the Center for Genome Discovery at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and associate professor of Pathology at HMS, and Vijay Yajnik, MD, PhD, attending physician at the Massachusetts General Hospital Digestive Healthcare Center and Crohn’s and Colitis Center, and assistant professor of medicine at HMS.

“Our research centers on the long-held hypothesis that Crohn’s disease may be caused by an infectious agent,” explains Meyerson. “New methods, such as next-generation sequencing, allow us to find with greater power the bacteria and viruses that may be associated with this chronic disease.”

According to Sandor Frankel, a trustee of the Helmsley Charitable Trust, this new gift will provide renewed support for projects already underway, as well as fund promising new projects over the next several years.

“The Helmsley Trust is committed to seeing its dollars make a difference in the fight against Crohn’s disease,” says Frankel. “We see this program as harnessing a wide range of resources and perspectives to open up new avenues for treatments, and eventually a cure, for Crohn’s disease. The collaborative and creative spirit of these research initiatives has been impressive. We are proud to be supporting this program.”

GORDONS HONORED WITH HARVARD MEDAL

Each year since 1981, the Harvard Alumni Association honors those who have given extraordinary service to the University—from teaching, leadership, and innovation to fundraising, administration, and volunteerism—with the Harvard Medal. Among this year’s cadre of recipients were Ellen, GSA ‘69, and Melvin Gordon ‘41, MBA ‘43.

The Gordons’ time and talents over the past seven decades have been palpable across the University and punctuated by their impact at Harvard Medical School. Here they have established a professorship, funded the creation of the Department of Systems Biology, funded basic research across disciplines throughout the Quad, and renewed the skylights in the signature campus building, which were blacked out during World War II.

Ellen Gordon served as chair of the Campaign for the Third Century of Harvard Medicine in the 1980s and has been a member of the HMS Board of Fellows since 1991. The couple’s generosity was recognized in 2000 when HMS renamed its iconic, pillared building the Ellen R. and Melvin J. Gordon Hall of Medicine.

Right: Melvin and Ellen Gordon proudly display their Harvard Medals after receiving them from President Drew Faust during the University’s May 24 Commencement Exercises.
Tick Tock: Mathers Foundation gift explores human body clock

Weitz has studied these clocks since completing his postdoctoral fellowship 20 years ago. At that time, only a small group of researchers were dedicated to studying molecular mechanisms—and he was drawn to work in an area that was ripe for discovery.

“’It’s not difficult to ask important and deep questions in biological research;’ Weitz says. “’It’s more difficult to ask questions where you can gain traction and get somewhere.’”

Pieces of the puzzle
Since the late 1990s, knowledge about circadian clocks has exploded. It was discovered that not all circadian rhythms were controlled passively by the brain as previously thought, but that there are thousands of autonomous organ systems with their own clocks. Work from Weitz’s lab indicated, for example, that the functions of the retina, liver, and pancreas are driven by a circadian clock within each organ. Emerging evidence also indicates that clocks in peripheral tissues play important roles in physiology and metabolism, including the regulation of circulating hormones, glucose, and lipids.

Weitz says that the more his team learns, the more surprises they uncover, keeping them engaged in this work. He plans to use this new funding to continue to analyze PERIOD complexes, applying the strategy his lab has developed over the last few years.

“Despite impressive advances over the last decade, our present understanding of the circadian clock is still rudimentary, and our knowledge of its molecular components is very much incomplete. There are compelling indications that we are missing major pieces of the puzzle,” says Weitz. “We’ve had some successes in our lab, and renewed support from the Mathers Foundation allows us to continue our exploration of—and deconstruction of—the circadian clock.”

The G. Harold & Leila Y. Mathers Foundation supports fundamental basic research in the life sciences and provides support for specific projects from established researchers at top universities and independent research institutions within the U.S.

Annual gifts amplify School’s priorities

Throughout fiscal year 2012, thousands of alumni and friends made personal commitments to support Harvard Medical School’s medical education, groundbreaking research, and service to humanity.

The Annual Giving Program is made up of several principal initiatives, including the Alumni Fund, the Friends of Harvard Medicine, Auditorium Chairs Program, and the Board of Fellows Annual Fund. Gifts of all sizes raised through the Annual Giving Program provide essential support for student scholarships and fellowships, faculty support, and research and global health initiatives.

This year, more than 4,000 alumni and friends made gifts totaling more than $3.9 million to HMS. Highlights include:

• The Alumni Fund raised $1.66 million—designated 100 percent to student scholarship by Dean Flier—through gifts from HMS alumni, including the Reunion classes (see story on page 7).

• Nathaniel Kurmick, MD ’40, his wife, Sally, and an anonymous donor matched all contributions made during a one-month period as part of the Match Day Challenge. Nearly 300 alumni stepped up to the challenge in honor of the 165 HMS students matched this year, raising $207,787 to boost immediate-use scholarship support for students.

• Phyllis Gardner, MD ’76, immediate past-president of Harvard Medical School’s Alumni Council, and her husband, Andrew Perlman, MD, PhD, sponsored the Give One, Get One Thousand Campaign. For every new Dean’s Council gift made by June 30, they provided an additional $1,000 in support of HMS students. This initiative raised a total of $191,350.

• The Board of Fellows Annual Fund raised more than $640,000, which Dean Flier has committed to supporting the School’s strategic priorities.

“Annual gifts to the Alumni Fund have a lifetime value that far exceeds any one gift,” says Beth Karlan, MD ’82, chair of the Alumni Fund. “These funds provide critical support to ensure the ongoing success of HMS and its graduates.”
Irene Luria honors late husband with scholarship fund

Harvard Medical School was a defining force in the lives of Irene and Sidney Luria, MD ’43. So when her husband died in 2010, Irene decided to honor his memory by establishing a $1 million charitable gift annuity to endow the Dr. Sidney B. Luria and Irene F. Luria Scholarship Fund at Harvard Medical School.

Sidney combined his world-class Harvard Medical School education with his natural dexterity to build a successful career as a cardiovascular surgeon. He served as medical officer captain of the 24th Infantry in the Pacific during World War II and was awarded a Purple Heart and a Silver Star for treating 264 wounded soldiers in five days with no fatalities.

He went on to become chief of surgery at the Veterans Hospital in Manchester, N.H., and eventually opened his own practice in Waterbury, Conn., where he was one of the only board-certified cardiothoracic surgeons in the country.

“In the operating room, as on ward rounds, Dr. Luria was a great teacher,” former colleague Massoud Marjani, MD, recounted in a letter to a Waterbury newspaper following Sidney’s death. He described him as an outstanding surgeon whose contributions to the practice of first-rate community surgery were widely recognized by his colleagues, surgical residents, and patients.

“My husband had a good rapport with his patients, and his students loved him,” Irene adds.

Sidney and Irene had always agreed that giving to HMS was a priority. Irene became interested in establishing a charitable gift annuity after her lawyer recommended it. Charitable gift annuities offer a tax deduction, fixed income for life—a portion of which may be tax-free—and potential savings on capital gains tax. Sidney’s fond memories of the School made establishing a charitable gift annuity with Harvard Medical School an easy decision.

Alumni Council election results are in

HMS alumni participated in this spring’s Alumni Council elections, submitting votes both electronically and through traditional paper ballots. Two new officers and three new councilors will join Nancy Rigotti, MD ’78 (pictured), professor in the Department of Medicine at HMS, as she begins her one-year term as president.

Newly elected officers include Barbara McNeil, MD ’66, PhD, Ridley Watts Professor of Health Care Policy at HMS, as president-elect, along with L.D. Britt, MD ’77, chair of the Department of Surgery at Eastern Virginia Medical School, as treasurer.

Councilors include Eleanor Shore, MD ’55, senior consultant to the Office for Academic and Clinical Affairs at HMS; Mary Mullen, MD ’87, associate in Cardiology at Boston Children’s Hospital; and Stephen A. Martin, MD ’01, an assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.
Harvard Medical School gave Robert Stenson, MD ’65, more than just a medical degree. It gave him the analytical skills that would stay with him throughout his life, providing a competitive edge that has allowed him to work on the front lines in his field.

In appreciation of these skills, Stenson established a $100,000 charitable gift annuity and bequest to create the Robert and Jane Stenson Professorship in regenerative biology, a cutting-edge field which he believes has massive potential for numerous aspects of medicine, including cardiology.

“Treating people with heart failure is limited because of damage from heart attacks, but if we had the capability and capacity to regrow cardiac cells for injured or scarred cardiac muscles, it would have enormous consequences,” he says.

After graduation, Stenson built his career in cardiology, often working on innovative projects. He completed his fellowship at Stanford, where, working with Hewlett-Packard, he helped to develop software to facilitate the analysis of hemodynamic data in the heart catheterization laboratory. After serving two years as a consultant cardiologist in the Air Force, Stenson’s career was dedicated to working in interventional cardiology in clinical practice, particularly in the early days of angioplasty.

“I don’t think you can find a better place than Harvard to donate,” Stenson says. “If you want to make a contribution, the Medical School would be the best place I can think of.”

WIMBERLEY PROFESSORSHIP PROPELS RESEARCH ON AGING AND NEUROLOGICAL DISEASE

Kirk R. Daffner, MD ’84, chief of the Division of Cognitive and Behavioral Neurology and director of the Center for Brain/Mind Medicine at Brigham and Women’s Hospital (BWH), has been installed as the first incumbent of the J. David and Virginia Wimberley Professorship in Neurology at HMS. Established by J. David and Virginia Wimberly—a generous philanthropic partner and advocate for neurodegenerative research across HMS—the professorship recognizes the stellar care his late wife received at BWH.

Above, left to right: Martin A. Samuels, MD, chairman of the Department of Neurology at BWH and professor of Neurology at HMS; Wimberly; Daffner; Dean Jeffrey S. Flier, MD, and Betsy Nabel, MD, president of BWH and professor of medicine at HMS; celebrate the Wimberly Professorship at the April event.

John Burris, MD, president of the BWF, recognizes a distinct benefit of the gift. As a transition award, it bridges advanced postdoctoral training and the early years of faculty service. “These awards provide essential funding at an important stage in their careers,” he says. The grant allows Harvey to build a lab and get a study going, ultimately leading to more research support down the road.

Equally important is the gift’s support of science spanning multiple disciplines. While Harvey’s team is focusing on the biological aspects of the study, the gift advances the engineering and physics initiatives that are key to developing the virtual reality system and new microscopy tools.

“This gift is so important, not only by supporting me at a crucial point in my career, but by providing funding that opens new doors for what’s possible in developing technology across disciplines,” Harvey says.

The concrete models of the biological framework developed through this research will lead to a better understanding of why breakdowns of the biological functions occur in diseases such as schizophrenia, autism, and dementia.

“So little is known about how the brain works. To understand it, we need to start by examining how it performs basic computations,” notes Harvey.

Christopher Harvey, PhD, assistant professor of Neurobiology, has received a prestigious Career Award from the Burroughs Welcome Fund (BWF), an independent private foundation dedicated to advancing the biomedical sciences by supporting research and educational activities. Harvey will receive $500,000 over five years to study how the brain makes simple decisions—such as choosing to turn left or right at the end of the street—to provide a basic understanding of the biological mechanisms of brain function.

Employing a virtual reality maze developed specifically for this study, Harvey uses new technology, including microscopy and electrical monitoring tools, to track the basic functions that occur in mice as they make decisions.

Christopher Harvey, PhD, assistant professor of Neurobiology at Harvard Medical School, has received a prestigious Career Award from the Burroughs Wellcome Fund (BWF), an independent private foundation dedicated to advancing the biomedical sciences by supporting research and educational activities. Harvey will receive $500,000 over five years to study how the brain makes simple decisions—such as choosing to turn left or right at the end of the street—to provide a basic understanding of the biological mechanisms of brain function.

Employing a virtual reality maze developed specifically for this study, Harvey uses new technology, including microscopy and electrical monitoring tools, to track the basic functions that occur in mice as they make decisions.

**Charitable gift annuity furthers regenerative biology**

**Burroughs Wellcome Fund gift explores basic brain function**
Much of the work over the last decade, including the anonymous gift explores human origins. This groundbreaking work has not only garnered public interest and broad media attention, but it recently inspired a generous gift from an anonymous donor supporting Reich’s deeper exploration of human origins.

"Much of the work over the last decade, including the Human Genome Project, Human Haplotype Map Project, and the Thousand Genomes Project, has focused on studies that look at human history to understand how it influences the genetic risk factors for disease," says Reich. "This work has been driven by the needs of medical geneticists—who have been trying to search for disease genes with as much statistical power as possible—but fundamentally these are historical questions. Directly addressing the historical questions is what my lab is focused on."

Disease hotspots
Scientists like Reich have only recently begun to explore the genetic differences between individuals and populations, as well as the role those differences play in human health. As researchers begin to parse those differences, a crucial tool is a genetic map, which specifies the precise areas where DNA from the mother and father has been reshuffled to produce a single, reproductive cell.

This reshuffling process, by which huge chunks of chromosomes are stitched together at specific locations during sexual reproduction, is known as recombination. Together with mutation, recombination accounts for all the genetic—and physical—variety seen within species. Recently, researchers have identified a DNA code that allows them to zero in on the exact locations where recombination typically occurs, referred to as recombination hotspots.

"Areas in the genome where there are recombination hotspots can also be disease hotspots. By charting them, we can identify those that have an especially high propensity for causing disease," says Reich, whose lab explained the increased risk for prostate cancer in African Americans by identifying a locus containing seven independent risk factors on chromosome 8 that did not exist in other populations.

Despite the importance and implications of this research, Reich says securing public funding for his studies on human history has been difficult—until now.

"There has been a disconnect between the importance of our work and funding for it," says Reich, adding that this gift has enabled him to add specialized facilities for processing ancient human biological material while avoiding contamination with modern human DNA. "We are thankful to the visionary private donor who stepped forward to fill that void."

Anonymous gift explores human origins

Winston Churchill said that the farther back you can look, the farther forward you are likely to see. Perhaps no one understands that more than David Reich, PhD, professor of Genetics at Harvard Medical School, whose research focuses on the interface of disease gene mapping and human evolutionary history.

Reich uses population mixture as a tool for learning about human biology. He is also the leading U.S. researcher in using DNA to study human history. In recent years, he and international teams of genetic researchers have discovered an extinct group of humans, offered the firmest proof yet that humans interbred with Neanderthals, and completed the world’s most detailed human genetic map to date.

This groundbreaking work has not only captured the public imagination, but it recently inspired a generous gift from an anonymous donor supporting Reich’s deeper exploration of human origins.

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Gardner and Perlman cultivate tomorrow’s medical leaders

Phyllis Gardner, MD ’76, and her husband, Andrew Perlman, MD, PhD, have renewed their commitment to current students with a $100,000 gift supporting scholarship and financial aid.

"There’s a misconception that because we’re Harvard, we don’t have financial concerns," says Gardner. "As a volunteer I’ve had the chance to learn about the intricacies around the School’s finances and I’ve come to understand that our budget is constrained. Only a quarter of the School’s financial aid is covered by the endowment. Current use gifts are essential to bridge the gap and keep recruiting the best students."

In the last academic year, 82 percent of the student body received financial assistance, with $13.5 million awarded in scholarships.

Because Gardner’s career in medicine has been so rewarding, she wants to help remove barriers that may hinder others from following the same path. "I felt like I found my spot in the world when I entered HMS. My experiences as a student—and throughout my residency at MGH—tie me here," says Gardner, who is a professor at Stanford University School of Medicine. "We’re still the leader in medical education, and I will do whatever I can to keep it that way."

Perlman adds, "It’s upsetting that student indebtedness is often viewed as the ‘norm’ of a medical education. The impact of debt affects us all, reducing the number of students going into specialties where they’re needed most or working with disadvantaged patient populations. We feel our support makes a difference—not only for the students at HMS, but for their future patients as well."

HIRSCHHORN NAMED CONCORDIA PROFESSOR OF PEDIATRICS

Joel Hirschhorn, MD ’95, PhD ’95, director of the Center for Basic and Translational Obesity Research at Boston Children’s Hospital and HMS and senior associate member and co-director of the Metabolism Initiative at the Broad Institute, has been named the first incumbent of the Concordia Professorship in Pediatrics at Children’s. Established through anonymous gifts, the professorship will later be renamed in honor of Frederick Lovejoy Jr., MD, the William Berenberg Distinguished Professor of Pediatrics at HMS, following his retirement.

Hirschhorn’s research focuses on identifying genetic factors influencing height, weight, and other polygenic traits, then leveraging these discoveries to uncover novel human biology relevant to obesity and growth. He is also exploring how an understanding of human population genetics can inform genetic association studies, and vice versa.

At left: Lovejoy (left) and Hirschhorn celebrate the professorship at the Harvard Club of Boston.
Board of Fellows honors Boger’s service

Joshua Boger, PhD, executive chairman of Alkeus Pharmaceuticals, Inc., and founder and former chief executive officer at Vertex Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (left, with Board of Fellows member Martha Crowninshield) was recognized for his two-year term as chair of the Board of Fellows at the spring meeting. Fellow members Senator William Frist, MD ’78 (right), chairman of the Hope Through Healing Hands Foundation; Henri A. Termeer, former chairman, president, and chief executive officer of the Genzyme Corporation; and Freda C. Lewis-Hall, MD, senior vice president and chief medical officer at Pfizer Inc., each honored Boger with remarks about his service and leadership.

Dean Jeffrey S. Flier, MD, led members in the presentation of a special proclamation. “You have shared with Harvard Medical School your wisdom and expertise in biomedical science, you have endorsed and supported programs in translational biomedical research and therapeutics, you have provided vital guidance to the School’s leadership, and you have fostered a community of engagement and excellence among the Board of Fellows,” read Flier.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Dean Flier welcomed Frist and John W. Rowe, MD, professor at Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health, as the new chair and vice chair, respectively.

David William Rattner, MD, has been named the first incumbent of the Warshaw Family Professorship in Surgery. The professorship is named for the family of Andrew L. Warshaw, MD, who is the surgeon-in-chief and chairman emeritus in the Department of Surgery at MGH and the W. Gerald Austen Distinguished Professor of Surgery at HMS. Upon his retirement, it will be known as the Andrew L. Warshaw Professorship in Surgery.

Rattner, a founding member of the Massachusetts General Physicians Organization and the Center for Innovative Minimally Invasive Therapies, has held leadership roles in numerous national organizations, including the Boston Surgical Society, the Society for Surgery of the Alimentary Tract, and the Society of American Gastrointestinal Endoscopic Surgeons. He was appointed to MGH’s Department of Surgery in 1986 and named chief of the Division of Gastrointestinal and General Surgery in 1999. He became a professor of surgery at HMS in 2003, and currently directs the MGH Advanced Minimally Invasive Surgery Fellowship.

Above: Warshaw (right) congratulates Rattner at the January event.

San Francisco was the setting for the latest in the HMS Conversations series, focused on personalized genetics. Hosted by Genetics Advisory Council members G. Steven Burrill and Dennis Winger, the event featured an informative discussion on how HMS’s genetics initiatives are contributing to the evolution of more effective, individualized care.

Above, left to right: Scott Shafer, host of NPR’s “The California Report;” moderates the conversation with George Church, PhD, professor of Genetics at HMS and director of the Personal Genome Project, and Christine Seidman, MD, the Thomas W. Smith Professor of Genetics and Medicine at HMS and Brigham and Women’s Hospital and a Howard Hughes Medical Investigator.

“As our ability to interpret genomic data improves, and the cost of human genome sequencing continues to drop, we can imagine a future when everyone’s genome will be sequenced as a routine part of medical care,” said William W. Chin, MD ’72, executive dean for research and the Bertarelli Professor of Translational Medical Science.

‘CONVERSATION’ ON PERSONALIZED GENETICS

RATTNER NAMED WARSHAW FAMILY PROFESSOR OF SURGERY

‘CONVERSATION’ ON PERSONALIZED GENETICS
Two Harvard Medical School researchers have joined the battle to find a cure for blood cancers, thanks to a $360,000 fellowship from the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS). Alexis Lomakin, PhD, a research fellow in the Department of Cell Biology, and Richelle Sopko, PhD, a research fellow in the Department of Genetics, are the newest fellows in the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society’s Career Development Program.

“It is always a deep satisfaction and a real thrill to know that the kind of science that you do at the bench is valid far beyond the borders of your lab,” says Lomakin, who studies microtubules and key cell molecules to see how they change when different chemical signaling pathways are disturbed in living cells. He hopes that understanding the mechanisms behind microtubule organization in motile cells will elicit promising new targets for treatments of acute lymphoblastic leukemia and Hodgkin’s lymphoma.

Sopko will be studying the blood system of the common fruit fly, which has many similarities to the human blood system, to understand how alterations in its genes affect the growth and function of blood cells. In particular, she will research a gene called PVR that fruit flies need for survival. Too much of the human counterpart of this gene results in tumors and leukemias, and Sopko hopes to understand how this gene encourages human blood cells to grow.

William (Bill) Elliott Jr., MD ’37, was no stranger to medicine. Born and raised in the rural farming town of Bunceton, Mo., his father was a country doctor. After his family helped fund his medical education at Harvard, Elliott went on to become the first surgeon in Palm Springs, Calif., in 1947. It was there he and his wife, Ruth, made a life together and raised their family.

Two of the couple’s four daughters, Nancy and Susan Elliott, say that what punctuated their parents’ 62-year marriage was their passion for seeing the world. Their travels took them to more than 150 countries, from Afghanistan and China’s Silk Road to Antarctica, Siberia, and Mongolia.

Following the death of their parents, Nancy, along with her husband, Paul Johnston, and Susan, with her husband, Pat Nicollete, chose to pay tribute to them—and their global sensibilities—through charitable remainder trusts that support global health initiatives at HMS and the Harvard School of Public Health.

The Ruth S. and William Elliott Jr., MD Fund for Innovation will ultimately support the Global Health Delivery Program (GHD) under the direction of Paul Farmer, MD ’90, PhD ’90, the Kolokotrones University Professor at Harvard University and chair of the Department of Global Health and Social Medicine at HMS. The GHD trains and supports students and faculty working to establish the effective design and implementation of health care programs in resource-poor settings worldwide.

A second fund, directed by HSPH, will support the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and its mission to relieve human suffering in war and disaster by advancing the science and practice of humanitarian response. In the meantime, Harvard manages the trusts and pays the beneficiaries a percentage of the value as annual income.

“Harvard Medical School changed our father’s life, and it was an important part of who he was,” says Nancy Elliott. “We wanted to honor our parents and support a cause we believed in at the same time.”

“Ezekiel Hersey Council members have made significant financial commitments to the future success of Harvard Medical School,” Cohen says. “Being a part of such a dedicated group of supporters is a true pleasure.”

Ezekiel Hersey Council co-chair Jordan Cohen, MD ’60, welcomed more than 70 members to the council’s annual dinner in May. The Ezekiel Hersey Council recognizes alumni and friends of Harvard Medical School who are investing in the future of discovery and medicine by establishing life income gifts or including HMS in their estate plans.

“Ezekiel Hersey Council members have made significant financial commitments to the future success of Harvard Medical School,” Cohen says. “Being a part of such a dedicated group of supporters is a true pleasure.”

Members and their guests were treated to a presentation by Dennis Selkoe, MD, co-chair of Harvard NeuroDiscovery and Vincent and Stella Coates Professor of Neurologic Diseases, about the advancements his team is making in the treatment of Alzheimer’s disease. Above: Daniel D. Federman, MD ’53, the Carl W. Walter Distinguished Professor of Medicine and Medical Education, talks with fellow Ezekiel Hersey Council member Gordon C. Weir, MD ’67, and his wife, Susan Bonner-Weir, PhD.
Sept. 24

Warren Alpert Foundation Prize Symposium
Celebrate the winners of the 2012 Warren Alpert Foundation Prize—Julian Adams, PhD; Kenneth C. Anderson, MD; Alfred L. Goldberg, PhD; and Paul G. Richardson, MD—who played a leading role in the discovery, preclinical and clinical development, and FDA approval of bortezomib as a front-line therapy for patients with multiple myeloma. The event runs from 2:30–5:30 p.m. at the Joseph B. Martin Conference Center, located at 77 Avenue Louis Pasteur in Boston. Moderated by Joan Brugge, PhD, chair of the Department of Cell Biology at HMS, the symposium features remarks by HMS Dean Jeffrey S. Flier, MD.

For more information or to RSVP, contact Caitlin Craig at 617-384-8467 or caitlin_craig@hms.harvard.edu.

Oct. 18

12th Annual Hollis L. Albright, MD ’31 Symposium
Join us from 5–7 p.m. in the New Research Building Amphitheater for a scintillating discussion of the new scientific initiatives underway at HMS. Featuring an update by Dean Jeffrey S. Flier, MD, the symposium will be moderated by George Daley, MD, PhD, Samuel E. Lux IV Professor of Hematology/Oncology at Boston Children’s Hospital, and includes keynote presentations by Elizabeth Nabel, MD, president of Brigham and Women’s and Faulkner Hospitals and professor of medicine at HMS, and John Parrish, MD, CEO of the Center for Integration of Medicine and Integrative Technology (CIMIT) and the Edward Wigglesworth Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Dermatology at HMS.

To RSVP or for more information, contact Meredith Tremblay at 617-384-8520 or email hmsalum@hms.harvard.edu.

Nov. 4

Alumni Reception in San Francisco
Live in the San Francisco area or planning to attend the Association of American Medical Colleges’ (AAMC) annual conference? Don’t miss the HMS alumni reception at the Marriott Marquis from 6–7:30 p.m.

To RSVP or for more information, contact Alexandra Chase at 617-384-8596 or alexandra_chase@hms.harvard.edu.

March & April

Longwood Seminars
You don’t have to be a doctor to attend Harvard Medical School’s mini-med school classes, held in Boston’s Longwood Medical Area beginning March 5. Geared toward the general public, this free, evening seminar series features faculty from HMS and its affiliate hospitals presenting a range of topics, from nutrition and sleep dynamics to health care access and the human genome. Participants who attend three out of the four sessions receive a certificate of completion.

Registration is required. For more information, visit hms.harvard.edu/content/longwood-seminars or email longwood_seminars@hms.harvard.edu. To view the 2012 video series, visit youtube.com/harvardmedicalschool and click on the Longwood Seminars playlist.

May 30–31

Reunion
Reconnect, Rediscover, Reunion: Save the date and make plans to attend Reunion 2013. This year we celebrate classes ending in 3s and 8s. More than 500 alumni and friends will return to campus for the festivities, including a gala, class-specific activities, symposia from faculty and alumni, the Dean’s State of the School Address, tours, and much more.

Learn more at alumni.hms.harvard.edu/reunion or contact Anne Koza at 617-384-8520 or hmsalum@hms.harvard.edu. Ensure you’re receiving the latest event information by updating your email address at alumni.harvard.edu.

View all upcoming HMS events at hms.harvard.edu/events. Can’t join us in person? Download our Harvard Medical Labcasts at hms.harvard.edu/podcasts or visit the HMS YouTube Channel.