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By Eve Silberman

“I was one of those kids who went to the museum and read every single label,” says Leilah Lyons, a U-M graduate student in electrical engineering and computer science. Lyons’s love of museums inspired her to pursue the new Museum Studies Program Certificate at U-M, which included her internship at the Hands-On Museum in Ann Arbor. While pursuing an academic career, Lyons also wants to participate in the emerging field of educational software design for museums—hoping to create an experience for today’s children that matches her excitement during long-family trips to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C.

At the Hands-On Museum, Lyons created a “design document” for a “[computer] game that teaches you about the ecology of a watershed.” A design document, she explains, “is a paper document that specifies how a specific piece of software is to be created. I didn’t make the software itself while I was interning, but I am working on programming it now. “A totally different kind of learning occurs in museums as opposed to classrooms,” Lyons says. “This puts more pressure on software developers to provide applications that are attractive and that quickly, clearly and intuitively communicate their lessons.” In a museum, children do not exhibit the patience they might in a classroom for sitting still and doing a lot of reading, she explains. They want to be quickly engaged in an activity. At the same time, the standards in some ways have to be even higher than they are for educational software in the classroom because children in a museum might not be accompanied by a teacher who can explain and clarify. Lyons’s doctoral work involves educational software research, much of it focused around a shared simulation framework she and another graduate student, Joseph Lee, designed called MUSHI (Multi-User Simulation with Handheld Integration). It involves handheld computers that allow individual students to “inspect” in detail aspects of a larger display. She has designed a chemistry simulation where students in small groups can view the movement of molecules on personal computers called Tablet PC’s. Simultaneously, the smaller handheld computers allow them to see the individual atoms that comprise a molecule. “The really cool part,” says Lyons, “is that the students could, for example, ‘create’ atoms with differing numbers of protons, neutrons, and electrons on their handhelds, then ‘release’ them in the larger display, and see how they would react with other atoms in the larger display. Would they form molecules? Isms?” An important part of the process is that it encourages collaboration. Lyons says she is a contrast to “one kid, one computer” set-ups where students work in isolation. With MUSHI, the kids are each asked to complete certain tasks, then share their findings with the other kids in their group. The MUSHI system is aware of every action taken by the students with their handheld devices, so a kid might see a pop-up on the handheld that says, “Share your findings with Dave.” “The more we study about how kids learn,” says Lyons, “we find they really get a lot out of talking to their peers.” She says both the Ann Arbor Hands-on Museum and the U-M Exhibit Museum of Natural History are interested in testing the software. Lyons is the recipient of a Rackham Executive Board 15

Rackham Alumni Magazine

Published annually by the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies

Janet A. Weiss, Dean, Rackham Graduate School and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

Jill McDermagh, Director of Development and Alumni Relations

Cover Photo: Paul Jaronski, The Reading Room

Contributing Photographers:

D. C. Gerleng, Skip Keenly, Bill Wood

Rackham Alumni Magazine welcomes your comments.
Please send correspondence to Elyse Rubin, Senior Editor, 915 East Washington Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1070 or e-mail: elyserbu@umich.edu

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The Reading Room

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Janet Weiss never ceases to wonder at the scope and quality of interdisciplinary activities at the University of Michigan, and she has had plenty of opportunities to do so. When she was appointed associate provost for academic affairs in May 2002, her 20 years as a faculty member included stints as associate dean of the Business School (now the Ross School of Business), associate director of the Institute of Public Policy Studies (now the Ford School of Public Policy), and director of the U-M’s Nonprofit and Public Management Center (a collaborative effort of the Schools of Business, Public Policy and Social Work). She had also served on the executive committees of the Institute for Social Research, the Institute for Research on Women and Gender, and the Rackham Graduate School.

“I thought I knew the University really well because I had multiple appointments and had a lot of friends who worked all over the University,” says Weiss, who left the provost’s office to begin her duties as Rackham’s dean on August 1. “I was stunned to discover the whole range and breadth of the scholarly life of the University. When you have the perspective of the provost’s office, you see even more than you see from the vantage point of any particular school or college, and it’s breathtaking, it’s exhilarating, it’s amazing. That’s one of the reasons why the Rackham position was attractive to me: it also has a perspective that cuts across a very wide range of the University’s activities, and that’s very, very exciting.”

In her view, the interdisciplinary environment is an integral part of what makes Michigan great, and Rackham is one of its chief vehicles. Strengthening that position, she says, will be one of the principal themes of her term as dean.

“Rackham is home for a set of graduate degree programs that cross the boundaries of schools and colleges,” says Weiss. “I’m very interested in helping those programs evolve and thrive. These are incredibly important programs. They are an example of what Michigan does better than any other university. Providing them with appropriate administrative support, keeping them on sound financial footing and facilitating their stellar academic rigor is a really important role for Rackham to play.”

Weiss sees improving the sense of partnership between Rackham and other schools and colleges as an essential component in maintaining the infrastructure such programs require. “Making Rackham a stronger partner is a very high priority for me,” she says. “That extends all the way from good communication, dean to dean, to close communication concerning Rackham activities and parallel activities in schools and colleges, such as admissions, recruiting, and student records. Getting a high-quality, seamless information transfer is a key theme for me.”

Weiss’s commitment to diversity is both deep and personal—she was in the first class of women undergraduates admitted to Yale University, where she earned her bachelor’s degree before going on to receive a PhD in psychology and social relations from Harvard—but she recognizes that, ultimately, one of the best recruiting tools is retention. “Rackham has played a very important role over the years in supporting schools and colleges in their efforts to diversify their graduate student population, and that will continue to be the case,” she says, “but I’m also interested in addressing issues of climate and retention, so that all of our graduate students have an environment that helps them to succeed.”

Speaking of environments, Weiss has one more wish on her list. “It is my goal to have students from around the campus come here often and hold events, so that our graduate students have the opportunity to connect academically and socially right here in the glorious Rackham Building.”
Our Tradition of Excellence

At the University of Michigan Rackham Graduate School, the paths of alumni, faculty, staff, friends and current graduate students begin and still converge. Since conferring its first doctoral degree in 1876, the University of Michigan has advanced the value of graduate education in meeting society’s needs. We have used our individual skills and training to mentor, teach, inspire, discover, invent and lead as we transform our global community in thousands of ways throughout the world.

In 1935, Mary Rackham worked with President Alexander Ruthven to endow the Graduate School with the means to support graduate education at Michigan. Today, we are housed in the magnificent and newly restored Rackham Building and joined by the rigors of academic pursuits in over 120 graduate programs across the depth and breadth of the University. Our heritage of excellence continues to draw exceptional faculty and graduate students from around the world to the University of Michigan, and each year the process of training future citizen-scholars begins anew.

Support of Graduate Studies

The Rackham Graduate School has changed dramatically since our founding in 1915, although, most importantly, we remain the largest single source of graduate student financial aid. Almost two-thirds of our annual budget is designated for student support, a critical source of fellowships and grants for nearly 7,000 students. We are committed to recruiting and retaining the best-qualified students from diverse communities in the US and abroad, and financial aid is an important tool in that effort. Our ability to continue to attract the best and brightest to Michigan increasingly depends upon our ability to compete abroad, and financial aid is an important tool in that effort. Our ability to continue to attract the best and brightest to Michigan increasingly depends upon our ability to compete abroad, and financial aid is an important tool in that effort.

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By Eve Silberman

Keiko Beppu, holder of two University of Michigan degrees, is President of the Matsuyama Shinonome College, a women’s college in Matsuyama, Japan.

Beppu didn’t intend to be a trailblazer. A 1959 graduate of Kobe College where she majored in English, she had worked after graduation as a translator. With the encouragement of one of her Kobe College professors, she made the bold decision to go to a graduate school in the United States and earn a doctorate in English literature.

She applied to more than twenty graduate schools in the United States. Most schools admitted her but offered no financial aid. She had already told Cornell she would go there, she recalls, when on March 29, 1966, Professor Frank Huntley sent her a telegram telling her she had won one of the coveted Barbour Scholarships. Established by former Regent Levi Barbour in 1914, the scholarships help women attend the University of Michigan, and build bridges between people of the United States and Asia.

The Barbour Scholarship tipped the scales for Beppu. “The Barbour helped me complete my graduate studies at Michigan,” she reflects. “Both the degree and the experience I have had as a Barbour Scholar are my assets for life.”

More than three decades after she studied in Ann Arbor, Beppu has donated $100,000 for the Barbour Scholarship endowment. An additional $100,000 is in her will. “I’m simply giving back a small portion of what I owe to Michigan and its educational principles,” she says. She was motivated “by my belief in education in general, and especially education for women, who should be given a greater chance for creating a better, sustainable society and world community.”

At Michigan, Beppu received both an M.A. (1967) and an Ed.D (1972) in English Language and Literature. She wrote her dissertation on the writings of Henry James and the British critic Walter Pater, and it was later published in Japan.

Beppu recalls being taken aback by the sight of American students coming to class with a cup full of coffee or knitting while the teacher lectured, which she gradually got used to. “And, she says, “students calling their professors by their first name is still a bit strange to me.” In the turbulent year, 1968, she vividly remembers students crowding out onto the Diag in front of the graduate library with a glass of beer in hand, celebrating the occasion of President Johnson’s announcement of ceasing bombing of North Vietnam.

But some of her favorite memories are of U-M faculty. The late Frank Huntley of the Barbour Scholarship Committee became a friend. “Frank Huntley and his wife were the parent figures to all the Barbour Scholars,” she recalls. She enjoyed Shakespeare classes as taught by the late John Arthos, whom she would visit whenever she was in Ann Arbor. “Lines from Shakespeare are the source of my inspiration in teaching and in writing as well,” she says.

After returning to Japan, Beppu taught English and American literature at her alma mater, Kobe College, for thirty years, while continuing to publish and speak at academic conferences around the world. Her most recent book is a collection of essays on Henry James. In 1999, she became president of Matsuyama Shinonome, where she teaches one class, “ Cultures of English-Speaking Peoples,” to freshmen. She is building the cross-cultural undergraduate exchange programs the college has with universities in China, as well as Pitzer College in California and Stephens College in Missouri.

“My experience at U-M and in Ann Arbor has convinced me of the importance of the exchange of different ideas and cultures,” she says.
You can try whatever you want before making a final decision about what lab or program you want to join. It definitely helps to be able to have the flexibility in your first year to explore..."

Chris EVELYN

By Jeff Mortimer

They’re always on the scene, so we know they’re involved. But what, exactly, are they doing there and, more to the point, how do we stop them? This is the mystery that Chris Evelyn, a third-year doctoral student in the laboratory of Dr. Rick Neubig in the Department of Pharmacology, is trying to help solve. “They” are Rho GTPases, a class of proteins that play an important role in the biological processes within the cell. These mysterious proteins, Rho GTPases, are thought to potentially play a role in the metastasis of cancers. “The overall goal of my project is to understand the role of the Rho signaling pathway in cancer metastasis,” says Evelyn. “A lot of times when a protein is overexpressed in cancer cells, it tends to be playing some role in the cancer’s progression. We don’t really understand the molecular mechanism of the role that Rho plays in different steps of cancer metastasis. Having a compound that can obstruct the pathway can help us understand better what role Rho may be playing in cancer. It’s a pretty good bet it’s doing something, but it may be playing one role in one type of cancer and no role in another, or a big role in one kind and a less important role in another. That’s sort of the problem with cancer: there are so many proteins and so many things that can be regulating that it can get pretty complicated and confusing. We’re only trying to understand one small piece of a big jigsaw puzzle.”

That’s often what toiling in the vineyard of scientific research entails, and science has fascinated Evelyn since he was a boy growing up in Wheatley Heights, on New York’s Long Island. “Like most people interested in science, upon entering college I initially wanted to be an MD,” he says, “but I did some laboratory research the summer after my junior year at Duke University, and that whetted my appetite and initiated my interest in pharmacology.”

Evelyn was attracted to Michigan in part by the Program in Biomedical Sciences (PIBS), which coordinates admissions and the first year of graduate studies for 13 PhD programs. One significant benefit for students is that they aren’t required to make a final decision on which program they will enter until the end of the year. “You can try whatever you want before making a final decision about what lab or program you want to join,” he says. “It definitely helps to be able to have the flexibility in your first year to explore, if you’re not sure what you want to do.”

It also helped that Evelyn had one of the fellowships that Rackham awards to PIBS students. “Without that funding,” he says, “I would not have had the opportunity to rotate through several labs and weigh my options before making the important decision of choosing the lab that fit me best to do my doctoral dissertation.”

It was a decision that added a highly promising member to the team pursuing some very important answers.
OUR DONORS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

by Jeff Mortimer

When she was a graduate student in speech at the University of Michigan, a Rackham Prize Fellowship made it possible for Joan B. Kessler to finish her PhD in two years, which also made it possible for her to leave Ann Arbor along with her husband Warren (Skip) Kessler when he graduated from the University of Michigan Law School in 1973. She eventually earned a law degree herself, and they’re now partners in the Los Angeles firm of Kessler & Kessler, A Law Corporation.

Her family’s U-M roots are more than a century old: her great uncle Samuel Kessler graduated from the University of Michigan Law School in 1906, her father followed suit with BA and JD degrees and her aunt, uncle and sister are also graduates of various programs at Michigan. “There was no question in my mind when I was growing up that I would go to the University of Michigan,” she says. “I didn’t even apply to any other school. It was the realization of a lifelong dream to attend there, to follow in the family tradition.”

Kessler’s dissertation compared and analyzed the decision-making processes of six versus twelve member juries. The dissertation research was cited twice by the US Supreme Court in support of reducing jury size for certain cases. “Because of my interest in law and my work and after serving as a consultant to lawyers, it was not surprising that I would eventually go to law school,” says Kessler.

Kessler has not forgotten the paucity of female mentors she encountered while accomplishing her academic goals. To remedy that situation, and to express her ongoing gratitude to Rackham for its assistance, she followed in another family tradition—giving back to the University by establishing the Joan B. Kessler Foundation for Women Graduate Students in 2003.

“One of the things that I’ve always felt was very important in my professional life is supporting young women coming up,” she says, “and as a teacher, as a professor, and now as a lawyer, I have devoted a lot of time and energy to that. In that regard, I decided to establish an award to assist women graduate students in research-related travel and other dissertation-related expenses that may not be covered by another source.”

The $2,500 Joan B. Kessler Award is given annually on her birthday, which is also the occasion of efforts to grow the Fund. Has invited women friends and professional colleagues to celebratory luncheons and asked that they make donations to her Fund at Rackham. The first such affair raised more than $10,000, to which she and her husband added their own gift of $25,000. She raised more than $15,000 at a birthday celebration this year bringing the total Joan B. Kessler Award Fund to over $60,000.

“I think that women have a responsibility to help young women coming up in the professional ranks achieve their goals,” she says, “and one thing this shows is you don’t have to give a million to have an impact. We’re not in a position to do that, but we were in a position to give back and be supportive, and the three women who have gotten these awards so far are tremendously capable women who just needed a little help.”

It also shows that there’s room for creativity in philanthropy. “You don’t just have to give a donation,” Kessler says. “You can use a birthday party or an anniversary or any life milestone as a cause for celebration and as a way to encourage others to donate to Rackham.”

The passage of the years doesn’t just bring the resources to help; it can also bring the wisdom spawned by a longer perspective. “As you get older,” she says, “the personal gifts one might receive are not as meaningful as are donations in your honor to a cause like the Rackham Graduate School at the University of Michigan, which is very close to my heart.”

By Jeff Mortimer

It’s one thing to devote your life’s work to higher education. It’s another to devote your money to it. University President Mary Sue Coleman and her husband, political scientist Kenneth Coleman, have done both throughout their careers, but never quite so spectacularly as last fall, when they pledged $500,000 to the university’s current fund-raising campaign, The Michigan Difference.

“We’ve always felt that it was important to set an example,” says President Coleman. “It just felt right to give if you’re asking others to give.”

“We’ve never seen an institution where there wasn’t something to be an enthusiastic supporter of,” says Kenneth Coleman, “but the number of ‘somethings’ is far higher at Michigan than elsewhere.”

From that diverse and distinguished buffet, the Colemans chose the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies to be the largest single beneficiary of their largesse: $150,000 of their gift will launch the Mary Sue and Kenneth Coleman Endowed Rackham Graduate Fellowship Fund.

“Ken and I believe in graduate education and the importance of graduate education,” says President Coleman, “and in the absolute necessity of having funding for students. There are very few people who have the resources to pay to get a PhD on top of an undergraduate education. We want to stimulate fund-raising for graduate education.”

For them, it’s a clear case of maximal targeting.

“If you want to keep your superstar faculty, have great graduate students,” says Kenneth Coleman. “If you want to enhance the reputation of your institution nationally and internationally, have great PhDs. If you want to stimulate the economy of the state, have good graduate education.”

The Colemans saw a vivid demonstration of that point when they were at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. “Without graduate education, there would be no Research Triangle, period, end of story,” says Kenneth Coleman. “That’s what the competition is doing, so that’s what we need to be doing in Michigan, too.”

But gaining a competitive advantage is far from the whole story. “I want people to know I care deeply about the quality of the experience that students have here,” says President Coleman.

The Colemans’ pattern of giving began, appropriately, with the Iowa liberal arts college where both spent their undergraduate careers. “We started giving to Grimmell shortly after we graduated,” says President Coleman. “We didn’t give very much because we didn’t have very much, but we felt it had been such a wonderful experience that we wanted to give back.”

Despite their modest means, “We felt our money could make a real difference if targeted very carefully,” says Kenneth Coleman. Their ability to give has increased, but they have remained steadfast in their desire to give effectively.

“I feel an enormous responsibility to make available the resources that people need here,” says President Coleman, “because I am exposed constantly to the great ideas that people have across the university. I want them to be able to make those become real.”

The Colemans’ pattern of giving photo by Skip Kessler

Mary Sue and Ken Coleman

“Our donors making a difference

“One of the things that I’ve always felt was very important in my professional life is supporting young women coming up.”

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And in the long run, solidly supported graduate education is one of the foundations of the quality of that experience, here and elsewhere.

“People will remember the great professors from their undergraduate experience, but they don’t think about how they became great professors,” says Kenneth Coleman, “and that has to do with graduate education. Great teachers don’t fall fully formed from the heavens. Somehow their natural gifts have to be refined.”

The Colemans’ pattern of giving photo by Martin Ploat
Laura

Each summer, graduate students at the University of Michigan leave Ann Arbor to conduct research projects around the world. Generous support from Rackham alumni allows our students to work at archaeological digs, conduct research in international archives and museums, or participate in collaborative scientific research.

A true citizen of the world, Laura Kennedy was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, moved with her parents to Guernsey, an English island off the coast of France, and has now spent the last two summers in Russia to pursue her studies of the composer Dmitri Shostakovich. Laura first became fascinated with Shostakovich as an undergraduate studying piano performance at Wheaton College, an interest that has carried over to her doctoral studies at Michigan in Musicology. In 2004, Kennedy was invited by the Russian Association of International Cooperation to spend three months in St. Petersburg to research archives and to interview both Russian musicologists and some of Shostakovich’s contemporaries. A Rackham Enrichment Fund Award made Laura’s trip possible and created my opportunities in Russia.”

Some Final Thoughts:
While the summer’s work has laid foundations, an extended period of international research is critical for building on the opportunities now opened. If the possibilities for research, archival work, meetings, and introductions become concrete realities, I believe that the information and analysis could not only contribute significantly to Shostakovich studies, but could also reshape our understanding of the Stalinist era and the life of its greatest composer.

So far, Western scholarship has tended to offer only colorful snapshots of Shostakovich as a political figure. Arguments have centered on artist vs. dictator (Shostakovich vs. Stalin), politically encoded music and personal angst, the authenticity or veracity of books, reminiscences, and memoirs about Shostakovich. But these views, though appealing, have often been thinly veiled spin-offs from our Western fascination with capitalism vs. communism. Russia’s cultural heritage, though rich and vast, and the music of its greatest 20th-century composer deserves more than a critical curiosity that remains unformed and distant. What made Shostakovich such a great composer? I love my subject. I love everything about it, and I love the many other topics it has raised—all language, literature, art and history, music, life and culture. The summer in Russia has deepened this passion. Even more, it has laid foundations and allowed me to begin crucial research.

I hardly know how to thank Rackham and the alumni of UM for my time in St. Petersburg. Rackham’s generous support created my opportunities in Russia; it made the research possible. Thank you is not enough—not nearly enough—but I say it with all my heart.

June 18, 2005
Life back in Russia has been good, challenging, sometimes frustrating, sometimes breathtaking—it’s always unpredictable. My living situation this time is wonderful. I’m with my dear friend and teacher from last year, Natasha. We are the same age, we share many of the same tastes and interests, and her kindness and generosity are beyond words. The apartment is far from the center of the city—at least a 45-minute commute by foot and metro—and we share two rooms on the top floor (65 steps up) of an old building. No elevators. There’s certainly no lack of exercise in this city.

July 1, 2005
Research has been progressing. So far, I’ve had weekly meetings with a close friend and colleague of Shostakovich. Next week I’ll have interviews at some of the city’s major libraries and at the Conservatoire, where some of Shostakovich’s former students now teach. I am also studying Russian intensively since most of my research requires strong language skills. Weekdays are taken up with language classes, meetings and interviews, research, reading, translation, studying. At home, Natasha and I speak only Russian. My linguistic innocence has led to some priceless exchanges. The best was when I told Natasha that I was going to “wash” her . . . I had meant to say, “help” her make dinner . . .

The St. Petersburg Conservatoire
The introduction here has been, perhaps, the most important development of the summer. In my view, the Conservatoire, with its library, archives and manuscripts, is a key facility and former students of Shostakovich, which holds a critical key to the dissertation research. Shostakovich taught here for many years; now, some of his former students are re-educators of theory, composition, history, and other fields of music. The library holds a large collection of Shostakovich’s works, as well as much of the Russian bibliography written on the composer. It also has original manuscripts and materials from the 1930s and 1940s and a division devoted solely to Russian and Soviet opera, ballet, and theater.

I have now been studying at the library 2-3 afternoons a week. I work with one of the archivists and another young graduate student and the Conservatoire archivist attended my first visit. I saw the manuscript rooms, the division for musical scores, and the holdings on opera and ballet. This summer, I am studying the catalogue. The first step, the archivist advised, is to know what materials exist and are available, and then to determine what I need. So I am examining lists of articles, journals, newspapers, programs, concert announcements, reviews, reactions, etc. I have pages of notes and bibliographic info—where to find these things when the departments are open and if I have the opportunity to return for an extended period of research.

“Rackham’s generous support created my opportunities in Russia.”

Photo by D. C. Goings
Laura

KENNEDY

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It's one thing to devote your life's work to higher education. It's another to devote your money to it. University President Mary Sue Coleman and her husband, political scientist Kenneth Coleman, have done both throughout their careers, but never quite so spectacularly as last fall, when they pledged $500,000 to the university's current fund-raising campaign, The Michigan Difference.

“We've always felt that it was important to set an example,” says President Coleman. “It just felt right to give if you're asking others to give.”

“We've never seen an institution where there wasn't something to be an enthusiastic supporter of,” says Kenneth Coleman, “but the number of 'somethings' is far higher at Michigan than elsewhere.”

From that diverse and distinguished buffet, the Colemans chose the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies to be the largest single beneficiary of their largesse: $150,000 of their gift will launch the Mary Sue and Kenneth Coleman Endowed Rackham Graduate Fellowship Fund. “Ken and I believe in graduate education and the importance of graduate education,” says President Coleman, “and in the absolute necessity of having funding for students. There are very few people who have the resources to pay to get a PhD on top of an undergraduate education. We want to stimulate fund-raising for graduate education.”

For them, it’s a clear case of maximal targeting.

“If you want to keep your superstar faculty, have great graduate students,” says Kenneth Coleman. “If you want to enhance the reputation of your institution nationally and internationally, have great PhDs. If you want to stimulate the economy of the state, have good graduate education.”

The Colemans saw a vivid demonstration of that point when they were at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. “Without graduate education, there would be no Research Triangle, period, end of story,” says Kenneth Coleman. “That’s what the competition is doing, so that’s what we need to be doing in Michigan, too.”

But gaining a competitive advantage is far from the whole story. “I want people to know I care deeply about the quality of the experience that students have here,” says President Coleman.

And in the long run, solidly supported graduate education is one of the foundations of the quality of that experience, here and elsewhere.

“People will remember the great professors from their undergraduate education, but they don’t think about how they became great professors,” says Kenneth Coleman, “and that has to do with graduate education. Great teachers don’t fall fully formed from the heavens. Somehow their natural gifts have to be refined.”

The Colemans’ pattern of giving began, appropriately, with the Iowa liberal arts college where both spent their undergraduate careers. “We started giving to Grinnell shortly after we graduated,” says President Coleman. “We didn’t give very much because we didn’t have very much, but we felt it had been such a wonderful experience that we wanted to give back.”

Despite their modest means, “We felt our money could make a real difference if targeted very carefully,” says Kenneth Coleman. Their ability to give has increased, but they have remained steadfast in their desire to give effectively. “I feel an enormous responsibility to make available the resources that people need here,” says President Coleman, “because I am exposed constantly to the great ideas that people have across the university. I want them to be able to make those become real.”

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“One of the things that I’ve always felt was very important in my professional life is supporting young women coming up.”

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Mary Sue and Ken COLEMAN
Chris EVELYN

By Jeff Mortimer

They’re always on the scene, so we know they’re involved. But what, exactly, are they doing there and, more to the point, how do we stop them?

This is the mystery that Chris Evelyn, a third-year doctoral student in the laboratory of Dr. Rick Neubig in the Department of Pharmacology, is trying to help solve. “They” are Rho GTPases, a class of proteins that play an important role in the biological processes within the cell. These mysterious proteins, Rho GTPases, are thought to potentially play a role in the metastasis of cancers.

“The overall goal of my project is to understand the role of the Rho signaling pathway in cancer metastasis,” says Evelyn. “A lot of times when a protein is overexpressed in cancer cells, it tends to be playing some role in the cancer’s progression. We don’t really understand the molecular mechanism of the role that Rho plays in different steps in cancer, but it’s been shown to be over-expressed in a lot of different cancers,” including colon, breast, lung, testicular, gastric, bladder, ovarian, inflammatory breast, pancreatic, and head and neck carcinoma.

Evelyn is currently developing a cell-based high-throughput screening assay in conjunction with the Center for Chemical Genomics at the Life Sciences Institute using luciferase (“the enzyme that fireflies use to glow”) to identify small chemical inhibitors of Rho’s nefarious behavior.

“Basically, we’re screening for compounds that are able to inhibit this pathway,” he says, “and if we find something using our luciferase readout, we can use the compound as a tool to study the mechanism of the Rho pathway in different steps of cancer metastasis. Having a compound that can obstruct the pathway can help us understand better what role Rho may be playing in cancer. It’s a pretty good bet it’s doing something, but it may be playing one role in one type of cancer and no role in another, or a big role in one kind and a less important role in another. That’s sort of the problem with cancer: there are so many proteins and so many things that can be regu-lating that it can get pretty complicated and confusing. We’re only trying to understand one small piece of a big jigsaw puzzle.”

That’s often what toiling in the vineyard of scientific research entails, and science has fascinated Evelyn since he was a boy growing up in Wheatley Heights, on New York’s Long Island. “Like most people interested in science, upon entering college I initially wanted to be an MD,” he says, “but I did some laboratory research the summer after my junior year at Duke University, and that whetted my appetite and initiated my interest in pharmacology.”

Evelyn was attracted to Michigan in part by the Program in Biomedical Sciences (PIBS), which coordinates admissions and the first year of graduate studies for 13 PhD programs. One significant benefit for students is that they aren’t required to make a final decision on which program they will enter until the end of the year.

“You can try whatever you want before making a final decision about what lab or program you want to join,” he says. “It definitely helps to be able to have the flexibility in your first year to explore, if you’re not sure what you want to do.”

It also helped that Evelyn had one of the fellowships that Rackham awards to PIBS students. “Without that funding,” he says, “I would not have had the opportunity to rotate through several labs and weigh my options before making the important decision of choosing the lab that fit me best to do my doctoral dissertation.”

It was a decision that added a highly promising member to the team pursuing some very important answers.
Keiko Beppu, holder of two University of Michigan degrees, is President of the Matsuyama Shinonome College, a women’s college in Matsuyama, Japan.

Beppu didn’t intend to be a trailblazer. A 1959 graduate of Kobe College where she majored in English, she had worked after graduation as a translator. With the encouragement of one of her Kobe College professors, she made the bold decision to go to a graduate school in the United States and earn a doctorate in English literature.

She applied to more than twenty graduate schools in the United States. Most schools admitted her but offered no financial aid. She had already told Cornell she would go there, she recalls, when on March 29, 1966, Professor Frank Huntley sent her a telegram telling her she had won one of the coveted Barbour Scholarships. Established by former Regent Levi Barbour in 1914, the scholarships help women attend the University of Michigan, and build bridges between people of the United States and Asia.

The Barbour Scholarship tipped the scales for Beppu. “The Barbour helped me complete my graduate studies at Michigan,” she reflects. “Both the degree and the experience I have had as a Barbour Scholar are my assets for life.”

More than three decades after she studied in Ann Arbor, Beppu has donated $100,000 for the Barbour Scholarship endowment. An additional $100,000 is in her will. “I’m simply giving back a small portion of what I owe to Michigan and its educational principles,” she says. She was motivated “by my belief in education in general, and especially education for women, who should be given a greater chance for creating a better, sustainable society and world community.”

At Michigan, Beppu received both an M.A. (1967) and an Ed.D (1972) in English Language and Literature. She wrote her dissertation on the writings of Henry James and the British critic Walter Pater, and it was later published in Japan.

Beppu recalls being taken aback by the sight of American students coming to class with a cup full of coffee or knitting while the teacher lectured, which she gradually got used to. And, she says, “students calling their professors by their first name is still a bit strange to me.” In the turbulent year, 1968, she vividly remembers students crowding out onto the Diag in front of the graduate library with a glass of beer in hand, celebrating the occasion of President Johnson’s announcement of ceasing bombing of North Vietnam.

But some of her favorite memories are of U-M faculty. The late Frank Huntley of the Barbour Scholarship Committee became a friend. “Frank Huntley and his wife were the parent figures to all the Barbour Scholars,” she recalls. She enjoyed Shakespeare classes as taught by the late John Arthos, whom she would visit whenever she was in Ann Arbor. “Lines from Shakespeare are the source of my inspiration in teaching and in writing as well,” she says.

After returning to Japan, Beppu taught English and American literature at her alma mater, Kobe College, for thirty years, while continuing to publish and speak at academic conferences around the world. Her most recent book is a collection of essays on Henry James. In 1999, she became president of Matsuyama Shinonome, where she teaches one class, “Cultures of English-Speaking Peoples,” to freshmen. She is building the cross-cultural undergraduate exchange programs the college has with universities in China, as well as Pitzer College in California and Stephens College in Missouri.

“My experience at U of M and in Ann Arbor has convinced me of the importance of the exchange of different ideas and cultures,” she says.
Our Tradition of Excellence

At the University of Michigan Rackham Graduate School, the paths of alumni, faculty, staff, friends and current graduate students begin and still converge. Since conferring its first doctoral degree in 1876, the University of Michigan has advanced the value of graduate education in meeting society’s needs. We have used our individual skills and training to mentor, teach, inspire, discover, invent and lead as we transform our global community in thousands of ways throughout the world. In 1935, Mary Rackham worked with President Alexander Ruthven to endow the Graduate School with the means to support graduate education at Michigan. Today, we are housed in the magnificent and newly restored Rackham Building and joined by the rigors of academic pursuits in over 120 graduate programs across the depth and breadth of the University. Our heritage of excellence continues to draw exceptional faculty and graduate students from around the world to the University of Michigan, and each year the process of training future citizens-scholars begins anew.

Support of Graduate Studies

The Rackham Graduate School has changed dramatically since our founding in 1935, although, most importantly, we remain the largest single source of graduate student financial aid. Almost two-thirds of our annual budget is designated for student support, a critical source of fellowships and grants for nearly 7,000 students. We are committed to recruiting and retaining the best-qualified students from diverse communities in the US and abroad, and financial aid is an important tool in that effort. Our ability to continue to attract the best and brightest to Michigan increasingly depends upon our ability to compete in meeting society’s needs. We have used our individual skills and training to mentor, teach, inspire, discover, invent and lead as we transform our global community in thousands of ways throughout the world.

The Rackham Campaign

The University of Michigan is in the midst of the most ambitious fundraising campaign in our history. The Michigan Difference seeks to raise $2.5 billion in support of students, faculty, facilities, programs and research. The Graduate School’s part of this campaign goal is $35 million, of which $31 million has already been donated by many of Rackham’s alumni and friends. Funds raised will enable Michigan to maintain its eminence as a center of graduate education by providing ample support—in the form of grants, fellowships and state-of-the-art resources—for our graduate students and programs.

Graduate students occupy an important niche in the University community. By examining difficult questions in new and exciting ways, graduate students challenge assumptions and push intellectual frontiers. The University’s ability to recruit and retain the best faculty is tied inextricably to the quality of the graduate students who will work with them on cutting-edge research. Graduate students enhance the quality of the undergraduate experience at Michigan by demonstrating exceptional ability and creativity as teachers and mentors in their own classrooms. To sustain the excellence of a Michigan education, we must provide sufficient support for our graduate students.

Join the Campaign!

We invite you to join with us in this endeavor. Your gift to The Michigan Difference Campaign may be designated for direct support of Rackham graduate students. Every gift received will be a wise and urgently needed investment not merely in the best in graduate education, but in the future well-being of our society and the world. Today, at always, a well-educated citizenry and a well-trained work force are crucial for human survival and progress. Just as the world currently benefits from your skills and talents, so the world will need the same from future generations of Michigan graduate students.

In this issue of Rackham Alumni Magazine, we introduce you to friends and alumni who have, whether individually or through corporate leadership, chosen to create their own legacy of support for the future of graduate education at Michigan. You will also learn how Rackham support is making a difference for graduate students across the University, enabling them to pursue critical and sometimes life-changing research opportunities.

(Continued on page 5)
ProQuest

“We get back from it at least as much as we contribute.” — Alan Aldworth

by Jeff Mortimer

The way Alan Aldworth sees it, his company’s generosity to the Rackham Graduate School is a two-way street. Aldworth is the president and CEO of ProQuest Company, a global provider of content and information solutions headquartered in Ann Arbor. One of its businesses is UMI, founded in 1938 as the microfilm vault holds the largest commercially available microform collection in the world. UMI has been renowned throughout its history as the publisher of record of nearly every dissertation produced in the United States and Canada, averaging 55,000 annually, usually including more than 600 by University of Michigan authors. Since 1987, first as an independent company and now as part of ProQuest’s Information and Learning Group, UMI has also been a co-sponsor of Rackham’s Distinguished Dissertation Awards, which recognize authors whose doctoral dissertations elude quantification, Aldworth believes they are nonetheless worthwhile. As he says of ProQuest’s support of the Distinguished Dissertation Awards, “Our shareholders can be happy that they are nonetheless worthwhile. As he says of ProQuest’s support of the Distinguished Dissertation Awards, “Our shareholders can be happy that they are nonetheless worthwhile. As he says of ProQuest’s support of the Distinguished Dissertation Awards, “Our shareholders can be happy that

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I appreciated graduate education for what it was when I was a graduate student,” says Savage. “Being a student and learning and having your light bulb on all the time is a lot of fun. In my current position, I am involved in higher education on a more national level, and I appreciate it not only for what it can do for individuals but also for society as a whole.

“We get back from it at least as much as we contribute,” says Savage, who also serves on the Rackham Dean’s Advisory Board and was on this year’s Dean Search Advisory Committee. “It’s one thing to believe in democracy and it’s another thing to vote.”

Aldworth had already spent more than a decade at the Tribune Company when he decided to pursue a master’s degree at Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management. Shortly after completing his studies there, he co-founded the company’s Tribune Education division, which grew to $375 million in sales before being sold. The principal thing that my graduate education did for me was to open my eyes to the importance of entrepreneurship and leading change in organizations,” he says, “which really encouraged me to try new things and be very strategic and bold in my career.”

ProQuest’s Information and Learning Group, where he earned his PhD in Asian Languages and Literature from Rackham in 1985 and just retired as the director of UMI Dissertations Publishing for ProQuest, can confirm their philosophy with their own experiences.

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Rackham a stronger partner is a very high priority for me,” she says. “That extends all the way from good communication, dean to dean, to close communication concerning Rackham activities and parallel activities in schools and colleges, such as admissions, recruiting, and student records. Getting a high-quality, seamless information transfer is a key theme for me.”

Weiss’s commitment to diversity is both deep and personal—she was in the first class of women undergraduates admitted to Yale University, where she earned her bachelor’s degree before going on to receive a PhD in psychology and social relations from Harvard—but she recognizes that, ultimately, one of the best recruiting tools is retention. “Rackham has played a very important role over the years in supporting schools and colleges in their efforts to diversify their graduate student population, and that will continue to be the case,” she says, “but I’m also interested in addressing issues of climate and retention, so that all of our graduate students have an environment that helps them to succeed.”

Weiss sees improving the sense of partnership between Rackham and other schools and colleges as an essential component in maintaining the infrastructure such programs require. “Making Rackham a stronger partner is a very high priority for me,” she says. “That extends all the way from good communication, dean to dean, to close communication concerning Rackham activities and parallel activities in schools and colleges, such as admissions, recruiting, and student records. Getting a high-quality, seamless information transfer is a key theme for me.”

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Speaking of environments, Weiss has one more wish on her list. “It is my goal to have students from around the campus come here often and hold events, so that our graduate students have the opportunity to connect academically and socially right here in the glorious Rackham Building.”
By Eve Silberman

“I was one of those kids who went to the museum and read every single label,” says Leilah Lyons, a U-M graduate student in electrical engineering and computer science. Lyons’s belief in the role of museums to inspire lifelong learning led her to pursue the new Museum Studies Program Certificate at U-M, which included her internship at the Hands-On Museum in Ann Arbor. While pursuing an academic career, Lyons also wants to participate in the emerging field of educational software design for museums—hoping to create an experience for today’s children that matches her excitement during long-ago family trips to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C.

At the Hands-on Museum, Lyons created a “design document” for a “[computer] game that teaches you about the ecology of a watershed.” A design document, she explains, “is a paper document that specifies how a specific piece of software is to be created. I didn’t make the software itself while I was interning, but I am working on programming it now.”

“Very different kind of learning occurs in museums as opposed to classrooms,” Lyons says. “This puts more pressure on software developers to provide applications that are attractive and that quickly, clearly and intuitively communicate their lessons.” In a museum, children do not exhibit the patience they might in a classroom for sitting still and doing a lot of reading, she explains. “They want to be quickly engaged in an activity. At the same time, the standards in some ways have to be even higher than they are for educational software in the classroom because children in a museum might not be accompanied by a teacher who can explain and clarify.”

Lyons’s doctoral work involves educational software research, much of it focused around a shared simulation framework she and another graduate student, Joseph Lee, designed. Lyons, “Multi-User Simulation with Handheld Integration.” It involves handheld computers that allow individual students to “inspect” in detail aspects of a larger display. She has designed a chemistry simulation where students in small groups can view the movement of molecules on personal computers called Tablet PCs. Simultaneously, the smaller handheld computers allow them to see the individual atoms that comprise a molecule. “The really cool part,” says Lyons, “is that the students could, for example, ‘create’ atoms with differing numbers of protons, neutrons, and electrons on their handhelds, then ‘release’ them in the larger display, and see how they would react with other atoms in the larger display. Would they form molecules? Is that the students could, for example, ‘create’ atoms with differing numbers of protons, neutrons, and electrons on their handhelds, then ‘release’ them in the larger display, and see how they would react with other atoms in the larger display. Would they form molecules? Is that the students could, for example, ‘create’ atoms with differing numbers of protons, neutrons, and electrons on their handhelds, then ‘release’ them in the larger display, and see how they would react with other atoms in the larger display. Would they form molecules? Is that the students could, for example, ‘create’ atoms with differing numbers of protons, neutrons, and electrons on their handhelds, then ‘release’ them in the larger display, and see how they would react with other atoms in the larger display. Would they form molecules? Is that...