



Living Legacies

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THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY



Rockefeller University's First Woman Ph.D. Student

Mary Agnes Bonneville first became interested in science while she was a student at Smith College. After graduating from Smith in 1953 and subsequently receiving an M.A. from Amherst College in 1955, she began her Ph.D. studies at Rockefeller. Mary Bonneville was the only woman in the first class of ten students admitted to the institution's newly formed graduate program. She spent six years at Rockefeller, working in the laboratory of Professors George Palade and Keith Porter.


Following her graduation from Rockefeller in 1961, Dr. Bonneville held postdoctoral appointments at Columbia, Tufts, and Harvard, and was briefly a faculty member at Brown and Harvard. In 1970, she followed her thesis advisor, Dr. Porter, to the University of Colorado at Boulder. She worked in the Department of Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology, which was founded by Dr. Porter, until 1996, when she retired as a full professor.

At the University of Colorado, Dr. Bonneville taught cell biology, microscopic anatomy, physiology, human reproduction, and electron microscopy techniques. She was a member of the American Society for Cell Biology, the Electron Microscopy Society of America,

and the American Association of Anatomists. A tireless champion for women in academia, Dr. Bonneville also chaired the University of Colorado's Committee on Women, working to develop the university's policies on sexual harassment and parental leave.

Keith Porter was a lifelong mentor, colleague, and friend to Dr. Bonneville, and they frequently collaborated on projects. They co-authored *An Introduction to Fine Structures of Cells and Tissues*, a comprehensive atlas of cell and tissue structure as revealed by electron microscopy. The book had four editions and a number of re-printings. Dr. Bonneville also conducted a series of television interviews with Dr. Porter and other prominent cell biologists to create an oral history of the field.

In 1987, Dr. Bonneville established the Mary Agnes Bonneville Living Trust. Wanting to support the institution that launched her career, she named The Rockefeller University as a remainder beneficiary. This wonderful commitment has provided generous support to Rockefeller, ensuring that future generations of women scientists would receive the mentorship and guidance necessary for a fulfilling and successful career in science.



Living Legacies is a periodic series highlighting benefactors who made the enormously helpful decision to include The Rockefeller University in their estate plans. In sharing what they have done, we hope to honor their dedication, and also to demonstrate how planned gifts can have a transformative impact on biomedical research at Rockefeller.

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