

# Living Legacies

ISSUE NINE | WINTER 2021

THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY





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## Honoring a Titan's Commitment to Philanthropy

**John C. Whitehead** (1922-2015) led an exceptional life. A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Haverford College, John enlisted in the United States Navy in 1943. He became a war hero, participating in the D-Day invasion of Normandy as well as the invasions of southern France, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. After World War II, John received an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School. He subsequently joined Goldman Sachs, where he worked until his retirement in 1984; he was named a partner in 1956 and co-chairman of the firm in 1976. Through his astute leadership, John helped Goldman Sachs become one of the world's preeminent investment banking institutions.

John's post-Goldman career was equally impressive. From 1985 to 1989, he served the Reagan administration as Deputy Secretary of State, the second highest position in the State Department. As he neared his 80th birthday, John was appointed chairman of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, formed in November 2001 with the mandate to rebuild the shattered site of the World Trade Center towers and revitalize downtown Manhattan. He was also the founding chairman of the 9/11 Memorial and Museum.

Widely known as an uber-trustee, John generously gave his time, talent, and resources to the boards of numerous nonprofit organizations. In 1989, he became a trustee of The Rockefeller University. For the rest of his life—as a trustee and, later, trustee emeritus—John dedicated himself to Rockefeller,

working tirelessly to raise awareness of the university and its mission of *Science for the Benefit of Humanity*. Through his advocacy and stewardship, the Annual Fund reached new levels of unrestricted support.

In 2009, in recognition of John's longstanding commitment to Rockefeller and in celebration of his 87th birthday, the university established the John C. Whitehead Presidential Fellowships, prestigious awards for outstanding early-career investigators. John's friends and colleagues donated funds to endow these fellowships. However, the most moving contribution was made by John himself. When he died in 2015 at the age of 92, he left a generous bequest to ensure that the endowment of the Whitehead Presidential Fellowships would generate, in perpetuity, the pivotal funding needed to support and propel the promising careers of select, exceptionally talented young scientists.

Today, the John C. Whitehead Presidential Fellowships provide extraordinary opportunities for recent doctoral graduates to conduct independent and interdisciplinary research, with a level of autonomy usually reserved for heads of laboratory. John's dedication to Rockefeller will endure long into the future through the Whitehead Fellowships and the scientific breakthroughs of the remarkable investigators who receive these distinguished awards. The Whitehead Presidential Fellowships are a lasting testament to a man who devoted his life to philanthropy and public service.



**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.

For more information, please contact:

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