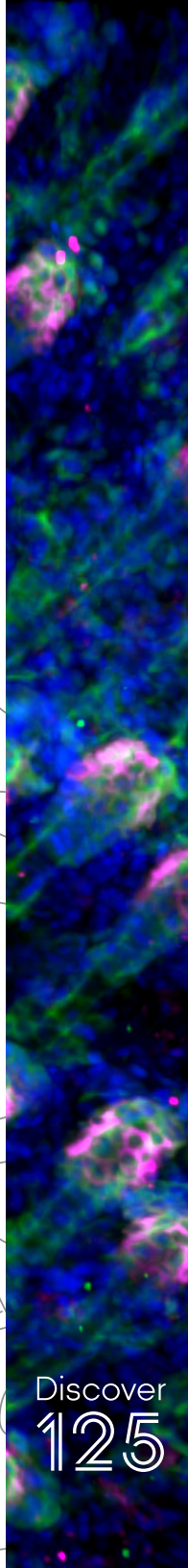
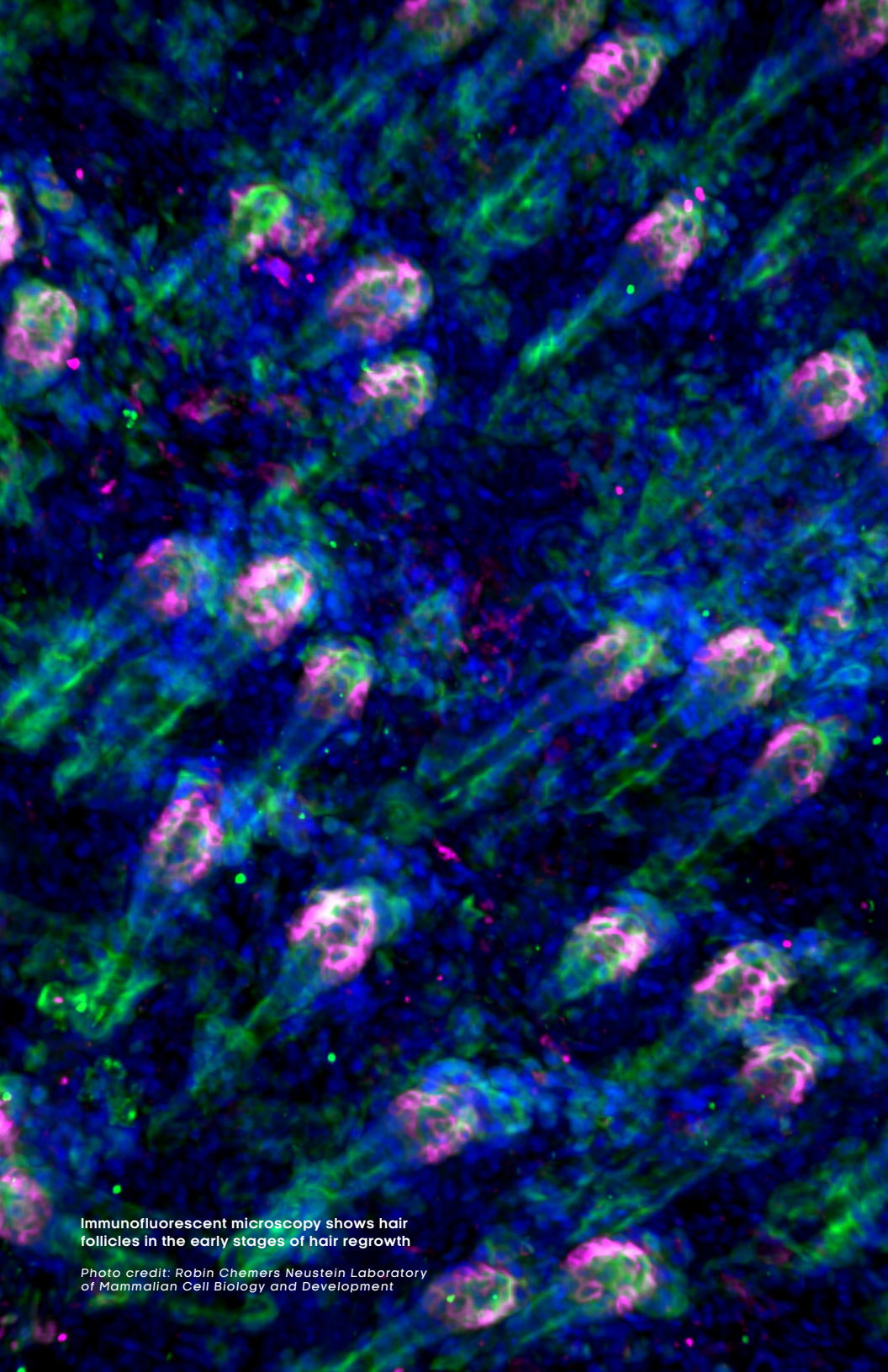
THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

WOMEN& SCIENCE

2025–2026





Immunofluorescent microscopy shows hair follicles in the early stages of hair regrowth

Photo credit: Robin Chemers Neustein Laboratory of Mammalian Cell Biology and Development

The Rockefeller University

Science for the benefit of humanity

The Rockefeller University is one of the world's foremost institutions dedicated to research and graduate education in the biomedical sciences. Rockefeller was founded in 1901 with the core principle that understanding the fundamental causes of disease provides the surest route to prevention and effective therapy. In 2026, Rockefeller University will commemorate 125 years of advancing science for the benefit of humanity. This is a milestone for the university community, as well as a landmark occasion for the global scientific enterprise. In conjunction with the 125th anniversary, Rockefeller will also mark 70 years of the David Rockefeller Graduate Program. Discover 125 is a celebration of these two landmark anniversaries.

In the university's history, 26 Rockefeller scientists have received Nobel Prizes, 26 have won Lasker Awards, and 20 have garnered the National Medal of Science, the highest honor in science and medicine awarded by the United States government.

Seminal discoveries in basic science from Rockefeller scientists have driven dramatic clinical advances, including

- discovery that DNA is the substance of heredity, setting the course for modern biological research
- characterization of human blood types, improving the safety of blood transfusions
- research that paved the way for safe antibiotics
- discovery of dendritic cells, the sentinels of the immune system, which laid the groundwork for cancer immunotherapy
- a system to replicate and study the virus that causes hepatitis C, leading to the development of curative drugs
- discovery of the molecular mechanisms that control circadian rhythm
- uncovering the role of stem cells in homeostasis, wound repair, inflammation, and cancer
- determination of the molecular structure of the protein involved in cystic fibrosis, opening the way for improved therapeutics
- the discovery of GLP-1 and its role in digestion, leading to the revolutionary new class of medicines to treat diabetes and obesity

About Women & Science

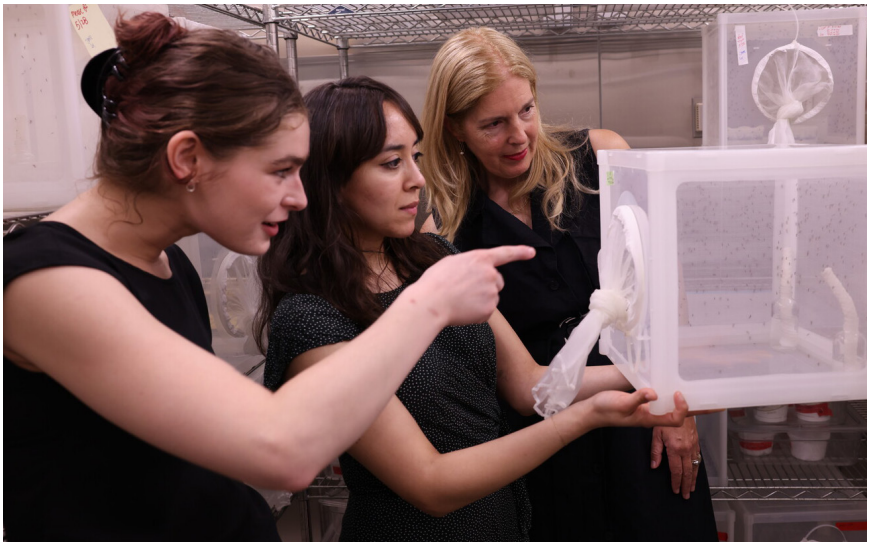


Photo Credit: John Abbott

2023 W&S Graduate Fellow Adelia Gaffney and 2019 W&S Graduate Fellow Adriana Rosas Villegas with Professor Leslie Vosshall

Founded in 1997, the Women & Science initiative supports women investigators and their scientific pursuits in myriad ways. This includes funding for research and education, highlighting the many significant contributions of women scientists, underscoring the importance of basic science in addressing women's health challenges, and encouraging more women to make scientific research a philanthropic priority.

Through the Partners in Discovery Fund, donors to Women & Science have generously raised more than $55 million in support of graduate and postdoctoral fellowships, recruitment of women faculty, special research initiatives related to women's health, and, through the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Women's Entrepreneurship Fund, women-led translational research projects.

Today, approximately 40 percent of Rockefeller's scientists—including graduate students, postdoctoral investigators, research and clinical scientists, assistant and associate professors, and tenured senior professors—are women.

Core Priorities of the Initiative

MENTOR THE NEXT GENERATION

The cornerstone of the Women & Science initiative is our fellowship program, which recognizes outstanding women graduate students and postdoctoral scientists. To date, more than 275 of these coveted fellowships have been awarded, and many recipients have gone on to careers in academia, technology, government, education, and medicine.

PROMOTE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Women & Science has helped to increase representation of women at the university in both the lab and on the board. In the last ten years, the university has hired seven women heads of lab with the support of the Women & Science Fund to Recruit Women Faculty. The number of women trustees has tripled since the initiative was founded, and women now constitute 50 percent of the board.

HARNESS THE POWER OF TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

The Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Women's Entrepreneurship Fund (Kellen WEF) is an innovative program established to encourage more women scientists at the university to pursue the clinical and entrepreneurial potential of their scientific discoveries.

RECOGNIZE OUTSTANDING WOMEN IN BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

Women & Science is committed to elevating the visibility of women in academic science and biomedical research. To that end, the initiative features women researchers in presentations on topics related to women's health. Additionally, the Pearl Meister Greengard Prize recognizes the accomplishments of women in biomedical science, and installations on campus showcase women scientists at Rockefeller, past and present.

Current Women & Science Fellows

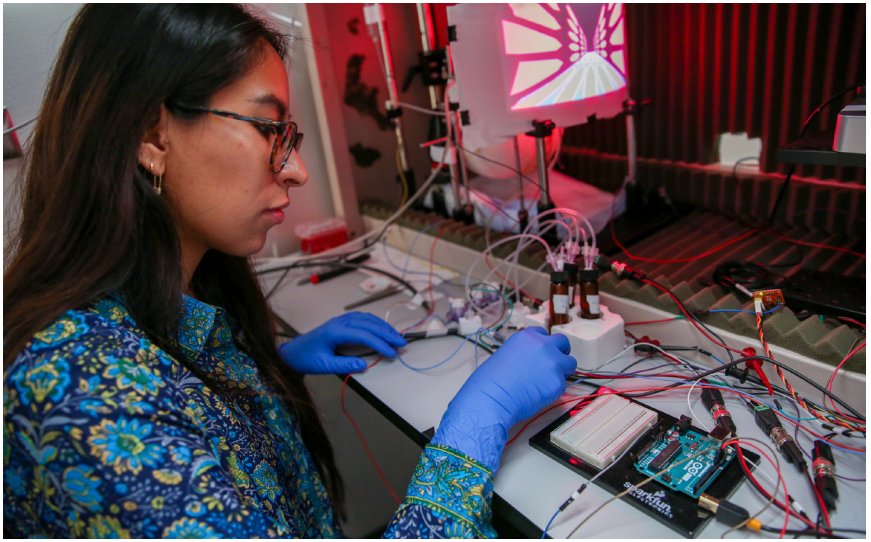


Photo Credit: John Abbott

2022 W&S Graduate Fellow Andrea Terceros in the Skoler Horbach Family Laboratory of Neural Dynamics and Cognition

GRADUATE FELLOWS

Tzu-Jou Chen
M.S., National Taiwan University
B.S., National Pingtung University of Science and Technology

Adele Dujsikova
Carleton College

Mitra Pezeshki
Scripps College

Michelle Yinfei Yaochai
National University of Singapore

SYDNEY R. SHUMAN W&S GRADUATE FELLOW

Rio McLellan
Laboratory of Molecular Biology
Headed by Nathaniel Heintz

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS

Caroline Langley, Ph.D.
Laboratory of RNA Structural Biology and Biophysics
Headed by Steven Bonilla, Ph.D.

Mariko Kanai, Ph.D.
Laboratory of Host-Pathogen Biology
Headed by Jeremy Rock, Ph.D.

Spotlight on Former Women & Science Fellows

JOSEFINA DEL MÁRMOL, PH.D. • 2010 FELLOW • RUTA LAB

Dr. del Mármol was named a HHMI Freeman Hrabowski Scholar and a 2023 Pew Scholar in Biomedical Research. She was a 2022 Blavatnik Regional Award Winner in the life sciences category. She is now an assistant professor and head of lab at Harvard Medical School.

> "*There is a string of amazing female figures at Rockefeller. Seeing how these women have the ability to be trailblazers in their careers and also have very rich personal lives was very impactful.*"

DIANY PAOLA CALDERON, M.D., PH.D. • 2013 FELLOW • PFAFF LAB

Dr. Calderon received the 2021 Nancy M. and Samuel C. Fleming Research Scholar Award. She is now an assistant professor of neuroscience in the Brain and Mind Research Institute at Weill Cornell Medical College.

> "*Earning a W&S Fellowship gave me the confidence to pursue my ideas and encouraged me to keep applying for funding.*"

YUKO ULRICH, PH.D. • 2014 FELLOW • KRONAUER LAB

Dr. Ulrich is a principal investigator at the Max Planck Institute for Chemical Ecology. In 2022, she was named the first recipient of the Zukunftskolleg Research Award from the University of Konstanz.

> "*Beyond the fact that my W&S Fellowship allowed me to pursue ambitious research goals, it made me aware that we were actively, concretely supported by a larger community.*"

Striving for Gender Parity: The Fund to Recruit Women Faculty

Photo Credit: Scott Rudd Photography

Heads of Lab Amy Shyer, Vanessa Ruta, Cori Bargmann, Agata Smogorzewska, Elaine Fuchs, Viviana Risca, Li Zhao, Priya Rajasethupathy, and Lamia Wahba

Rockefeller's faculty are innovative scientific leaders with visionary research programs that have the potential to transform their fields. These investigators, in turn, attract the best and brightest students and postdoctoral scholars, who come from around the world to train in Rockefeller labs. In the last ten years, Rockefeller has hired seven women heads of laboratory with support from the Women & Science Fund to recruit women faculty—a demonstration of the university's commitment to fostering a diverse scientific community.

> *"From the day you open your lab, you're encouraged to be very bold and risky in your thinking—to really try to address the most fundamental questions you can conceive of. And with all the resources available, it allows you to think about the most impactful and incisive ways to address these questions. That's something I felt as a graduate student here and something that drew me to come back to Rockefeller."*
>
> Vanessa Ruta, Ph.D. '05
> *Gabrielle H. Reem and Herbert J. Kayden Professor*
> Laboratory of Neurophysiology and Behavior
> *Investigator*, Howard Hughes Medical Institute

Women Heads of Laboratory

Cori Bargmann, Ph.D.
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Torsten N. Wiesel Professor
Lulu and Anthony Wang Laboratory of Neural Circuits and Behavior

Elizabeth Campbell, Ph.D.
Corinne P. Greenberg Women & Science Professor
Laboratory of Molecular Pathogenesis

Jue Chen, Ph.D.
William E. Ford Professor
Laboratory of Membrane Biology and Biophysics
Investigator
Howard Hughes Medical Institute

Titia de Lange, Ph.D.
Leon Hess Professor
Laboratory of Cell Biology and Genetics

Elaine Fuchs, Ph.D.
Rebecca C. Lancefield Professor
Robin Chemers Neustein Laboratory of Mammalian Cell Biology and Development
Investigator
Howard Hughes Medical Institute

Mary E. Hatten, Ph.D.
Frederick P. Rose Professor
Laboratory of Developmental Neurobiology

Priya Rajasethupathy, M.D., Ph.D.
Jonathan M. Nelson Family Associate Professor
Skoler Horbach Family Laboratory of Neural Dynamics and Cognition

Viviana I. Risca, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Laboratory of Genome Architecture and Dynamics

Vanessa Ruta, Ph.D.
Gabrielle H. Reem and Herbert J. Kayden Professor
Laboratory of Neurophysiology and Behavior
Investigator
Howard Hughes Medical Institute

Amy E. Shyer, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Laboratory of Morphogenesis

Agata Smogorzewska, M.D., Ph.D.
Skoler Horbach Family Professor
Laboratory of Genome Maintenance

Ekaterina V. Vinogradova, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Laboratory of Chemical Immunology and Proteomics

Leslie B. Vosshall, Ph.D.
Robin Chemers Neustein Professor
Laboratory of Neurogenetics and Behavior
Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer
Howard Hughes Medical Institute

Lamia Wahba, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Laboratory of Non-Canonical Modes of Inheritance

Li Zhao, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Laboratory of Evolutionary Genetics and Genomics

Women Research Affiliates

Marina Caskey, M.D.
Professor of Clinical Investigation
Laboratory of Molecular Immunology

Theodora Hatziioannou, Ph.D.
Research Associate Professor
Laboratory of Retrovirology

Ines Ibañez-Tallon, Ph.D.
Research Associate Professor
Laboratory of Molecular Biology

Rhonda G. Kost, M.D.
Associate Professor of Clinical Investigation and Clinical Research Officer
Center for Clinical and Translational Science

Sarah F. Leibowitz, Ph.D.
Research Associate Professor

Orna Levran, Ph.D.
Research Associate Professor

Margaret R. MacDonald, M.D., Ph.D.
Research Associate Professor
Laboratory of Virology and Infectious Disease

Svetlana Mojsov, Ph.D.
Lulu Chow Wang and Robin Chemers Neustein Research Associate Professor

Erin Norris, Ph.D.
Research Associate Professor
Patricia and John Rosenwald Laboratory of Neurobiology and Genetics

Alison North, Ph.D.
Research Associate Professor and Senior Director
Frits and Rita Markus Bio-Imaging Resource Center

Dana Orange, M.D., M.Sc.
Chapman-Perelman Associate Professor of Clinical Investigation
Laboratory of Molecular Neuro-Oncology

Hilda Amalia Pasolli, Ph.D.
Research Associate Professor and Director
Electron Microscopy Resource Center

Sarah J. Schlesinger, M.D.
Associate Professor of Clinical Investigation and Senior Attending Physician
The Rockefeller University Hospital

Shen-Ying Zhang, M.D., Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Clinical Investigation
St. Giles Laboratory of Human Genetics of Infectious Diseases

Recent Awards and Honors

ELAINE FUCHS, PH.D.

Dr. Fuchs was elected president of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Academy, its mission being to honor extraordinary scientists whose groundbreaking contributions have driven significant innovation and progress in the fight against cancer. She was elected to the AACR in 2013 and served on its Board of Directors from 2020 to 2023.

SVETLANA MOJSOV, PH.D.

Dr. Mojsov received numerous prizes for her discovery of the blood sugar regulating gut hormone called GLP-1 which led to the development of new medicines for type 2 diabetes and weight loss. These include: Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences, the BBVA Foundation's Frontiers of Knowledge Award, and the National Library of Medicine Distinguished Medical Science Award. She was also elected to the National Academy of Sciences.

DANA ORANGE, M.D., M.SC.

Dr. Orange received the John B. Winfield Visiting Scholar Award from the University of North Carolina. This award recognizes an outstanding investigator who has made significant contributions to the advancement of rheumatology and arthritis research.

KATYA VINOGRADOVA, PH.D.

Dr. Vinogradova was appointed investigator of the Chan Zuckerberg Biohub New York. The Investigator Program provides funding to pursue high-impact research projects that align with the mission to harness and bioengineer immune cells for the early detection, prevention, and treatment of age-related diseases.

LESLIE VOSSHALL, PH.D.

Dr. Vosshall received the Edward M. Scolnick Prize in Neuroscience for her pioneering work on mosquito olfaction, elucidating the mechanisms by which they find human prey and identify precise sites to target for a blood meal. She's the fourth Rockefeller scientist to receive this award, joining Drs. Cori Bargmann, Charles Gilbert, and Bruce McEwen.

LAMIA WAHBA, PH.D.

Dr. Wahba was named a Rita Allen Foundation Scholar in recognition of her work on the non-DNA-based mechanisms by which biological information can be transmitted across generations.

The Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Women's Entrepreneurship Fund

The Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Women's Entrepreneurship Fund (Kellen WEF) was established to inspire more women to develop the translational and entrepreneurial potential of their research. In addition to a competitive grants program, the Kellen WEF supports a speaker series and educational workshops featuring industry leaders. The Kellen WEF is central to Rockefeller's robust translational research ecosystem and ensures that all university investigators have the funding, scientific resources, and entrepreneurial programming to take their discoveries from the lab to the clinic.

The Kellen WEF was established with gifts from Women & Science donors and endowed by a generous gift from the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation at the recommendation of Michael and Denise Kellen.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

A Guide for the Biotech Adventurer: Interactive Workshop on Drug Discovery
Led by the Traverse Biotech Team
Participants learn what it takes to translate foundational science into clinically relevant products for patients in a "choose your own adventure" game.

Managing Science & Scientists: A Workshop for Early-Career Researchers
Led by Harvard Business School and Berkeley Haas Faculty
A three-day intensive annual workshop designed to ease the transition from individual contributor to manager.

Candid Conversations with Bioscience Leaders
Small networking events for researchers featuring leaders in academia and industry.

Kellen WEF Grant Program

The Kellen WEF grant program fosters translational projects from women scientists and supports collaborative ventures where a woman is one of the team leaders. This grant program complements the existing translational opportunities on campus, funding projects ranging from early-stage exploratory research to translational science entering clinical trials. Since its launch in the fall of 2020, more than 40 Kellen WEF grants have been awarded.

RECENT GRANT RECIPIENTS

MASCHA KOENEN • POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

Dissecting the role of thermogenic adipocytes on bone remodeling: This project seeks to identify the regulatory mediators of thermogenic fat-to-bone communication, in order to find signaling molecules that can improve bone formation. A long-term goal would be to create a novel therapeutic to treat osteoporosis.

PRIYA RAJASETHUPATHY • HEAD OF LAB

Developing and testing lead compounds to improve short-term memory: Working memory is a form of short-term memory that stores and processes sensory experiences, for seconds to minutes, in order to drive goal-directed behaviors. It can be severely disrupted by learning disabilities, in aging, and in diseases such as Alzheimer's and schizophrenia. The Rajasethupathy lab recently determined that variations in a single gene, called GPR12, are responsible for substantial variability in short-term memory performance. This gene encodes a receptor molecule found on nerve cells, where it is involved in neural signaling. In this project, Dr. Rajasethupathy and her colleagues are working to identify small-molecule modulators of the GPR12 receptor that point the way toward therapeutics to restore cognitive function in individuals with neurodegenerative disease.

AGATA SMOGORZEWSKA • HEAD OF LAB

Helicases as therapeutic targets in medulloblastoma and other cancers: This project focuses on BRCA2, a protein that is essential for cellular DNA repair. Mutations in the gene that produces BRCA2 can lead to breast, ovarian, prostate, and pancreatic cancers, as well as pediatric brain tumors called medulloblastomas.

Portrait of Discovery

FIVE ROCKEFELLER TRAILBLAZERS WHO MADE SCIENTIFIC HISTORY

Photo Credit: Robert Lowell

Five Trailblazing Women Scientists at The Rockefeller University
Brenda Zlamany, 81 x 100 ¼ inches, oil on canvas, 2021

In 2019, Women & Science and the student-led organization, Women In Science at Rockefeller (WISeR), collaborated on a monumental project: **The Women & Science Portrait Initiative**. Brooklyn-based painter Brenda Zlamany was commissioned to create a portrait of five pioneering women scientists from Rockefeller's early decades. This groundbreaking portrait—the university's first depicting women scientists—Florence R. Sabin, Louise Pearce, Rebecca C. Lancefield, Gertrude E. Perlmann,and Marie M. Daly (above, left to right), includes researchers who held significant tenures at Rockefeller or went on to have distinguished careers at other institutions. All were among the first women in their respective fields and are recognized for their pioneering contributions to science.

This portrait was unveiled in 2022 as part of the 25th anniversary celebration of Women & Science and now hangs above the fireplace in Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Hall.

Pearl Meister Greengard Prize

RECOGNIZING OUTSTANDING WOMEN IN BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

Photo Credit: C + G Partners

The Pearl Meister Greengard Prize, a major international award, recognizes the accomplishments of outstanding women in biomedical science. The Prize was established by Nobel laureate Paul Greengard (1925–2019), and his wife, sculptor Ursula von Rydingsvard. Dr. Greengard donated his entire monetary share of the 2000 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine to Rockefeller and, in partnership with generous supporters of the university, created this annual award.

An exhibit recognizing the Pearl Meister Greengard Prize recipients was installed in the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Hall in 2021. Composed of translucent, color-shifting hexagons, each with an etched portrait and citation, the exhibit spotlights the outstanding women scientists who have received the prize.

Recent Women & Science Programs

NOVEMBER 2025
The Social Lives of Ants: From Simple Brains to Complex Behavior
Daniel Kronauer, Ph.D.

OCTOBER 2025
The Birth of New Genes: Uncovering Nature's Genetic Innovations
Li Zhao, Ph.D.

MAY 2025
Spring Lecture and Luncheon
Inflammation and Pain: Advances in Understanding Arthritis and Other Autoimmune Diseases
Dana Orange, M.D., M.Sc.

APRIL 2025
How to Starve a Tumor: Understanding the Biology of Metabolism in Physiology and Cancer
Kivanç Birsoy, Ph.D.

DECEMBER 2024
At the Forefront of Basic Research: New Strategies to Outsmart Drug-Resistant Microbes
Elizabeth Campbell, Ph.D.

NOVEMBER 2024
Obesity: Causes and the New Treatments
Jeffrey M. Friedman, M.D., Ph.D.

MAY 2024
Spring Lecture and Luncheon
From the Clinic to the Bench and Back: Insights into the Genetics of Neurological Disorders
Huda Y. Zoghbi, M.D.

APRIL 2024
Breast Cancer and Women's Health: Past, Present, and Future
Elizabeth Comen, M.D.

DECEMBER 2023
Sleep and Beyond: How Basic Research is Leading a Revolution in Circadian Medicine
Sofia Axelrod, Ph.D.

Videos of past programs are available here:
youtube.com/user/RockefellerUniv

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