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Templeton grant to fund investigations into wisdom

By William Harms
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News Office

The University will serve as the center for a new national effort to develop scholarly investigations into the nature, cultivation, benefits and applications of wisdom.

The John Templeton Foundation is providing a \$3 million, three-year grant to the University to establish the Research Initiative on the Nature and Benefits of Wisdom, which will be managed by the Center for Cognitive and Social Neuroscience.

John Cacioppo, the Tiffany & Margaret Blake Distinguished Service Professor in Psychology and the College

Fellowship recipient

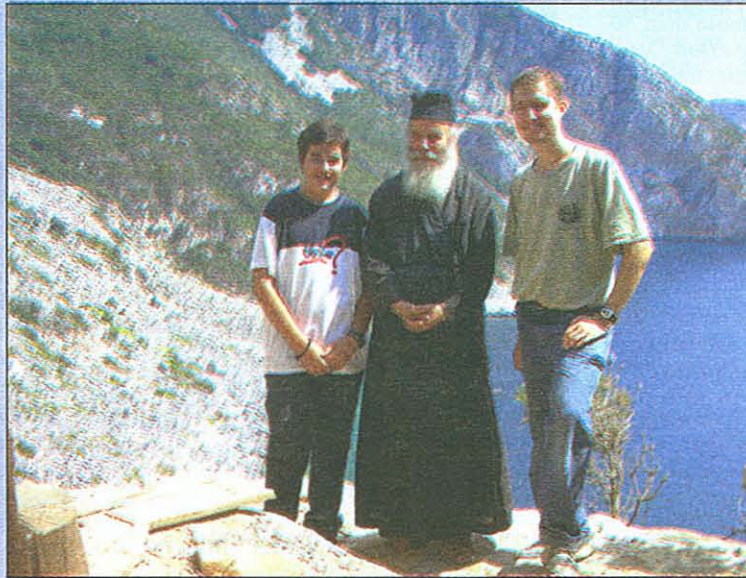


Photo courtesy of Nicholas Marinides

Nicholas Marinides (right) and a family friend (left) visit with Bishop Chrysostom of Rodostolos (center) on Mt. Athos, a peninsula in Greece where many monasteries have thrived since Byzantine times.

This is Bliss

Prestigious prize will aid student in

Four Chicago faculty members are named Guggenheim fellows

By Josh Schonwald
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News Office

The John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation has named four University faculty members 2007 Guggenheim fellows in its annual competition.

This year's Chicago winners, who were selected from among 2,800 applicants from the United States and Canada, are Shadi Bartsch, the Ann L. & Lawrence B. Buittenwieser Professor in Classics and the College, Catherine Brekus, Associate Professor in the Divinity School, Fred Donner, Professor in Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations and the College, and Bernard Wasserstein, the Harriet & Ulrich E. Meyer

Early Roman Empire and Actors in the Audience: Theatricality and Doublespeak from Nero to Hadrian.



Shadi Bartsch



Catherine Brekus



A winner of the Llewellyn John & Harriet Manchester Quantrell Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, Bartsch currently is Chair of the Committee on the History of Culture.

In her Guggenheim project, Bartsch plans



Photos by Dan Dry

Stephanie Crofts,
Nancy Chang do



Strahilevitz first presented the idea in a paper called "How's My Driving? For Everyone (And Everything?)," which was published in the *New York University Law Review* in November 2006. Since then, it has ignited dialogue among legal scholars and average citizens alike. It has been cited on numerous blogs, and Strahilevitz has been quoted in *The Wall Street Journal* and interviewed on National Public Radio about why this form of "snitching" through motorist self-regulation can be effective. Strahilevitz also presented "How's My Driving?" at the Law School's Chicago's Best Ideas lecture series in January.

Strahilevitz said he became frustrated by inconsiderate motorists while commuting to the Law School on Lake Shore Drive, and developed the paper as a way to get people thinking more broadly about the applicability of law and technology and the very real possibility of increasing motorist accountability and safety. A "How's My Driving?" system for all

telephone numbers or looking for suspicious patterns" of reporting. The end result also could be that courteous drivers are rewarded, which he said almost never happens. Anonymous reporting that can be properly vetted and made available only to a few people is more effective than "public shaming," such as posting information about a bad driver on a public Web site, Strahilevitz said.

"Public shaming often results in people being excessively punished. I don't want that. I view this as a much better alternative to public shame sanctions," he said.

The end result, Strahilevitz said, is more conscientious drivers and safer roads.

"When you're driving on the road, your job is to get from A to B in a manner that's safe for you and everybody else," Strahilevitz said. "I don't really consider it 'snitching' I consider it performance evaluation."

American Chemical Society honors authors of scientific papers and breakthrough findings

By Steve Koppes
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News Office

After completing tours of duty as a combat engineer in Germany and the Philippines during World War II, Harvey Fisher resumed his studies at the University in the autumn of 1947. Working under the mentorship of Professors Frank Westheimer and Birgit Vennesland six years later, Fisher became the first author of a landmark paper published in the *Journal of Biological Chemistry*.

"It was done with only one explosion and two hospitalizations," quipped Fisher, now a professor of biochemistry and molecular biology at the Kansas University Medical Center. But the paper's scientific reverberations continue.

"This particular paper published in 1953 changed the face of chemistry forever," said Jeffrey Seeman, former chair of the American Chemical Society's Division of History of Chemistry and originator of the award program. The ACS Division has now commemorated the influence of that 1953 paper, "The Enzymatic Transfer of Hydrogen," by unveiling a plaque at a ceremony held Monday, March 26, in the Gordon Center for Integrative Science.

The paper is one of the first 10 scientific works the society has honored in its Citations for Chemical Breakthroughs award program. So honored as well is

a 1974 *Nature* paper on the formation and decomposition of ozone co-authored by Chicago alumnus F. Sherwood Rowland. That paper helped earn Rowland, the Bren research professor of chemistry at the University of California, Irvine, a share of the 1995 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. Rowland received his Ph.D. in chemistry from the University in 1952.

"Many awards go to individuals," Seeman said. "This award goes to the institution so that as students, visitors and faculty walk down the hall and see these plaques, they will be reminded of the great science that was done and is still being done here."

Fisher considers his own most significant chemical discovery to be the mind of his co-mentor Westheimer. "He thought up the idea, and that was the important thing," Fisher said of the experiment that led to their 1953 paper. "The rest was just a matter of getting the chemistry done."

Today Westheimer, a former Professor in Chemistry at Chicago, is the Morris Loeb professor emeritus in chemistry at Harvard University. Co-authoring the paper with Fisher and Westheimer were Eric Conn and Vennesland. A professor in biochemistry before taking an appointment in Germany, Vennesland died in 2001. Conn, a former instructor in biochemistry at Chicago, now is a professor emeritus of biochemistry, molecular and cellular biology at

Research Building. Shortly after his arrival in Chicago, Rosenbaum shared some of his insights and ideas about writing.

Many of your pieces take the form of a quest. What are the origins of this form?

When I was a kid, I discovered in the attic of my house, a cache of something like 50 of my father's old Hardy Boy mysteries. I found myself longing to solve mysteries myself. I've always liked the kind of journalism that takes the quest form, as well. You go to a person and they tell you a story, then you go to the next person and they tell you something else, maybe something in conflict. You travel and you seek to find a way of resolving these contradictions or explaining where they come from and what agendas are behind the differences.

You left graduate school in literature for journalism. Why?

A turning point occurred in graduate school, at Yale, when I attended a seminar on Chaucer's Love Vision poems. I asked the scholar a question at the end of his talk about what he felt Chaucer's attitude to the reality of love was. His answer was, "Love is such an uninteresting question. The real interesting question is about the making of poetry." Now, I think the making of poetry is an interesting question, but I don't think love is an uninteresting question. There were still questions that mattered to me and I felt that graduate school wouldn't teach me anything about them. I felt that it would be an insular, hermetic experience that would confine me in the sealed chamber of academia, and I also had this desire to hang out with cops and criminals—and not just to read about them. I got a few lucky breaks—a job at *The Village Voice*, a job as a contributing editor at *Esquire*; jobs that allowed me to experience journalism as a great adventure and to travel across the country pursuing stories that mattered to me.

I was an English-m nerd. And, yes close reading ry, a skill I lea Yale, has perh been the thin on my journa work. Close r tease out amb ered was that directly applica jects. Autopsy scripts, Cong are document intent, but ne unexpected ir kind of literat

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Donner has done extensive research on the role of pastoral groups in Near Eastern societies and in early Islamic history. He has authored two monographs on early Islamic history: *The Early Islamic Conquests* and *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Writing*.

provide information about Islam's beginnings were written later, after the shift in terminology had taken hold. During the next year, Donner will be examining Arabic papyri, from the first Islamic century for evidence of this shift. Many of this papyri are held in major European museums.

Donner is currently working on a gener-

tion or values on the continent of Europe. Wasserstein argues that barbarism and civilization should not be seen as opposite ends of a spectrum, but as deeply enmeshed and implicated in each other.

Before coming to Chicago in 2003, he was a professor of history at the University of Glasgow, Scotland.

ives Bliss ine studies

late, but no one could be er suited for such a chal- e, Kaegi said. "Nick is truly xceptional, motivated, mod- uring man who has been king about his career for a y time," Kaegi said. "Of rse, his academic record is tanding, but he has really n his education beyond the room. It really is a big part is life."

Marinides said he hopes to his studies for teaching and logical dialogue involving Orthodox Christian urch, of which he is a mem- while still making his work ssible and useful to the der world, both academic non-academic.

or now, he is just enjoying present. I feel very fortunate right . Looking back over the last years at the University of ago, it is amazing to see much my thinking has aged, how much I have aged, how much I have vn," he said. Marinides is a Student shall and a Junior Phi Beta pa member at the iversity.

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American Chemical Society honors Fisher, colleagues for breakthrough

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the University of California, Davis.

The 1953 Chicago paper marked the discovery of the prochirality concept that pervades all of chemistry and biology today, said Brice Bosnich, the Gustavus F. and Ann M. Swift Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus in Chemistry and the College.

The paper described an experiment showing that an enzyme—a protein molecule that drives chemical reactions—can distinguish between atoms that differ only in their chirality, or handedness, much the way the right hand differs from the left. By removing one of two seemingly identical hydrogen atoms from a molecule, an enzyme could produce versions of a chemical product that differ in their handedness. But if it removed the other atom, a different product resulted.

"It was a very subtle thing that told you that all the processes of life are chiral," Bosnich said. As plants and animals form new cells, convert fuel into energy, or perform myriad other chemical reactions, chirality plays a key role every step of the way.

"These transformations are very complex, and Westheimer was one of the earliest to begin to understand how these extraordinary transformations occur," Seeman said.

As part of a flood of war veterans who attended college on the GI Bill, Fisher and many of his fellow students brought about a different kind of transformation to Chicago.

"We were a most unusual graduate class. The faculty didn't know quite what to make of us. They didn't think we knew very much," said Fisher, who received his Chicago Ph.D. in biochemistry in 1952. "We'd come back from Germany and the South Pacific,



Photo by Lloyd DeGrane

Harvey Fisher

and we weren't much concerned with any threats from the state of Illinois. Angry chairmen didn't phase us much. We were very confident."

One of Fisher's classmates, Robert Langdon (S.B. '44, M.D. '45, Ph.D. '53), collaborated with Konrad Bloch, a member of the Biochemistry and Biophysics faculty from 1948 to 1954. The work on cholesterol synthesis helped earn Bloch the 1964 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

Another classmate, Theodore

Rall, (Ph.B. '47, S.B. '48, Ph.D. '52) soon began collaborating with Earl Sutherland at Case Western Reserve University. Rall contributed to hormonal research that earned Sutherland the 1971 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

A third classmate, Irwin "Ernie" Rose (S.B. '48, Ph.D. '52), shared the 2004 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for discovering how cells degrade proteins.

"Out of a class of 14, we weren't too shabby," Fisher said.