

UC SANTA BARBARA

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Eileen Conrad

Leading UCSB Molecular Biologist Appointed to Endowed Chair in Biotechnology

Daniel Morse, a renowned UC Santa Barbara professor of molecular genetics and biochemistry, is the first scholar appointed to the Wilcox Family Chair in Biotechnology.

The Wilcox professorship was established recently with a \$700,000 gift from Gary and Susan Wilcox, who are both distinguished UCSB alumni, volunteer leaders, and longtime campus benefactors.

Morse, who also is director of the Institute for Collaborative Biotechnologies, said he was humbled and deeply grateful to the Wilcox family and to UCSB for the honor.

"Gary Wilcox has set a shining example of pioneering leadership in biotechnology that I've been privileged to know personally and follow closely for more than three decades," Morse said.

"It's an example that I have admired and held out as an inspiration to my students.

Indeed, Gary transformed the field of molecular genetics when, as a graduate student and postdoctoral researcher in our department at UCSB, he revealed the mechanism of 'positive control' of gene expression, a mechanism we know today to be a major driver of development, cellular differentiation, and disease.

It is a special privilege and an honor for me to follow in his exciting footsteps."

Endowed chairs are highly prized academic positions that enable a university to attract and retain distinguished scholars and to develop more fully a field of study by providing ongoing financial support for enhanced research and instruction.

Morse received his B.A. in biochemistry from Harvard University in 1963 and his Ph.D. in Molecular Biology from Albert Einstein College of Medicine in 1967.

He conducted postdoctoral studies in molecular genetics at Stanford University.

He served as the Silas Arnold Houghton Associate Professor of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics at Harvard Medical School before coming to UC Santa Barbara in 1972.

Morse has been the recipient of a Career Development Award from the National Institutes of Health and a Faculty Research Award from the American Cancer Society.

He also has been honored as a Distinguished Faculty Scholar by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and served as a Visiting Professor in Japan and at the University of Paris.

He was elected a Regents Fellow of the Smithsonian Institution and a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Morse was also named to the 2006

"Scientific American 50," the magazine's annual list of individuals, groups, and companies that have demonstrated outstanding technological leadership through pioneering research.

Scientific American recognized him for his innovative research developing biologically inspired routes to nanostructured semiconductor thin films.

Morse discovered that by putting molecules that mimic the enzyme that makes silica in a marine sponge onto metallic surfaces, his research team could create catalytic templates for growing nanostructured semiconductor films inexpensively.

"Inspiration from a lowly marine sponge may eventually yield more powerful batteries," the magazine noted.

Gary and Susan Wilcox each earned three degrees from UCSB.

She holds a B.A. in mathematics and master's and doctoral degrees in economics.

He has a B.A. in biology and master's and doctoral degrees in molecular biology and biochemistry.

Gary Wilcox is a trustee of The UCSB Foundation and currently chairman of the board of a start-up antiviral drug discovery company.

Previously, he was executive vice president of operations of ICOS Corporation in Bothell, Washington, and earlier he co-founded International Genetic Engineering, serving as its chairman, president, and CEO until its merger with XOMA Corporation in 1989.

From 1974 until 1984, Wilcox was a professor of microbiology at UCLA and a member of the campus' Molecular Biology Institute.

He is the author of more than 70 scientific papers and holds 15 patents.

Susan Wilcox is active in financial analysis and investing and has assisted in several start-up biotechnology companies.

She plays a leadership role in various charity and volunteer organizations while competing in golf tournaments throughout the Pacific Northwest.

She previously served as an adjunct professor of economics at Pepperdine University and worked for Atlantic Richfield Company from 1974-1983.

The couple resides in Mill Creek, Washington.

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of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.