

Women & Philanthropy

at UCLA

The UCLA Medal: Top Honors for Alumna Rachel Robinson

When Rachel Robinson '42 accepted the UCLA Medal from Chancellor Gene Block at UCLA Day this past May, she sealed her own brilliant legacy alongside that of her late husband, pioneering Bruin athlete and professional baseball player Jackie Robinson. The award is the university's highest honor and a tribute to Rachel's lifetime of dedication to education and social activism, especially

her work since 1973, when—just a year after her husband's untimely death at age 53—she founded the Jackie Robinson Foundation (JRF).

In a UCLA Day interview, Rachel, now 86, recalls being determined to “pull myself out of that deep hole” to push Jackie's legacy forward. “It had to be more than just naming a building or a

street for him. It had to be something active and alive—something in the area of education.”

The name of Jackie Robinson, who famously broke the color barrier in Major League Baseball in 1947 as a player with the Brooklyn Dodgers, had already become a symbol of the nonviolent civil rights movement. To honor his values and cement his legacy, Rachel set a bold mission for JRF: to provide comprehensive scholarships and support services to minority students in higher education.

“We don't just give them money,” Rachel explains. Networking, mentoring, community service projects and leadership development are all built into the program. At UCLA, JRF has awarded dozens of scholarships in the College of Letters and Science and the professional schools, as well as postgraduate fellowships in the David Geffen School of Medicine.

“Among our many accomplished alumni,” Chancellor Gene Block said upon presenting the UCLA Medal, “perhaps none is more committed to empowering others to live better lives than Rachel Robinson. We are especially grateful for her tireless dedication to provide scholarships and leadership training, which has enabled so many deserving students to pursue their dreams.”

Rachel was clearly moved by “such a stunning tribute. I would never, ever have anticipated it,” she says. “To receive this award from the university that I love and respect so much is very, very exciting and uplifting.”



President’s Message

Kathleen Flanagan

My membership in Women & Philanthropy grew from a personal goal to help students attend UCLA and get the most out of their time on campus. By supporting young scholars, I hoped to create for them the same opportunities that a high-quality education provided for me.

On a far greater scale, UCLA is an engine of opportunity for the people of California, especially for students from low-income families and underrepresented groups. Access to UCLA often means a fast track to positive socio-economic mobility, creating a cascade of benefits for our students, our state and our world. To help sustain broad access to UCLA, the university has undertaken the Bruin Scholars Initiative (BSI) to double the endowment for scholarship and fellowship support. You can read about one inspiring

BSI gift made by Women & Philanthropy member Rica Orszag in this newsletter.

At the same time, UCLA leadership recognizes the need to expand partnerships in the community to prepare students from all backgrounds to qualify for admission. With the Los Angeles Unified School District, for example, the university established the innovative UCLA Community School, a K-12 program that opened this fall in the Pico-Union neighborhood.

To advance UCLA’s core values of equal access, broad diversity and excellence—particularly in the face of state budget cuts and student fee increases—Women & Philanthropy plays a pivotal role. Our members open doors for aspiring students. We enable innovative programs. And we



extend faculty scholarship and research. Wherever your philanthropic interests at UCLA lie, I invite you to join us in support of the university—an engine of opportunity for the benefit of all.

Women & Philanthropy at UCLA recognizes and promotes women’s leadership and philanthropy on the UCLA campus.

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Her Kind of Town

Dean Teri Schwartz

“As a feature film producer, I loved to create and build,” says Teri Schwartz, new dean of the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television (TFT). “Now serving as the dean of one of the great film and theater schools in the world, I look forward to helping create a vibrant vision and interdisciplinary center around humanistic storytelling,

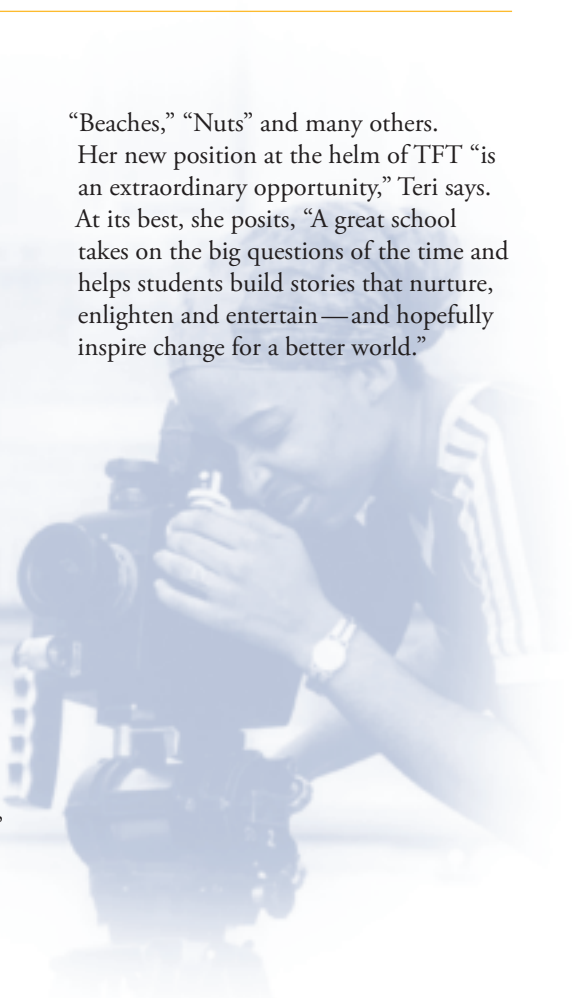


global diversity, social responsibility and technological innovation that will prepare our students to become leaders across the entertainment and emerging media industries.”

The award-winning producer-turned-educator joins the TFT team having served as the inaugural dean of the School of Film and Television at Loyola Marymount University, where she became known for her emphasis on diversity, a humanistic point-of-view, and international connectedness in the film community.

Teri earned a bachelor’s in English from UCLA in 1971 and a master’s in film from the University of London in 1973. She went on to become a prolific and successful filmmaker, production partner with Goldie Hawn, and a creative force behind popular films such as “Sister Act,”

“Beaches,” “Nuts” and many others. Her new position at the helm of TFT “is an extraordinary opportunity,” Teri says. At its best, she posits, “A great school takes on the big questions of the time and helps students build stories that nurture, enlighten and entertain—and hopefully inspire change for a better world.”



The Essential Scientist

Dean Victoria Sork

“There were not many women in science early in my career,” says Victoria Sork, the newly appointed dean of UCLA’s Division of Life Sciences. “I decided that if I got in the door, I had to keep it open for others.”

As the first woman to head a science division in the UCLA College of Letters and Science, Victoria now wants to swing that door wide open: “I am very committed to finding creative ways to diversify our faculty with more women and underrepresented minorities. I strongly believe that excellence and diversity go hand-in-hand.”

A pioneering environmental biologist and professor of ecology and evolutionary biology, Victoria will lead the advancement of a broad array of academic disciplines. “The life sciences represent the essential sciences of the 21st century,” she explains. “Our work addresses critically important, socially relevant topics such as the genetic

basis of disease, biotic response to global warming, and so much more—laying the foundations for understanding human health issues and environmental problems facing our planet.”

She assumes the deanship in the midst of a challenging economic environment,

but the pragmatic scientist reasons, “You should always invest in your areas of excellence. Many of our specializations are ranked in the top 10 nationally. I am confident that we can work together and make something that is even better.”



A Daughter's Tribute

Rica Orszag



Norton Rodman (l) and Ellen Rodman (r) with Bruin student Ruby Chung '09, the first recipient of the Norton Rodman Endowed Undergraduate Research Scholarship.

Rica Orszag '93 needed a gift for her father Norton Rodman's birthday. He was turning 80 years old—a milestone for anyone—and she and her husband Jonathan wanted “to give him something special and meaningful,” Rica explains.

up my studies and holding a job. I got a fellowship from the Hughes Corporation providing recognition for my work and financial support, which helped greatly. I might not have gotten my degree or become an engineer without it.”

“I grew up hearing from him about UCLA,” she continues. Her father studied physics at UCLA, earning a bachelor's in 1953 and a master's in 1955. “My dad joked that he attended when there were still just four buildings on campus.”

Norton recalls, “As a graduate student, it was a tough grind. I went from 150 pounds to 125 just keeping

“We wanted to honor my father and make it easier for current UCLA physics and engineering students to excel,” Rica explains. “At the same time, I love the idea of supporting my own alma mater.” Rica earned a bachelor's degree in communications at UCLA and went on to serve in the Clinton administration's press office from 1993 to 1997. Now she manages her own public relations firm and lives near campus, where she “is grateful to be getting more involved through Women & Philanthropy.”

The day of the party arrived, and Rica and Jonathan presented Norton with a certificate announcing their gift to UCLA establishing the Norton Rodman Endowed Undergraduate Research Scholarship.

“It was such a surprise,” Norton says. “I was practically in tears. I appreciate how much the scholarship will do for students' morale. For me, it was a really big night.”

The Fight of Her Life

Agi Hirshberg

Agnes (Agi) Hirshberg vowed to spearhead the fight against pancreatic cancer when her husband, retail entrepreneur Ronald Hirshberg, died of the insidious disease at age 54. She moved quickly to establish the Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research in 1997. “Full of rage against this cancer,” Agi explains, “I felt I had to continue Ronnie's personal battle. In his honor, I wanted to bring much-needed attention to this disease and stop the suffering of devastated families that are hit with this diagnosis.

“My goal remains to support ongoing research to find a cure,” says Agi, who has been a member of Women & Philanthropy for eight years.

“Since the foundation started, newly diagnosed patients have nearly doubled to 43,000, so we have a lot of work to do,”



cancer is the fourth most common cancer. But it is 11th in NIH funding. And it continues to be one of the most fatal of all cancer types.”

The Hirshberg Foundation is a leading supporter for pancreatic cancer research and for assisting families affected by the disease. Through the foundation, Agi has given millions of dollars to the David

Agi stressed earlier this year in her welcoming address at UCLA's fifth annual Agi Hirshberg Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer. “Pancreatic

Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA to promote basic science discoveries that can lead to new pancreatic cancer therapies. As a tribute to her husband, the foundation endowed the Ronald S. Hirshberg Chair in Translational Pancreatic Cancer Research, created the Ronald S. Hirshberg Translational Pancreatic Cancer Research Laboratory, and established the UCLA Pancreatic Cancer Tissue Bank.

Agi has taken the battle against pancreatic cancer off campus, as well. She is the founder of Sidmap, a company that offers the pharmaceutical industry a tracer-based technology to improve the development of new therapeutic drugs. “My life is now about demanding better treatment options, offering life extension to patients and eventually finding the cure.”

Excellence in the Neighborhood: The UCLA Community School

When UCLA and the Los Angeles Unified School District opened the UCLA Community School in the fall of 2009, families in the Pico-Union neighborhood that it serves had reason to celebrate. Thanks to the UCLA-LAUSD partnership, says the school's first principal Georgia Lazo, "We are in a unique position to create something very different from traditional public schools. Children can walk from home to school to receive the highest quality education possible."

The UCLA Community School will offer local K-12 students small classes, dual-language immersion programs and project-based learning typically reserved for expensive private institutions. "We are committed to graduating students who have a high degree of academic achievement, take pride in their home cultures and languages, and develop as global citizens," Georgia says.

She was born in the Pico-Union area and understands from experience how transformative an excellent education can be for kids in this urban setting. Now a veteran teacher and school administrator, Georgia is among the 80 percent of UCLA Community School faculty who received training at the UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, including the Principal Leadership Institute and the Teacher Education Program at Center X, which trains teachers to improve urban schooling.

"The common thread connecting the teachers," Georgia says, "is that they have a very strong vision of social justice. And, they know how to deliver culturally relevant and responsive instruction." All teachers are fluent in English and either Spanish or Korean, and several are fluent in all three languages; students will graduate with fluency in at least two languages.

"We are pleased to be working closely with LAUSD and community groups on this critical endeavor," said UCLA Chancellor Gene Block on the first day of classes. Many campus organizations such as ArtsBridge, the Center for Community Learning, the Central American Resource Center and others provide volunteers and diverse enrichment programs.

The groundswell of assistance is affirmation for Georgia, who says, "We believe that it takes a community to educate a child, and UCLA Community School is an innovative response to that maxim."



Principal Georgia Lazo at the UCLA Community School, a new K-12 school established in partnership with the Los Angeles Unified School District.

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