Alumni, parents, and friends shaping the future of Cal

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Cover: Steve Wozniak ’86, co-founder of Apple Computer, on Sproul Plaza. Woz — picked by students to speak at Commencement on May 18 — is one of ten alumni, faculty, and students featured in our cover story on favorite campus places. It was captured by San Francisco photographer and alum William Mercer McLeod ’85 (williammercermcleod.com).

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Around Cal

**New Chancellor starts in June**

UC Berkeley’s 10th Chancellor, Nicholas B. Dirks, will begin his term on June 1. Dirks, who most recently served as Columbia University’s executive vice president and dean of the faculty of Arts and Sciences, succeeds Chancellor Robert J. Birgeneau, who will remain at Berkeley as a professor of physics and materials science and engineering.

**Berkeley’s preeminence reaffirmed**

Berkeley programs continue to top U.S. News and World Report’s annual graduate rankings, with 14 disciplines ranked No. 1 this year. The campus also maintained its position among the top five universities worldwide in Times Higher Education’s annual World Reputation Rankings.

[promise.berkeley.edu/usnews](http://promise.berkeley.edu/usnews)  
[promise.berkeley.edu/reputation-ranking](http://promise.berkeley.edu/reputation-ranking)

**Final Four and a first-round draft pick!**

Cal Women’s Basketball had a historic season. In addition to securing their first-ever Pac-12 title and a berth in the illustrious Final Four (another first for the women’s team), guard Layshia Clarendon ’13 became the highest-drafted Golden Bear; when the Indiana Fever selected her as the ninth pick of the 2013 WNBA Draft.

[promise.berkeley.edu/clarendon](http://promise.berkeley.edu/clarendon)

**Antimalarial drug a triumph for Berkeley**

Artemisinin is a critical component in drugs used to treat malaria — a disease that annually kills 650,000 — and, until recently, could only be extracted from plants. Thanks to discoveries made by Berkeley chemical engineer Jay Keasling, the first large-scale production semi-synthetic artemisinin recently began, which should lead to a stable cost and steady supply of this life-saving drug component.

[promise.berkeley.edu/malariadrug](http://promise.berkeley.edu/malariadrug)

**New Wall of Fame inductees**

Berkeley’s Wall of Fame continues to grow, thanks to nominations from online visitors. Updated weekly, the blog features outstanding Cal alumni in every field — from household names to unsung heroes. Additions this spring include beloved author Beverly Cleary ’38, undocumented farmworker turned neurosurgeon Alfredo Quifones-Hinojosa ’94, and legendary actor Gregory Peck ’39.

[berkeleywalloffame.org](http://berkeleywalloffame.org)

**The Campaign for Berkeley**

2005 – 2013

$3 Billion  
$2.8 Billion

As of March 31, 2013, the campus raised $2.8 billion toward the $3-billion campaign goal with 31% endowment and 69% non-endowment funding.
Treasured campus spots

As we crisscross the 1,232 acres that we call Berkeley,
each of us comes to cherish distinct places. The cool stone steps of Sproul Hall as the world whirls by. The slope of Faculty Glade facing the graying branches of the lonely buckeye. A tranquil nook in the balcony of the Morrison Reading Room.

These glimpses of beauty, these junctures of expression and discovery, are both enduring and malleable. They form our fondest memories of Berkeley, yet each time we revisit them, as these ten individuals have, we are given the chance to see them anew.

View these students, faculty, and alumni at promise.berkeley.edu/treasuredspots
"I love being in an area where you can feel nature surrounding you. It’s calming and restores the soul."

Inspired by her father’s lifelong passion for the natural world, Davis, a volunteer docent for 32 years, can broadly describe what’s growing among the botanical garden’s 13,000 plants — or expound on a single flower. A bench she dedicated to her father sits in the garden of old roses.
Lorraine Petel radio personality
KALX DJ Booth
The DJ booth at KALX is my all-time favorite spot. It’s a place where I can share my favorite bands and tunes with thousands of listeners and just forget about the worries of the week. During my drive-time shift, I get calls from listeners letting me know that my show made their morning. It’s really awesome to hear that my music can change someone’s morning from OK to really amazing. A lot of my musical heroes used to be a part of KALX in the 80s and 90s — Dr. Frank and Jon Von from the Mr. T Experience used to DJ at KALX, and Operation Ivy seemed to be a permanent fixture around the office back in the day. Walking in their same footsteps means a lot to me.”

A sophomore majoring in American studies, Petel hails from Miami Beach, Florida.
Every morning, I’d wake up in a southside dorm, walk to classes sometime before noon, walk through (Sproul) Plaza and Sather Gate — and very often I’d read the little postings that were on the columns and look for concerts that were coming up and what people were talking about, what they were interested in. I was learning about life... And as I’d walk through here, some musicians might be playing… and I’d sit down and listen and love it… I mean, the years I was here, we still had tear gas, the Vietnam War, demonstrations, student boycotts, and those kinds of protests, but it had a reputation for freedom of speech and these human rights ideas… this campus kind of stood for the liberal thought of the whole country.”

Apple Computer co-founder Steve Wozniak first attended Berkeley in 1971, but dropped out after a year to begin designing the Apple I. He returned a decade later to finish his degree using the pseudonym “Rocky Clark.”
Zhijuan Gao, a fifth-year Ph.D. candidate, sits in front of the most powerful nuclear magnetic resonance machine in Northern California, which she uses to study the structure of σ54, a protein needed for the initiation of RNA synthesis. The 5-ton, 900 MHz device produces a magnetic field of 21 Tesla, or 400,000 times that of Earth.

Berkeley has the best professors and students working together in an amazingly collaborative environment. This NMR machine is the biggest piece of equipment in our lab, and I use it to take different spectra of my samples. It’s helping me obtain better research results than any other magnetic fields available on campus.”
I make a daily visit here. It’s not a particularly ‘sexy’ spot but it’s my favorite for making pictures. I love the interplay between people and architecture, and I find the continually shifting architectural landscape very inviting. I love to go at different times of the day in order to see how the sun and light are reflecting or casting shadows and literally changing the visual experience.”

An Emmy Award-winning photographer who twice has been nominated for the Pulitzer Prize, Hernandez teaches at Berkeley’s Graduate School of Journalism.

Richard Koci Hernandez  
photojournalist  
C. V. Starr East  
Asian Library
When I reflect on any success I’ve had in my life, I attribute much of it to the time I spent at Berkeley. One of the things that happens on campus is that your eyes are opened to a wider world. Spaces like the Free Speech Café where people gather, get coffee, and have discussions and see what is happening inside and outside of the United States can be a fascinating way to gently open your eyes to a different angle — and that’s what Berkeley is all about.”

Steve Silberstein ‘64, M.L.S ’77, philanthropist
Free Speech Movement Café

Silberstein stands near the café’s entrance, in front of cases displaying the front pages of newspapers from around the globe. One of the University’s most ardent supporters, he funded the café’s construction, which has buzzed with activity since the day it opened in 1998.
Walter Hood
M.L.A. ’89, M.Arch. ’89, landscape architect
Eucalyptus Grove

It’s a cultural landscape created at a time when Australia and California were sharing a lot of things. The eucalyptus tree was brought over in the late 19th century, and it was thought of as a fast-growing tree. But since the (Oakland) firestorm of 1991, they’ve been out of favor because they burn really hot. Now they’re in jail; you can’t plant them. It was once an iconic tree here. That’s what I really love about the grove — it reminds me of a different time and place.”

Hood is an award-winning professor in the College of Environmental Design, and his Oakland-based studio’s noteworthy projects include the gardens and landscape at San Francisco’s De Young Museum.
Being a tour guide was something I knew I wanted to do the minute I got here, and the Lincoln bust reminds us of what a special place this is. It really connects you with the history of the campus — Lincoln signed the Morrill Act of 1862, which created land-grant universities across the nation, including the University of California. It’s also meaningful because my grandmother thinks we’re related to him — but I’m not convinced.”

Lincoln, a senior from Lakeport, California, is a history major with a focus on 19th-century American history.
The foyer of Doe Library is one of my very favorite places on campus. It’s a beautiful campus, but this library is exceptional, and I have a special feeling for being here because of my enormous admiration for Mark Twain.”

Professor Oates, one of America’s foremost fiction writers, is teaching an undergraduate creative writing workshop at Berkeley this spring.
Being up on the hill at night and looking down upon the campus and city lights provides a very tranquil and unique vantage point to take in how beautiful our school really is — a vantage point that we rarely get to experience amidst the buzz and stressors of routine campus life.”

A senior from Grass Valley, California, Price is majoring in bioengineering and electrical engineering and computer sciences. This fall, he will begin his scholarship at the University of Oxford.
Daniel Price, future Rhodes scholar
The Big C on Charter Hill
Professor Malo Hutson lives with his wife, 20-month-old toddler, and 900 Cal undergraduates — and he can’t imagine a better arrangement. “I’m a community development professor and this is living in a community,” says Hutson ’97, M.C.P. ’99, one of five tenure-track professors who volunteer to live among Berkeley students as part of the campus’s Resident Faculty Program.

Launched in 2005, the program breaks down barriers between students and faculty through the informal and steady exchange that comes from living together on student turf — the residence halls. “Students get to know us on a more personal level, and it’s helped me understand them better,” says Hutson, an assistant professor of city and regional planning.

Though not everyone’s road to utopia, Hutson joined throngs of freshmen and other new admits when he and his young family settled into a two-bedroom cottage behind the Clark Kerr Campus’s cluster of Mission-style buildings last August.

“At first, we were a little bit nervous about it,” acknowledges Hutson. “But it’s been good for our family and good for the students we interact with.”

Hutson and other resident faculty at Clark Kerr and Units 1 and 2 lead field trips, cooking projects, exercise classes, and informal seminars throughout the year. But more importantly, they’re available to talk with students about everything from term papers and what to major in to recent films and weekend plans.

“It’s a nice, friendly relationship. It’s kind of like seeing a neighbor,” says Jonathan Reader ’16, a first-year environmental science student who is teaming with Hutson to convert an empty plot next to the professor’s cottage into a community garden.

Along with providing ready access to some of Berkeley’s most distinguished faculty, the program helps students...
navigate the world as emerging adults — and to envision their role in it. By observing and associating with professors in a relaxed setting, “They begin to see themselves as future scholars, policy makers, and professionals,” says Professor Genaro Padilla, a Clark Kerr resident faculty member since 2009.

Hutson, his wife, Moira O’Neill-Hutson, and their daughter, Nia, have plunged into residential college life and quickly became popular figures. Regulars for breakfast and dinner in the Great Hall dining room — nicknamed Hogwarts because of its soaring ceiling, gothic chandeliers, and wood-paneled walls — they usually draw a crowd.

Pint-sized Nia “is like Berkeley’s unofficial mascot,” says Savannah Luschei ’16, a 19-year-old freshman from Santa Barbara. Hutson has good reason to feel a sense of déjà vu at Clark Kerr. “I was here as an 18-year-old, and now I’m back,” he says.

A Southern California native, Hutson was a first-generation college student and walk-on outfielder for Cal baseball. He earned his B.A. in sociology and master’s in city and regional planning from Berkeley before heading to MIT for a doctorate. A noted expert in community development, urban sustainability, and population health, he joined Berkeley’s faculty in 2008.

Reflecting on his freshman days, Hutson says, “I wish they had the program when I was a student.”

On a recent Monday morning, Hutson had breakfast with junior transfer Katie McCloskey ’14 to discuss a summer research fellowship she is seeking. Happy to help, he says, “It’s in these informal meetings where everything happens.”

McCloskey, a 20-year-old studying geography, previously sought Hutson’s

“I’m a community development professor and this is living in a community.”
advice on her choice of a major. “I run into him a lot at the dining commons,” she says. “He’s so friendly and he listens to my concerns.”

As they chat, they are joined by O’Neill-Hutson, a legal specialist on campus, and Nia, who eats a bagel and slices of banana while swinging her legs from a booster seat.

“She thinks she’s a little college student,” says Hutson of his daughter. “She’s eating with students in the dining commons all the time.”

To join the program, Hutson and other resident faculty signed a three-year contract, which is renewable up to three times, and agreed to work at least eight hours weekly. In return, they receive free room and board. But participants say the program is much more than a business proposition.

“All of a sudden, I’m walking across campus and seeing all these people I know. It really gave me an entree into the undergraduate community,” says Professor Na’ilah Suad Nasir ’93, chair of the Department of African American Studies.

A third-generation Berkeley graduate, Nasir lives with her husband and three of her four children in a three-bedroom apartment at Unit 1’s Barbara Christian Hall. The oldest of the four, who lives elsewhere, is a Cal junior: “It was definitely an adjustment,” says Nasir of her snug quarters. “I hadn’t lived in an apartment for a really long time.”

Living with college students has its quirks. While resident faculty say their youthful neighbors are genuinely respectful, parties — and the noise that comes with them — are inevitable aspects of college life.

When Sara Aziz ’13 landed a prized spot at Berkeley in 2011, the Chabot College transfer student wasn’t sure she could adjust.

“A lot of people were scaring me that classes at Berkeley were really hard,” says Aziz, who credits the George A. Miller Scholars Program with helping her turn that nervous transition into a flat-out success. Holding a 4.0 GPA in molecular and cell biology, she will graduate in May.

The Miller Scholars program, which recently celebrated 15 years of improving access and opportunity on campus, offers a suite of services to low-income, first-generation students who transfer to Berkeley from California community colleges.

“We get some really great students to begin with, and we’re definitely giving them a boost,” says program coordinator Jennifer Bradford. Of the 160 students who have participated — including single parents, military veterans, and reentry students who endured homelessness — 26 have gone on to earn master’s degrees, plus five J.D.s, five Ph.D.s, and one M.D.

The program offers students a $7,000 scholarship, one-on-one advising, faculty mentoring, and a summer writing workshop. Another winning ingredient is the opportunity to conduct a yearlong community service or research project.

For Aziz, a 22-year-old immigrant from Egypt, the program provided an immediate community and the chance to design and implement a study of alternative childbirth. “This was the first time I was introduced to research,” says Aziz, who has set her sights on applying to medical school.

San Francisco philanthropist and retired financier George A. Miller M.B.A. ’61 hails the program as one of his best investments. An advocate of donating to causes during one’s lifetime, Miller looks forward to meeting each scholar. “They’re all amazing,” he says. “I think the joy of seeing what you can accomplish is pretty important — and it really is fun.”
Hurricane Sandy swept away alumnus Floyd Moreland's personal library, records, and much of the first floor of his Ortley Beach, New Jersey, home last October. But the touch his generous spirit — or his affection he earned his 1971 doctorate in classics.

Though evacuated and sleeping on an air mattress, Moreland fulfilled a $300 year-end pledge to Cal. He says he had no intention of breaking the promise he’d made shortly before the disaster to student Kimiya Hojjat, who had called Moreland to fundraise on behalf of the University.

“Even as I have lost everything, my commitment to the values and the opportunities that I received at Berkeley remains,” Moreland wrote in a letter accompanying his gift.

A retired classics professor, dean, and vice president at the City University of New York (CUNY), Moreland now lives in a rental and is still struggling to rebuild. “It never occurred to me at 70 years old that I’d be virtually homeless,” he says. He has also retired from his second career operating a century-old carousel in Seaside Heights.

As a graduate student in the 1960s, Moreland founded a summer crash course in Latin. “That defined my career,” he says. He created a similar program, the Summer Latin Institute, at CUNY. “I received an absolutely first-rate doctoral education at Berkeley,” he says.

Describing his recent donation, Moreland says, “It was just something from the heart.”

For Hojjat, who calls dozens of people each night through the Cal Calling Center, Moreland’s response “really means a lot to me.” The third-year student in cognitive science knows the pain of loss after experiencing a 2011 apartment fire that destroyed her belongings. Inspired by Moreland, Hojjat hopes one day to follow in his footsteps as a loyal donor.
“I was fascinated with the history of the microscope,” says Golub.

Inspired to share his collection for the enrichment and enjoyment of all, Golub began donating microscopes to Berkeley in 1995. Today, 144 of his microscopes and two scientifically important books on microscopy are permanently displayed in the Valley Life Sciences Building. Crafted in Europe and America, the microscopes trace the evolution of a scientific tool that has unveiled secrets of the natural world.

Golub’s earliest instruments date to the late 1600s, when natural philosophers first peered through them to discover microscopic life and closely examine inanimate objects.

“One jewel is the elegant “John Marshall great double microscope” fashioned in England in 1710 by one of the greatest opticians and microscope makers of the time. It features a gold-tooled leather exterior and many mechanical innovations.

Now 97, Golub came to Berkeley in 1937 as a graduate student in microbiology and met his wife, the late Ellina Marx Jacobs ’39, while living at International House. Later at Bio-Science Laboratories, his company performed specialized clinical analyses for hospitals and physicians throughout the world.

Donating the microscopes to Berkeley was an easy decision for Golub. Crediting his alma mater with his exceptional training and his introduction to Ellina, he says, “My heart belongs to Berkeley.”
Reviving a legend

Visionary choreographer Anna Halprin (upper left) presented “Parades and Changes” at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive when it first opened in 1970. It seemed appropriate that she would reunite with the original composer, electronic music pioneer Morton Subotnick, to recreate this now-legendary piece in homage to the institution as it prepares to move to a new home (see pages 24–25).

A “ceremony of trust,” as Halprin calls it, the work is built around a series of activities — embracing, audience interaction, tearing paper, falling, talking, dressing and undressing, running — while also tackling current social, political, and artistic issues. The performance, still captivating to audiences decades after ushering in a new era of dance, played to sold-out crowds in February.
Downtown Berkeley’s arts district will soon welcome a new neighbor as work gets under way on the future home of the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAM/PFA). Forward-looking and versatile, the new museum—slated to open in 2016—will integrate a repurposed 1939 Art Deco-style former printing plant with a new metal-clad structure.

Located across from the campus’s west entrance, it counts Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse (devoted to traditional music), and the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life as its neighbors—adding to Berkeley’s burgeoning arts scene and making BAM/PFA’s dynamic art, film, performance, and education programs more publicly accessible.

An intimate gathering was held in December in the raw, industrial space of the plant. It included a Tuvan throat singing performance by Professor Ken Ueno and presentation of the Berkeley Medal, the University’s highest honor, to Barclay Simpson ’66 (ex-’43), a BAM/PFA trustee and major force in the building campaign (see sidebar).

With only $5 million left to raise toward the center’s $100-million campaign, BAM/PFA Director Lawrence Rinder said, “This is an incredible milestone. We will be forever grateful to all of those individuals, as well as the campus and Berkeley communities, who have offered their overwhelming support and goodwill to the project.”

Simpson said, “This new building will ensure that the campus and the city of Berkeley have a world-class visual arts center for at least the next century.”
BAM/PFA began planning for the new building when a 1997 engineering survey found that its current building on Bancroft Way could not be upgraded to meet current-day seismic standards without eliminating the central space required for its exhibitions.

Rinder said the new facility, designed by renowned New York-based firm Diller Scofidio + Renfro, “respects the grand interior of the existing printing plant, while adding to that building a bold new architectural form filled with sensuous colors, materials, and surfaces.”

The cohesive and visually arresting space will include:
- exhibition galleries
- a participatory art-making studio
- a works-on-paper collection study center
- a film library and study center
- a 230-seat film theater and 32-seat screening room
- a special event space
- a store, café, and offices.

For more information about the building project, visit bampfa.berkeley.edu/newbuilding.

Despite decades of unwavering volunteerism and philanthropy on campus, Barclay Simpson had never heard of the Berkeley Medal, the University’s highest honor, until it was bestowed on him.

“I really didn’t think that I deserved it,” said Simpson, the characteristically modest founder of Pleasanton-based Simpson Manufacturing.

Chancellor Robert Birgeneau gave Simpson — a longtime BAM/PFA volunteer leader and donor — the medal during a small ceremony at the museum’s new site. BAM/PFA Director Lawrence Rinder presented Simpson with an imprinted brick recovered from the new site.

Birgeneau commended Simpson for his support of the BAM/PFA building campaign, as well as Cal Athletics, undergraduate scholarships, and campus-community programs, including Young Entrepreneurs at Haas and Cal Performances’ Ailey Camp.

“In everything he does, Barc has a positive effect on the lives around him,” the Chancellor said.

The Berkeley Medal is given to individuals whose contributions benefit the public in exceptional ways.
Biotech entrepreneur Matt Winkler ’74, Ph.D. ’79 knows that even the most brilliant young scientists often need a jumpstart.

That’s why each year, he and his family provide a pair of $50,000 grants — with no strings attached — to help two of Berkeley’s newest faculty members launch their ideas. The Winkler Family Foundation Awards benefit early-career professors in the Biological Sciences Division of the College of Letters and Science and in the College of Natural Resources, where Winkler earned his degrees.

Recipients can use the funds to set up a lab, hire postdoctoral and graduate assistants, or do whatever’s necessary as they embark on their research and academic paths.

“I’m really sensitive to this being the most delicate part of a professor’s career,” says Winkler, who has started a string of successful biotech ventures.

Since 2007, 11 Berkeley faculty members have received Winkler awards. Along with fueling groundbreaking research, the grants provide an important boost to up-and-coming scientists whose work hasn’t yet qualified for federal or other significant sources of support.

For Arash Komeili, an associate professor of plant and microbial biology, Winkler’s grant came just as his campus startup funds were running low in 2008.

“It meant we could continue with a project that was risky and still exploratory,” says Komeili, who studies magnetic particles called magnetosomes in bacteria. He used the award to support a graduate student whose promising research advanced their work. Since then, Komeili has received substantial backing from the National Institutes of Health and the Keck Foundation.
“A relatively small amount of money at a critical time in their career can make a major difference.”

That’s exactly the trajectory that Winkler wants to ignite — leveraging relatively small grants into major research support and pioneering faculty careers.

Lin He, a molecular and cell biologist, also received a 2008 Winkler award shortly after joining Berkeley. “This money gives you the financial security to explore risky ideas,” observes He, who is studying the role of tiny RNA, called microRNA, in the development of cancer. A year later, she won a prestigious MacArthur Fellowship.

Winkler is likewise investigating the emerging field of microRNA as the founder and CEO of Asuragen, a cancer diagnostics firm. He also founded Mirna Therapeutics, a cancer therapeutics company, whose first microRNA drug will enter human clinical trials this spring.

A resident of Austin, Texas, Winkler has been a strong advocate for improved teaching on evolution in public schools and last year won the Walking The Walk Award from the Texas Freedom Network.

“I got a great start in life by getting my degrees from Berkeley,” says Winkler, who holds a B.S. in genetics and a doctorate in zoology.

Selecting the grant recipients has become a cherished kitchen-table ritual for Winkler; his wife, Peggy, and their three young adult sons. “I wanted to get my kids involved in how they can thoughtfully make a difference,” he explains.

Today, Winkler hopes others follow their powerful philanthropic example.

“CALL THE HEAT!”

As a Berkeley undergraduate, Matt Winkler inadvertently became part of a radical chapter in history. In February 1974, he and some friends were studying at a South Berkeley apartment when a commotion erupted next door. They ran outside to discover two men throwing a screaming woman into the trunk of a car. Another man fired a semiautomatic rifle into the air.

Winkler shouted, “Call the heat!” to a female classmate as he and some male students sprinted down the street in hopes of glimpsing the license plate on the fleeing vehicle.

Their heroics were met by a hail of bullets. “The angel who watches out for fools and drunkards was looking out for us,” says Winkler, who had just witnessed the kidnapping of newspaper heiress and Berkeley student Patricia Hearst.

Winkler provided a description of Symbionese Liberation Army leader Cinque Mtume to the FBI and later testified at Hearst’s bank robbery trial.
Charter Gala 2013, a benefit for the Cal Alumni Association, was held at San Francisco’s Palace Hotel in March.


2. Former and current recipients of The Achievement Award Program scholarship had an opportunity to meet Shariq Yosufzai (center), Chevron Corp. vice president, global offices of diversity and ombuds, and Richard Beahrs ’68 (third from right).

3. More than 100 student and alumni volunteers from the Classes of 1958 to 2013 attended the annual Volunteer Leadership Conference to launch their fundraising campaigns.

Alumni & Family Weekend October 4–6, 2013

Come back to Berkeley! Choose from more than 100 fun-filled events, including alumni parties, the Cal Parents Family Dinner, Bear Affair BBQ, faculty seminars, campus tours, museum open houses, and the Cal–Washington State football game. Visit weekend.berkeley.edu starting July 1 to register, or call 888.UNIV.CAL.

2014 Alumni Awards

Berkeley’s innovative alumni have changed the world — and many are also leading volunteers and supporters of the University, making a difference in every corner of our campus. Please submit a nomination for one of the Cal Alumni Association’s 2014 Alumni Achievement or Alumni Service Awards. For more information, please visit alumni.berkeley.edu/awards.
4. Richard Steiny ’79 (right) and Amelia Kaymen (left), Cal Parents Board co-chairs, present a check for $37,750 to Senior Gift Committee co-chairs Samantha Steiny ’13 and Tyler Wishnoff ’13. The funds will create a challenge match to boost student giving.

5. Dr. J. Michael McGinnis ’66, Vice Provost Catherine Koshland, School of Public Health Dean Stephen Shortell, and Dr. David Satcher were on hand at the annual UC Berkeley Public Health Heroes reception, where McGinnis and Satcher were honored.

6. Adam ’83 and Rita Kablanian relax after hosting a Berkeley Science event at their home in November. Guest speakers were astronomy professors Imke de Pater and Geoff Marcy.

7. Larry Johnson ’72 and Natalie Camarena Lopez M.P.H. ’14, graduate student in the School of Public Health, enjoy conversation at the Berkeley Distinguished Fellows Reception.

In January, the annual Luncheon in the Library was held at Doe Library.

8. Professor Emeritus Thomas Metcalf joined volunteers Bea Moorhead Heggie ’47 and Joan Finnie.

10. Henry H. Wheeler, Jr. speaks with neuroscience students at the dedication of the Wheeler Brain Imaging Center in the Li Ka Shing Center.

11. Chancellor Robert J. Birgeneau, Oski, Lauren Bechtel Dachs, and Stephen Bechtel, Jr. cut the ribbon to open up the renovated Bechtel Engineering Center.

12. Nancy Hult Ganis ’78, M.J. ’81 chats with Bob Wong ’68, advisory board co-chair for the Center on Civility & Democratic Engagement, and his wife, Sheryl ’67, at a Goldman School of Public Policy dinner.

13. Len ’57 and Roberta ’57 Cohn, and Debra ’82 and Barry ’82 Cohn, president of the Magnes Museum Foundation, attended the museum’s Spring Exhibitions Opening.

14. Kenneth E. Behring and Maj. Nina D’Amato ’08, the Cal Alumni Association’s 2013 Mark Bingham Young Alumni Award winner, saluted the Graduate School of Education’s Principal Leadership Institute at the Blackhawk Museum. The event was underwritten by Behring and his wife, Patricia.

15. Karen Grassle ’65 meets Taiwanese playwright and director Stan Lai Ph.D. ’83 at the home of Professor Shannon Jackson. Dr. Lai was an Avenali Resident Fellow at the Arts Research Center.

17. The College of Letters & Science celebrated the launch of the Peder Sather Center with a symposium attended by Executive Dean Mark Richards, Swedish Minister for Gender Equality Nyamko Sabuni, Nobel laureate Saul Perlmutter, Consul General of Sweden Barbro Osher, Consul General of Norway Sten Arne Rosnes, and Academic Director Trond Petersen.

18. Adjunct Assistant Professor Kellie McElhaney, Silvia M. Garrigo, advisory board member for the Center for Responsible Business, and Kristin Groos Richmond M.B.A. ‘06, co-founder of Revolution Foods, reconnect at the Haas School’s 10th anniversary celebration for the center.

19. The Charter Hill Society Leadership Roundtable’s discussion of the future of public higher education included UC student regent (and moderator) Jonathan Stein, Chancellor Robert J. Birgeneau; AnnaLee Saxenian, dean of the School of Information; and Henry E. Brady, dean of the Goldman School of Public Policy. Robert D. Haas ’64 introduced the discussion.
“Big Data” didn’t make any of the 2012 words-of-the-year lists that I saw. That’s probably because it didn’t get the wide public exposure given to items like “frankenstorm,” “fiscal cliff,” and YOLO. But it had a huge surge in venues like Wired and The Economist, and it was the buzz of Silicon Valley and Davos. And Big Data had a lot to do with President Obama’s victory.

Whether it’s explicitly mentioned or not, the Big Data phenomenon has been all over the news. It’s responsible for a lot of our anxieties about intrusions on our privacy, whether from the government’s anti-terrorist data sweeps or the ads that track us as we wander around the Web. It has even turned statistics into a sexy major.

Today, we kick up clouds of data dust wherever we go. Cellphones and cable boxes; Google and Amazon, Facebook and Twitter; cable boxes and the cameras at stoplights; the bar codes on milk cartons; and the RFID chip that whips you through the toll plaza — each of them captures a sliver of what we’re doing.

It’s only when those chunks are aggregated that they turn into Big Data; then analytics software can scour...
it for patterns. Epidemiologists watch for blips in Google queries to localize flu outbreaks; security agencies comb over travel and credit card records looking for possible terrorists.

2012 was the year we held the first Big Data election, too. The Obama campaign had better voter data and analytics — that gave them an edge in identifying likely supporters and finding the best ways to reach “low-information” independents, including running ads on Jimmy Kimmel Live and the cable network TV Land. The amalgamation of all that personal data helps businesses target their customers online and tailor their sales pitches to individuals. You idly click on an ad for a pair of red sneakers and they’ll stalk you to the end of your days. I think of that famous 1993 New Yorker cartoon by Peter Steiner: “On the Internet, nobody knows you’re a dog.” Now it’s more like, “On the Internet, everybody knows what brand of dog food you buy.”

Though actually, it’s more worrisome when they get your brand of dog food wrong. In some circles, Big Data has spawned a cult of infallibility — but you can’t always believe what the numbers are saying. When algorithms weigh hundreds of factors over a huge data set, you can’t really know why they come to a particular decision or whether it really makes sense.

When I worked at the Xerox Palo Alto Research Center, we used to talk about a 95 percent solution. So what if Amazon’s algorithms conclude that I’d be interested in Celine Dion’s greatest hits, as long as they get 19 out of 20 recommendations right? But those odds are less reassuring when the algorithms are selecting candidates for the no-fly list.

I don’t know if the phrase Big Data itself will be around 20 years from now, when we’ll probably be measuring information in humongobytes. But 19 out of 20 is probably still going to be a good hit rate for those algorithms, and people will still feel the need to sort out the causes from the correlations — still asking the old question, what are patterns for? •

Geoff Nunberg is an adjunct full professor in the School of Information. A longer version of this essay aired on National Public Radio.