

# COMMENTS FROM FORMER *Women & Science* FELLOWS

Young investigators represent the future of science and are the very heart of Rockefeller's research enterprise. Below and on the following pages, recent recipients of *Women & Science* fellowships discuss the enormous significance of the award to their lives and careers in science.

## MELISSA NOEL

*Women & Science* Graduate Fellowship (2002–2003)

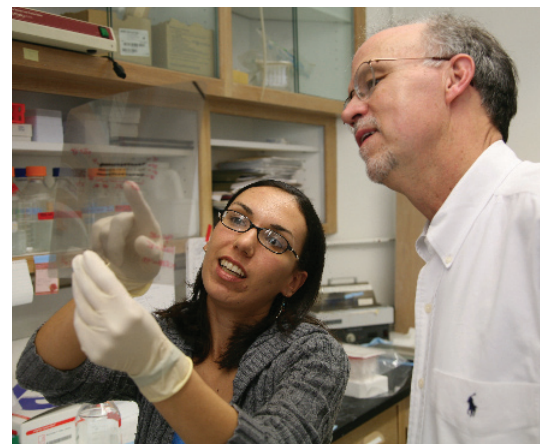
Currently: Graduate Fellow, Laboratory of Neurobiology and Genetics.  
Head of Laboratory: Sidney Strickland, Ph.D.



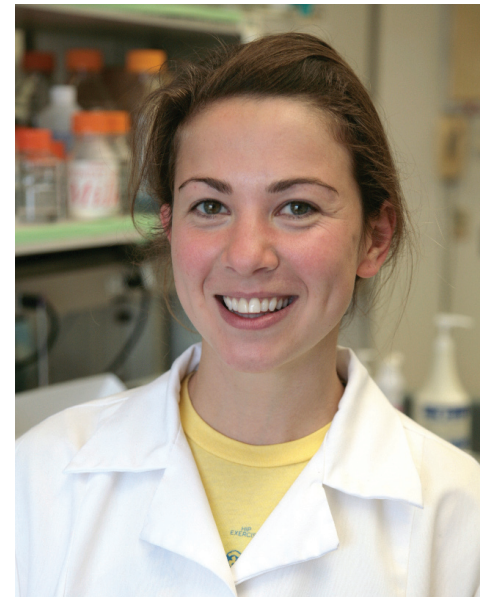
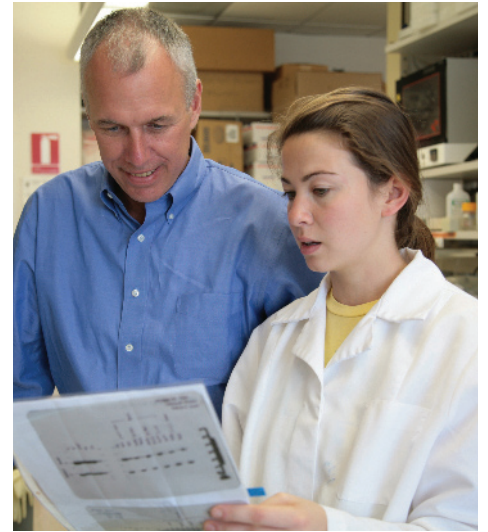
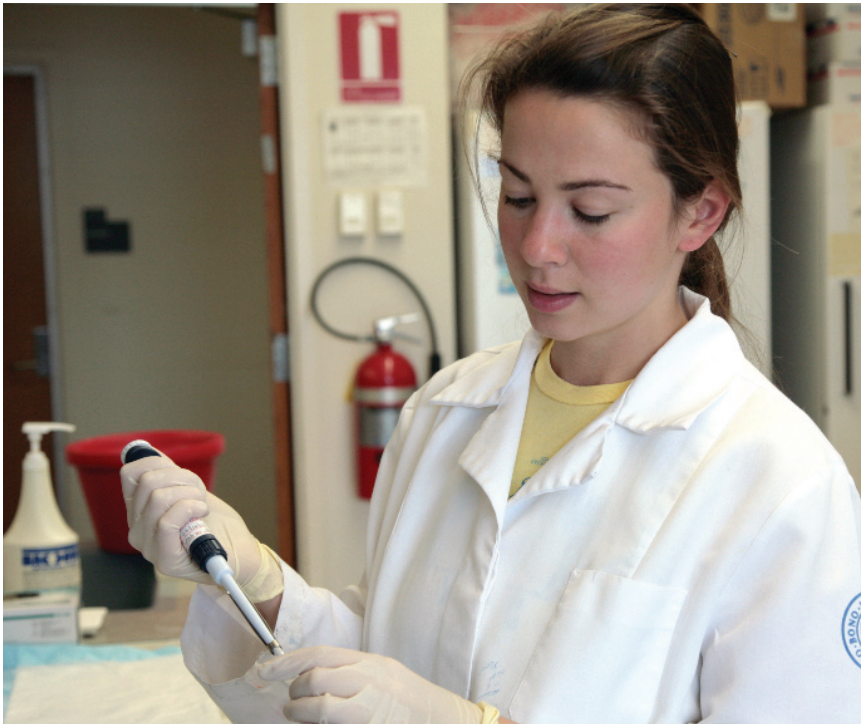
My first experience at RU was participating in the SURF (Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship) program, working in Bruce McEwen's lab. I had done research in my native Puerto Rico and at the University of Colorado.

But it wasn't until I came to Rockefeller that I felt that research was what I needed to be doing for the rest of my life. SURF showed me what science is about, how to think about a problem, and how to design an experiment to reach an answer to my question. The SURF program was a vital stepping stone to my *Women & Science* Graduate Fellowship.

As a graduate student at Rockefeller, I've been given the opportunity to think independently and study what really fascinates me, which is behavioral neurobiology. I don't think my graduate experience would have been the same anywhere else. As a young Hispanic woman scientist, I am extremely grateful to *Women & Science* for helping to develop my career.



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**ELIZABETH HELLER** *Women & Science* Graduate Fellowship (2002–2003).  
Currently: Graduate Fellow, Laboratory of Molecular Biology.  
Head of Laboratory: Nathaniel Heintz, Ph.D.

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I was so pleased when I was named a Rockefeller University *Women & Science* Graduate Fellow, and I continue to benefit greatly from the initiative’s programs. I look forward to the lectures and the annual luncheon as opportunities to interact with and learn from talented women—nonscientists as well as scientists.

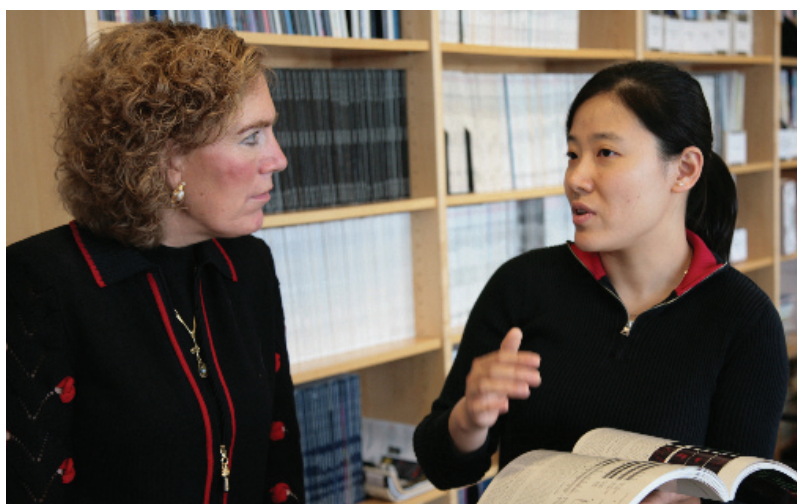
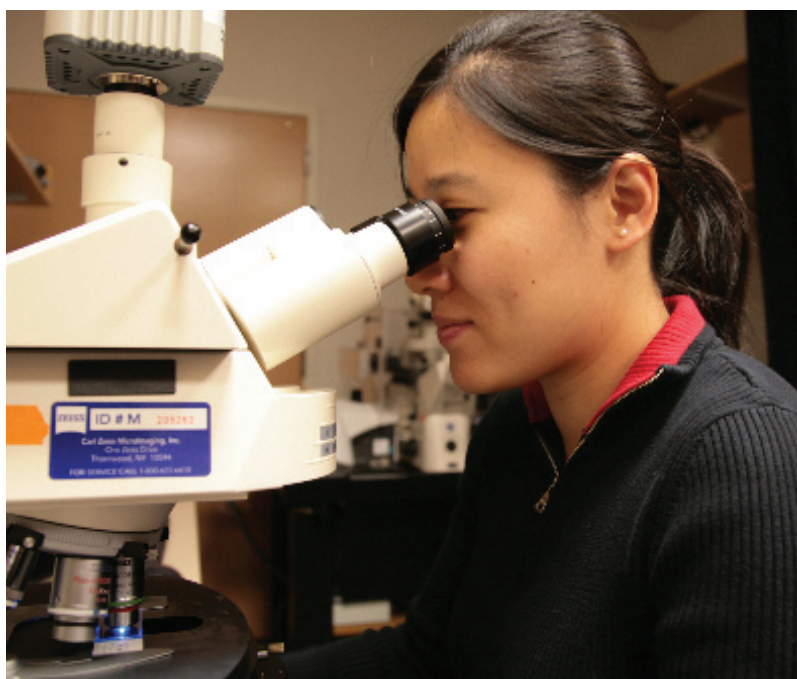
The advocacy of *W&S* has been instrumental in helping to attract outstanding women scientists to Rockefeller. I am particularly grateful to have Cori Bargmann here and to have been able to include her on my thesis committee. Cori’s expertise has proved invaluable for my work.

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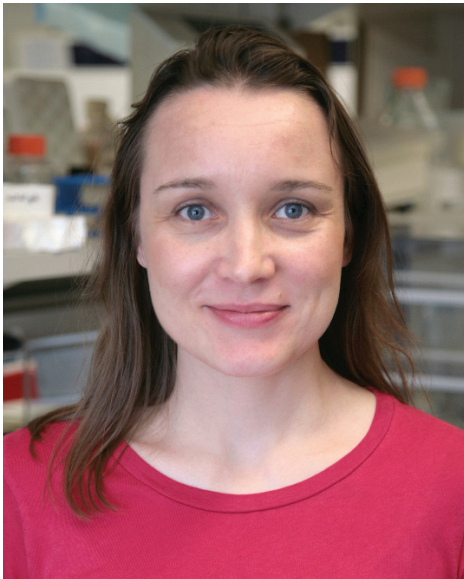
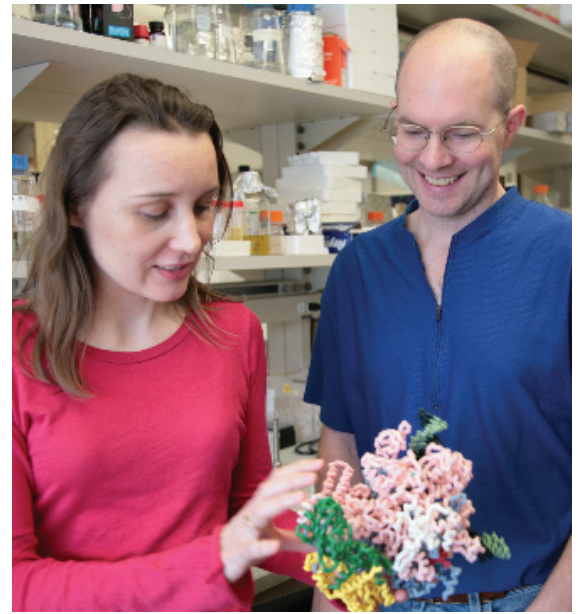
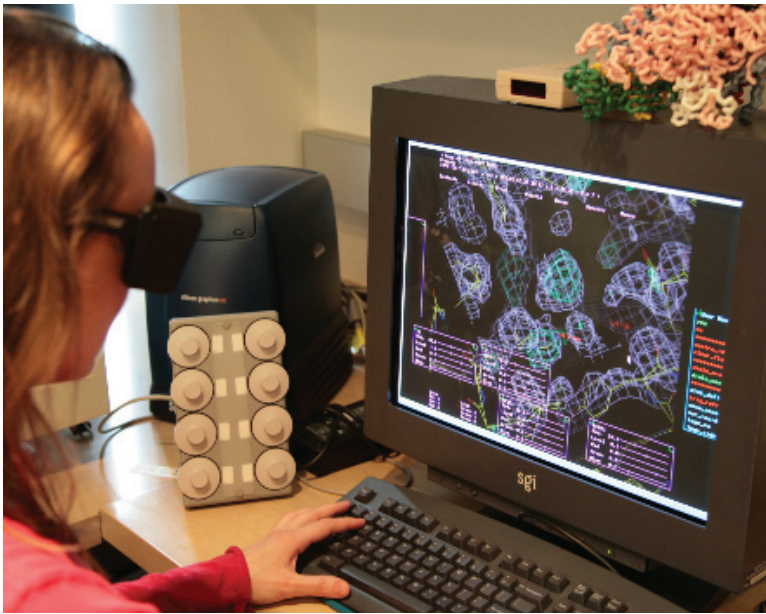


**XUAN WANG, PH.D.** *Women & Science* Postdoctoral Fellowship (2004–2005). **Currently:** Postdoctoral Associate, Laboratory of Mammalian Cell Biology and Development. **Head of Laboratory:** Elaine Fuchs, Ph.D.

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I am a postdoctoral fellow in the Laboratory of Professor Elaine Fuchs, The Rebecca C. Lancefield Professor. I feel honored to have been the recipient of a *Women & Science* Postdoctoral Fellowship as these awards are extremely competitive to obtain. I was especially grateful for the support from *W&S* because as a foreign scientist it is difficult for me to obtain fellowships through the U.S. government.

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**VALERIE LAMOUR, PH.D.** *Women & Science* Postdoctoral Fellowship (2003–2004). Currently: Postdoctoral Associate, Laboratory of Molecular Biophysics. Head of Laboratory: Seth A. Darst, Ph.D.



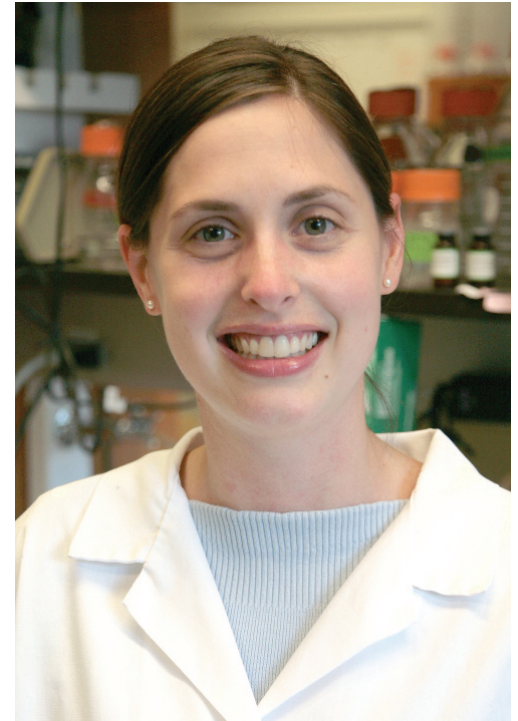
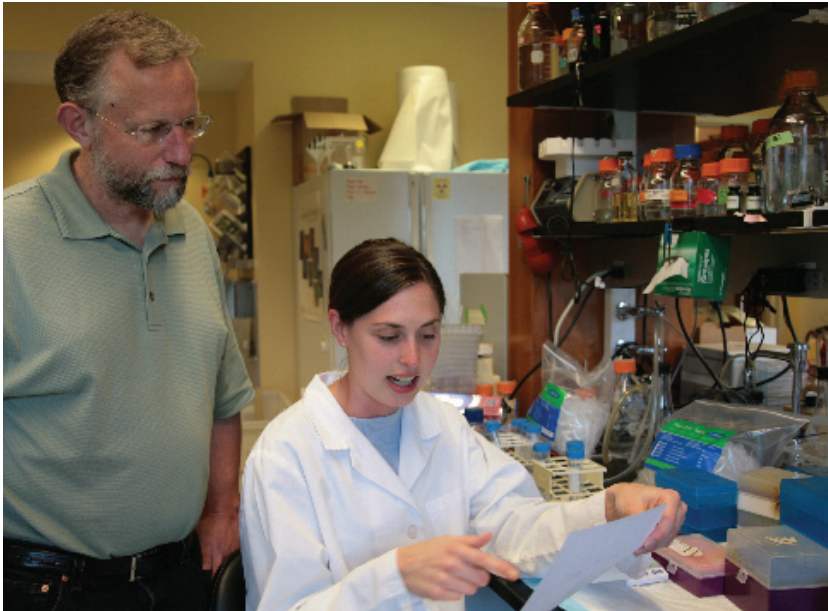
I would like to emphasize how important it was to be granted a *Women & Science* Postdoctoral Fellowship. In the academic research system, fellowships, awards and grants are as important in one's curriculum vitae as publications in scientific journals. They acknowledge your past achievements and efforts, support financially your present and future projects, and allow you to grow as an independent scientist. On a personal level, I was particularly proud to be a *W&S* Fellow since the award recognizes that a woman must overcome many difficulties to reach this level as a scientist.



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**DONNA TSCHERNE** *Women & Science* Graduate Fellowship (2001–2002). Currently: Graduate Fellow, Laboratory of Virology and Infectious Disease. Head of Laboratory: Charles M. Rice, Ph.D.

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I was awarded a *Women & Science* Graduate Fellowship at the beginning of my graduate career. I had little experience in the lab when I entered Rockefeller, and receiving this prestigious fellowship gave me the pride and confidence to handle the many challenges a young scientist faces. Now as I approach the end of my time at Rockefeller, I can honestly say that my *W&S* fellowship helped shape the researcher that I am today and motivated me to continue in biomedical science as my career.

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I also enjoyed invitations to many excellent meetings, where I was able to present my ideas and data and network with leading scientists in my field.

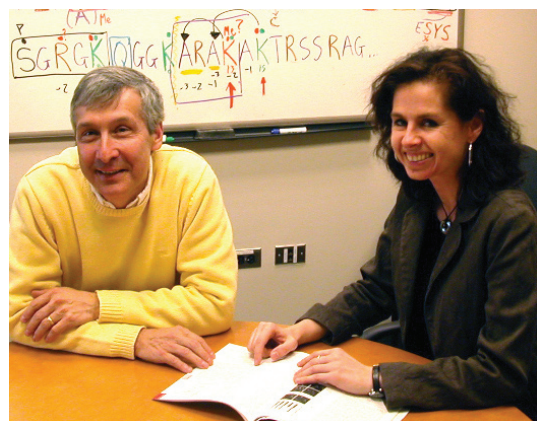
**SANDRA B. HAKE** *Women & Science* Postdoctoral Fellowship (2005–2006). Currently: Postdoctoral Fellow, Laboratory of Chromatin Biology. Head of Laboratory: C. David Allis, Ph.D.

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My *Women & Science* Postdoctoral Fellowship has had a significant impact on my career. It enabled me to publish several key research papers, to establish valuable collaborations and to attend many excellent meetings, where I was able to present my ideas and data and network with leading scientists in my field.

In addition, receiving an internationally recognized award such as the *W&S* fellowship is an important hurdle for a young, foreign female scientist working in the States. In fact, more advanced positions are basically out of reach without such a fellowship listed on one's CV. I am happy to report that I recently applied successfully for an Independent Group Leader position at the University of Munich, Germany. These relationships and experiences would not have happened without the *W&S* fellowships and I would like to thank the donors to *Women & Science* for their generous support.

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## *Women & Science*

# CHILD AND FAMILY CENTER FUND

The Rockefeller University's Child and Family Center provides a year-round, full-time program for children between three months and five years old.

Leslie Vosshall is a renowned neuroscientist and geneticist, who first came to Rockefeller as a Ph.D. student working in the laboratory of Professor Michael Young. Today, Leslie heads the Laboratory of Neurogenetics and Behavior as the Chemers Family Associate Professor—a position endowed by *Women & Science* co-Chair and RU Trustee Robin Neustein.

Using the fruit fly to learn about the odor-perception system, Leslie's work is addressing a number of key questions about how the olfactory system develops, how certain cells “decide” to respond to a given odorant, and how some odors elicit programmed behaviors. Her discoveries about how insects recognize and respond to odors are vital in the effort to control mosquitoes that spread malaria, as well as other insect pests that take a toll on agriculture and human health. Her team has also begun clinical investigations of odor perception and preferences in humans in studies, involving hundreds of volunteers.

But Leslie's involvement in the campus community is not limited to her roles as a head of laboratory and University alumna; she is also the parent of a student enrolled in Rockefeller's Child and Family Center. “My professional success at the University is entirely dependent on the availability of high-quality on-site daycare for my daughter at the Child and



*Leslie Vosshall and her daughter at Rockefeller's Child and Family Center*

Family Center,” Leslie stated. “The caring professionals at the CFC have nurtured the emotional and intellectual growth of my daughter since she was four months old, allowing me in turn to nurture my science at Rockefeller.”

Leslie's outstanding accomplishments as a scientist have been recognized with numerous awards including a Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers—the United States government's highest honor for young scientists.

“Women in science face an uphill battle and the Child and Family Center takes away one significant worry: who will take care of our children during the day?” —*Leslie Vosshall*