







# Big Ideas

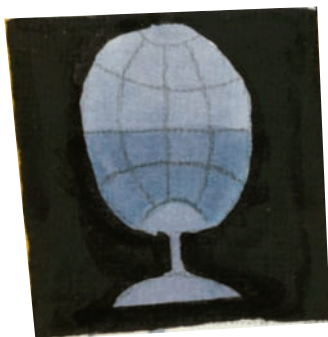
## Endowed Chairs Raise the Bar in the Classroom and Beyond

In 1663, Cambridge University established the Lucasian Professorship in Mathematics, thanks to benefactor Henry Lucas, who left instructions in his will for the purchase of land that would generate 100 pounds annually to support the distinguished position. At the time, Lucas, a philanthropist and a member of Parliament for Cambridge, could never have imagined the far-reaching impact of his legacy. Nor could he have predicted that the endowed chair his gift made possible would endure for more than three centuries and become what is today widely considered the most prestigious post in academia.

Eighteen renowned philosophers and physicists—including Isaac Newton and Stephen Hawking—have held this historic endowed chair. Each big thinker has in one way or another furthered the study of math and science well beyond the walls of Cambridge.

Fast forward to Fordham in the 21st century. The University's leadership and alumni share a deep appreciation for the unlimited potential of endowed chairs—not only in terms of how these distinguished appointments enrich academic excellence, but in how they strengthen the University's connections within academia, in New York City and among the human family around the globe.

BY CLAIRE CURRY



In recent years, thanks to the commitment of Joseph M. McShane, S.J., president of Fordham, and the generosity of visionary benefactors who have followed Henry Lucas' 300-year-old example, the University has significantly increased resources for endowed chairs and expanded these scholarly posts across nearly every college and school.

Today, 57 endowed chairs at Fordham are dedicated to the study of subjects as diverse as ethics, law, international business, theology, psychology, art and communications. Broadening this pool of intellectual leaders is among the primary goals of Excelsior | Ever Upward | The Campaign for Fordham, an ambitious endeavor seeking to raise \$500 million for the University, with nearly 20 percent earmarked to recruit international scholars to fill existing and newly established endowed chairs.

"Endowed chairs are central to Father McShane's strategic vision for the University," said Stephen Freedman, Ph.D., senior vice president/chief academic officer, and professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at Fordham. "They are very important to our emphasis on academic quality. When we think of endowed chairs, we think of students first: traditional undergraduates, master's students and doctoral students."

The selection process for filling these distinguished posts is thoughtful and deliberate. "We spend a lot of time in deciding on the kind of person we want to target and the way that position will allow the school and department to grow and expand," Freedman said. "We have used endowed chairs to enhance our academic reputation in areas that are already strong and in areas that can be even stronger." Recruitment is targeted, Freedman continued, with a focus on the University's strategic priorities. "Emphasizing social justice and academic rigor is critical to educating the whole person."

Fordham's Jesuit tradition certainly influences the endowed chairs the University establishes, along with the scholars it attracts. For example, the James and Nancy Buckman Chair in Applied Christian Ethics was created last year, courtesy of James E. Buckman, FCRH '66, and his wife, Nancy.

"We believe that Fordham should be the shining light in the area of theology and philosophy," he said. "It's a traditional area of excellence for the University. It's consistent with the Jesuit tradition and, God knows, if there was ever a time when people ought to be thinking about ethical behavior and ethical norms, it's today."

Barbara Hilkert Andolsen, Ph.D., a feminist theologian and ethics scholar, was installed as the chair in February 2009 and marked the occasion with the delivery of the first Buckman Lecture, "Unyielding Hope: Racism and Catholic Social Thought in a New American Moment."

Buckman, a Fordham trustee who is also a member of the President's Council and co-chair of Excelsior | Ever Upward | The Campaign for Fordham, is one example of many dedicated alumni who support the University by funding endowed chairs.

"We have donors who have had mentors or faculty members at Fordham who made a tremendous difference in their lives," Freedman said. "And how do they give back? By making similar educators available to today's students. They believe that one of the best ways they can support the University is to help attract academic talent and broaden the scope and the way we engage in scholarship."

A gift from Stephen E. Bepler, FCRH '64, and Kim B. Bepler, resulted in the 2009 installation of literary scholar Heather Dubrow, Ph.D., as the University's first John D. Boyd, S.J., Chair in Poetic Imagination. The Beplers established the chair in honor of Father Boyd, who taught English at Fordham for nearly three decades and made a significant impact in the lives of many students.

"His was the third class I ever took at Fordham," Stephen Bepler said. "He loved to teach. He made everything interesting, which is such an important and rare quality in an educator."

Paul Guenther, FCRH '62, and his wife, Diane, are supporting his alma mater with a gift that is directly impacting Fordham's academic strengths in history. Saul Cornell, Ph.D., the University's first Paul and Diane Guenther Chair in American History, arrived at Fordham in 2009 after 18 years at Ohio State



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University. An expert in the Second Amendment, he is consulted routinely by the media and academics for his interpretations of the amendment and other historical questions raised by timely public debates.

A gift from alumnus Jim Leitner, LAW '82, established the Leitner Family Chair in International Human Rights, one of 24 endowed chairs serving Fordham Law School.

Martin Flaherty, the Leitner Family Professor of International Human Rights and co-founding director of Fordham Law School's Leitner Center for International Justice, exemplifies Fordham's commitment to serving the greater good throughout the world. He has spearheaded or teamed with colleagues on human rights missions to Northern Ireland, Turkey, Hong Kong, Mexico, Malaysia, Kenya and Romania.

Fordham's Graduate School of Business Administration will also benefit from the generosity of the University's alumni with the installation of the E. Gerald Corrigan, Ph.D., Chair in International Business and Finance. This chair, like several others at Fordham, aligns with the University's mission to broaden its global reach and its strengths in business.

The 2008 appointment of David V. Budescu, Ph.D., as the inaugural Anne Anastasi Professor of Psychometrics and Quantitative Psychology illustrates how endowed chairs can carry forward the legacy of past Fordham faculty members. The position was made possible by a gift from the estate of Anne Anastasi, Ph.D., a preeminent psychologist and a member of the Fordham faculty for nearly 40 years. Her book *Psychological Testing* (Macmillan, 1954) is still considered by many scholars to be the definitive text in the field of psychological testing.

"It is a great privilege to serve in this position," Budescu said. "It is even greater that it is named for someone who was a role model for so many of us."

Celia Fisher, Ph.D., Fordham's Marie Ward Doty Professor of Psychology and a national expert on ethics, sets another fine example of the meaningful impact endowed chairs make within and beyond the Fordham community—supporting Jesuit ideals and enriching academic programs, while creating new research opportunities for students. During her tenure as chair, the University established the Center for Ethics Education under her leadership. Created in 1999, the center draws upon theology, philosophy, social and physical sciences, law and other areas to provide the multidisciplinary education necessary to advance the common good.

Fisher's federally funded research projects, which have focused on responsible conduct in research, drug use and HIV, among other topics, have influenced the study of psychology at Fordham. Another important contribution of the center and this endowed chair—a position created by a gift from George E. Doty, FCRH '38, in memory of

## Alumni donors help attract academic talent and broaden the scope of scholarship at Fordham.

his late wife—is a new cross-disciplinary master's degree program in ethics and society. This advanced-degree program, Fisher said, is particularly attractive to students applying for graduate degrees in mental health and in careers in virtually any field that requires ethical decision-making skills.

"Like many of our faculty, Celia Fisher has emphasized ethics across the curriculum," Freedman said. "She has brought forward students and faculty who have developed a style of instruction and service that has stemmed from her chair responsibilities. She has used the chair to emphasize a multidisciplinary approach to learning."

Fordham will continue to nurture scholarship and social justice with the creation and appointment of endowed chairs who, as leading researchers and practitioners in their respective fields, will complement the University's esteemed faculty and raise the bar for learning—educating the whole person and preparing students to become men and women who will do the world a world of good. —*Claire Curry is a New York-based freelance writer.*



**Through Excelsior | Ever Upward | The Campaign for Fordham, the University hopes to increase the number of endowed chairs that attract international scholars who contribute not only to students' education in the classroom, but also to national and international conversations and groundbreaking research in their respective fields.**

**Here are some of the fields in which the University hopes to establish prestigious academic posts.**

**Bioinformatics  
Business  
Environmental Science  
Ethics  
Immigration and  
Refugee Studies  
International Political  
Economy  
Interreligious Dialogue**

**Mathematics  
Medieval Studies  
Philosophy  
Poverty of Women and Girls  
Psychology  
Social Service  
Theatre  
Theology  
Urban Studies**

**For more information—and for a complete list of the 57 endowed chairs at Fordham—visit [www.fordham.edu/campaign](http://www.fordham.edu/campaign).**