in memoriam

Lance E. Davis, the Mary Stillman Harkness Professor of Social Science, Emeritus, passed away on Monday, January 20. He was 85 years old. Davis, whose research focused on the economic history of financial markets and institutional and technological change, received his undergraduate degree from the University of Washington in 1950 and, after serving in the Navy during the Korean War, earned his doctorate from Johns Hopkins University in 1956. He came to Caltech from Purdue University in 1968 and was a professor of economics until 1980, when he was named Harkness Professor. He retired in 2005.

Gerald B. Whitham, the Charles Lee Powell Professor of Applied Mathematics, Emeritus, passed away on Sunday, January 26. He was 86 years old. Whitham, a pioneer in the area of nonlinear waves whose research focused on fluid dynamics and the study of wave phenomena, including sonic booms, supersonic flow and shock-wave dynamics, and ocean waves, received his BSc in 1948, MSc in 1949, and PhD in 1953, all from the University of Manchester. He came to Caltech in 1961 as a visiting professor of applied mathematics, was a professor of aeronautics and mathematics from 1962 to 1967, a professor of applied mathematics from 1967 to 1983, and the Powell Professor until his retirement in 1998.

Whitham was instrumental in setting up Caltech’s applied mathematics program in 1962, and served as the executive officer for applied mathematics from 1971 to 1980. He was a fellow of both the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Royal Society of London.

A NEW FOCUS FOR THE TOLMAN-BACHER HOUSE

by Kimm Fesenmaier

The on-campus house where Caltech chemist and mathematical physicist Richard Tolman once conversed with such eminent scientists as Albert Einstein and Robert Oppenheimer has been spruced up and repurposed as the new home of the Keck Institute for Space Studies (KISS).

With support from the W. M. Keck Foundation, the Tolman-Bacher House, a single-family home located northeast of the Beckman Institute, was recently renovated to provide KISS with office space and small meeting rooms while maintaining the historical integrity of the original 1920s home. A second, complementary building (top) has been constructed to the west of the house and accommodates a large conference room.

The entire complex, dubbed the Keck Center, will provide a central location for KISS workshops, symposia, and idea-stimulating activities, with the conference building also serving as a meeting place for Caltech’s Board of Trustees.

“We are so thankful for the generosity of the W. M. Keck Foundation,” says Tom Prince, professor of physics and director of KISS. “This new facility will enable KISS to continue to bring together groups of scientists and engineers from diverse backgrounds to attack the most exciting problems in space science and engineering.”