

No Strings

When Gordon (PhD '54) and Betty Moore recently pledged \$100 million to Caltech, they created a permanent endowment, entrusting the choice of how to direct the funds to the Institute's leadership. "Those within the Institute have a much better view of what the highest priorities are than we could have," Gordon Moore said when the gift was announced. "We'd rather turn the job of deciding where to use resources over to Caltech than try to dictate it from outside."

Caltech provost Ed Stolper, too, is clear in his belief that this most-critical, no-strings-attached funding mechanism can make all the difference. "When someone has an idea that is good, and special," he says, "we can act quickly, even in a difficult financial time. When the money is there, people have the inspiration to think bigger."

That's why we've focused this issue of *E&S* on stories that examine what happens at Caltech when strings are cut and money is provided for instruments and centers so that researchers can pursue their most exciting—and, some might say, riskiest—ideas.

Thinking bigger—and having the unrestricted funds to make that possible—has provided instruments that gave Caltech researchers first-ever insights into the lives of viruses and bacteria (page 24). It's allowed the creation of a technique that's revealed the connections between carbon dioxide and glacial cycles and taken the temperatures of dinosaurs (page 28). It's behind the development of software that is changing how we look at financial markets (page 20).

Unrestricted funding, as impersonal as it sounds, is what gave Caltech the freedom to focus on its people, bringing together those scientists interested in "the weirdness of the world" in what has since become the Institute for Quantum Information and Matter (page 12). Such resources also created the Institute's Proteome Exploration Laboratory, through which biologists and chemists are able to explore ideas they couldn't have imagined before (page 16).

"Unrestricted funds," says Stolper, "lets us move into a field because we think it's important. It stimulates people to think of new and different things on a larger scale than they would have otherwise. It gives them a reason to dream."



—Lori Oliwenstein, Editor in Chief

