Sac State alumnus’s chemistry award
honors his parents, professors

Sacramento State’s Chemistry Department will offer the Russell-Forkey Research Award to undergraduate Chemistry majors beginning this summer, thanks to the generosity of alumnus Jeffry Mann.

The award is named for Professors Jack Russell and Dave Forkey, who stirred Mann’s interest in scientific research. Their inspiration, Mann says, led him to pursue a graduate degree in synthetic organic chemistry. Mann also created the Russell-Forkey Research Award to honor his parents, Ralph and Barbara Mann.

The award, which provides up to $10,000 in student stipends, will support faculty-mentored research by two to four undergraduates in Chemistry each summer, to be determined by the department. It is the first such award of its kind to the department.

This year’s recipients are Andrew Burton, Sonia Hawkins and Lauren Littell. Burton will work with Professor Jackie Houston to research inorganic chemistry while Littell will be mentored by Professor James Miranda in organic chemistry. Hawkins’ research will explore proteins that may limit heart disease, under the direction of Linda Roberts, chair of the Chemistry Department.

Roberts says Professors Russell and Forkey were strong proponents of involving students in research because of the educational value of the research experience. Consequently, “the department now has a very robust research culture,” she says, “in which nearly all professors work with students in their labs.”

“This award is important,” Roberts says, “because it supports the ongoing engagement of students in faculty-mentored research experiences, which enhances their postgraduate success. Many of our students go on from these experiences to postgraduate training in M.D. and Ph.D. programs, and employment in regional government and industry laboratories.”
Forkey recalls Mann as “one of a number of superb chemistry students in the mid-1980s that participated in Professor Russell’s and my research program. These students benefited by our personal involvement and the camaraderie of their peers.”

“That was an exciting time for Jeff and his cohorts,” Forkey says. “I believe much of his success can be attributed to his participation in undergraduate research. I am pleased that Jeff has been moved to support other undergraduate students with an exciting laboratory research experience.”

Mann received his B.S in Chemistry from Sacramento State in 1985. He earned a Ph.D. in synthetic organic chemistry from the University of Oregon. After a postdoctoral research fellowship in the Department of Pharmacy at University of California, San Francisco, he served on the faculty of the Department of Radiology at UCSF, where he directed a chemical research program funded by private, federal and industrial grants. He is also the named inventor on two U.S. patents covering biodegradable drug delivery vehicles for polymeric contrast media in diagnostic imaging.

Mann earned a law degree in 1997 and currently directs Morgan Lewis’s San Francisco Intellectual Property Practice, focusing on patent and licensing strategies and other intellectual property issues involving chemical, pharmaceutical and biotechnology research and development.

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