



## Endowed Professorships Serve as Backbone for Faculty Research, Recruitment, and Retention

Endowed professorships are engrained in the culture of our department. These generous programs serve to provide our department and faculty with the resources they need — but also memorialize and honor our greatest champions who selflessly give for this purpose. Read on to learn more about some of the great scientists who have made an impact in this way and the minds they are now influencing today by supporting their work.

### Harry Steenbock Professorships



Many know the history of Harry Steenbock and his seminal work in the field of biochemistry. Not only was he part of the group that first launched the then-named Department of Agricultural Chemistry's expansive research on vitamins in the first part of the 20th century, but he made sure his impact lasted well beyond his years. Steenbock's focus on vitamin

D, paired with his entrepreneurial savviness, led to the formation of the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF), which allows multiple endowed professorships to be sustained in his honor.

### Evelyn M. Mercer Professorship Fund

This professorship was established by Samuel T. Mercer to honor his sister Evelyn M. Mercer. Evelyn was the director of nursing services at Milwaukee County Hospital from 1944-1967 and director of the School of Nursing for the Milwaukee County Hospitals. She was "deeply concerned with the welfare and protection of others, as well as the humane handling of our animal friends." The professorship is awarded to a distinguished professor engaged in research to "understand fundamental life processes."



**John Markley**  
NMRFAM Director,  
Steenbock Professor  
of Biomolecular Structure

The central theme of Professor Markley's research is the application of nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectroscopy to the solution of biochemical problems. The unique power of NMR lies in its ability to provide detailed chemical and structural information at an atomic level about molecules in solution — even when they are present in living cells or organisms.



**Michael Cox**  
Evelyn M. Mercer  
Professor in Biochemistry

Professor Cox studies the fundamental life process of DNA repair, an essential mechanism cells carry out. One current interesting project includes subjecting *E. coli* to multiple rounds of extreme radiation and observing the evolution of resistance. They are currently mapping the genes that accompany this resistance over time.



## Dr. Laurens Anderson Distinguished Professorship Fund in Biochemistry

Professor Laurens “Andy” Anderson completed a Ph.D. in the Department of Biochemistry in 1950 under Henry Lardy and joined the department as a faculty member in 1951 after a postdoc in Switzerland. Anderson’s research area was carbohydrate chemistry, solving the structures of important sugars and also looking for new antibiotics. He was awarded the prestigious Hudson Award in Carbohydrate Chemistry from the American Chemical Society in 1984 and retired in 1986. Most recently – even in his late nineties – he donated almost 800 vials of sugar molecules from his time in the lab to the university to be used in drug screening.



## Professor Marvin J. Johnson Fund in Fermentation



**Brian Fox**

Department Chair,  
Marvin J. Johnson Professor  
in Fermentation Biochemistry

Professor Fox’s research interests lie in enzymes and their functions. His most recent research focuses on enzymes that carry out difficult reactions with biomass and biofuel molecules. In a 2016 paper in *Nature*, his lab described the structures of an enzyme that bacteria use in the process of bioremediation.

Professor Marvin J. Johnson received his Ph.D. in 1932 from the University of Wisconsin–Madison and was a faculty member in the department from 1940-1972. During his time in the department, he was a leading researcher on fermentation. He was part of the discovery of methods for the speedy, large-scale production of penicillin and other antibiotics. Experts agree this kind of work was essential in the United States’ fight in World War II. His endowed professorship is awarded to faculty who carry on important work in the area of fermentation.



## Continuing our Excellence

Our history of endowed professorships is strong, and we welcome the next generation of successful biochemistry alumni and friends to consider making an impact in this way. We are excited to work with those who are interested.

Endowed professorships can make a long-term and sustainable impact on our research, faculty, and students. They keep us moving forward so we can reach goals that impact us all. They are an excellent opportunity for our generous alumni and friends to join the ranks of these influential biochemists as they forge new paths in modern biochemistry.