

THE STEPHEN H. WEISS PRESIDENTIAL FELLOWSHIPS

In recognition of the importance of undergraduate teaching at Cornell University, the Board of Trustees established the Stephen H. Weiss Presidential Fellowships. Each fellowship is a university-wide award that honors a faculty member who has a sustained record of effective, distinguished, and inspirational teaching of undergraduate students. The title Stephen H. Weiss Presidential Fellow is a permanent designation, and awardees receive a \$5,000 annual award for five years for programmatic purposes of their choice.

Weiss Fellows are tenured professors who are selected by the president of Cornell from a set of nominees recommended by a committee composed of faculty members and students. Nominations are received from junior and senior students, faculty members, and other members of the academic staff. The award recognizes excellence in teaching and advising, and outstanding efforts toward instructional improvement and development. The appointed fellows are permitted to hold the title of Weiss Fellow simultaneously with any other named professorship.

Stephen H. Weiss explained why he chose to endow the program: "I felt it was very important to emphasize teaching at Cornell. There is a need to keep the balance between teaching and research at large universities. These awards are tangible evidence of Cornell's commitment to providing the best educational experience for its undergraduates."

W. Bruce Currie

Before arriving at Cornell in 1978, W. Bruce Currie taught at Massey University in New Zealand and held research appointments at University of Manitoba in Canada and Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri. He is currently a professor in the Department of Animal Science, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, who has earned a reputation for balancing rigor and entertainment in the classroom. His adaptability to various learning styles has garnered deep admiration from students who feel he enabled them to leave Cornell confident about following their own paths. His area of expertise includes the biology of pregnancy and developmental biology. He has created several new courses, including a laboratory course on animal physiology and a seminar-type course for research students. He has coordinated the research honors program in animal science for 13 years and currently serves as coordinator of undergraduate advising in the major. Among his many scholarly publications, Currie is the author of *Structure and Function of Domestic Animals*, a textbook used all over the world.

Richard Polenberg

Richard Polenberg began teaching at Cornell in 1966 as an assistant professor in the Department of History and was appointed full professor in 1970. He chaired the department from 1977-1980 and was named the Goldwin Smith professor of American History in 1986, a title he continues to hold. His scholarship has received international recognition, including two major awards for *Fighting Faiths: The Abrams Case, the Supreme Court, and Free Speech*. Other notable publications include *One Nation Divisible*

and *The World of Benjamin Cardozo*. He is known among both his students and colleagues as a legendary teacher who imparts tremendous knowledge with an engaging style. He has sparked passion for ideas and lifelong learning in many, if not all, his students.

Mariana Federica Wolfner

A 1974 Cornell graduate in biology and chemistry, Mariana Federica Wolfner completed her PhD in biochemistry at Stanford University and postdoctoral work at the University of California/San Diego. In 1983, she joined the Section of Genetics and Development in Cornell's Division of Biological Sciences as a member of the faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences. Her use of research in her teaching is exemplary and helps clarify and promote her subject, enabling even basic biology students to be exposed to cutting-edge science. Wolfner was appointed full professor in 1995 and has served as associate chair of the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics since 2001. She has received numerous honors, awards, and grants from organizations such as the American Cancer Society, National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, and the March of Dimes, including a Dupont Young Faculty Award. Her lab's research focuses on the actions of reproductive proteins and of regulators of cell division, using fruit flies as a "model" animal.