Crucial Support Provided by New Memberships

(Article excerpted from the Fall 2008 issue of The Institute Letter)

Memberships are critical to the intellectual life of the Institute and its community. Some 200 Members come each year to the Institute and are given the freedom to work on the attainment of longterm goals without pressure for immediate results. In order to continue to provide a haven for theoretical research and intellectual inquiry, the Institute continues to seek support for its Members through both annual gifts and endowments.

Among the new Memberships at the Institute is the Charles L. Brown Membership in Biology, named for the former Institute Trustee and Chairman of AT&T. During his years as Trustee, Brown served on the Finance, Housing, and Budget committees, becoming Vice Chairman and then President of the Institute’s Corporation. Among his other contributions, Brown served on the search committee that recommended Phillip Griffiths’s appointment as the seventh Director of the Institute. On his retirement from the Board in 1995, Brown became Trustee Emeritus and remained a generous friend of the Institute until his death in November 2003. Brown’s wife, Ann Lee Saunders Brown, recently made a gift to recognize Brown’s distinguished service to the Institute, endowing the Charles L. Brown Membership.

A generous gift from Zurich Financial Services has created an endowment for a Membership intended for scholars and scientists from China, including Hong Kong and Taiwan. The Zurich Financial Services Membership will be offered to Chinese candidates conducting research in the fields of mathematics, economics, and the sciences. James J. Schiro, Institute Trustee and Chief Executive Officer of Zurich Financial Services, worked with the Institute to conceptualize the Membership and bring it to fruition.

Eric E. Schmidt, Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of Google Inc., a recent addition to the Institute’s Board of Trustees, has made a gift to endow the Eric and Wendy Schmidt Membership in Biology. Their generous support is critical as the Institute seeks to further endow The Simons Center for Systems Biology and the pioneering research being conducted by its Faculty and Members.

The Gerda Henkel Stiftung has renewed its funding for an additional five years to support a Member in the School of Historical Studies. In renewing funding for scholars from Europe beginning in 2010, when the current five-year grant expires, the Chairman of the Gerda Henkel Stiftung cited the excellent working experience the Institute has provided for Members. The organization has shown generous and continuing support for scholars at the Institute for some twenty years, and in addition to Member support, they have provided funding for conferences in East Asian studies at the Institute.

The Institute has also received funding from the Qiu Shi Science and Technologies Foundation of Hong Kong for two Memberships for scholars and scientists from China in
2009–10 and 2010–11. The Qiu Shi Foundation was founded in 1994 by noted Chinese
industrialist Chi-ming Cha (1914–2007) and his family in Hong Kong. The primary goal of
the foundation is to promote science and technology research in China and to encourage
and reward successful Chinese scholars within these fields. This is accomplished through a
series of awards and scholarships given to facilitate training of emerging talent in the
sciences. C. N. Yang (former Member, 1949–54, and Professor in the School of
Mathematics, 1955–66) is one of a panel of six prominent Chinese scientists that regularly
consults with the Qiu Shi Foundation.