

# A December to Remember

'2019 promises to be a remarkable year in the University's history.'

By Richard Feldman

If the end of 2018 was any indication, 2019 promises to be a remarkable year in the University's history. We had an exciting finale to last year, with two historic announcements within days of each other, both of which speak, in particular, to the intellectual vitality of the University community.

On December 17, we celebrated the announcement of Sarah C. Mangelsdorf, currently the provost at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, as our 11th president and the first woman to lead Rochester. Also in December, I had the honor of attending the Nobel Prize award ceremony in Stockholm, where Donna Strickland '89 (PhD) became the first woman in Rochester's history to receive a Nobel Prize—and only the third woman in history to be awarded a Nobel Prize in Physics.

I greatly enjoyed the back-to-back celebrations, and I am confident that the excitement of December will carry well into the future success of the University.

At the Nobel ceremony, I was moved to be present when Professor Strickland and former University Professor Gérard Mourou were recognized for their work to develop lasers as high-powered tools that ultimately opened the door to new medical, scientific, and commercial innovations.

The pair conducted the research at the University's Laboratory for Laser Energetics. Their work, known to laser scientists as "chirped pulse amplification," has had broad impact in fields ranging from chemistry to atmospheric science, from nonlinear quantum electrodynamics to laser-driven manufacturing. Among the many applications, you can see the results of their work in commercial products, where it has helped make better glass for smartphones; in science, where it has been used to study how atoms behave; and in medicine, where it has helped improve cancer treatments as well as launched laser eye surgery. Such work exemplifies our University's mission, epitomizing *Meliora*, as a demonstrable example of making the world "ever better."

Professor Strickland joins Marie Curie (1903) and Maria Goeppert-Mayer (1963) in a rarefied trio of women scientists whose

work has been recognized with a Nobel Prize in Physics. I expect Professor Strickland's accomplishments will continue to inspire students and alumni throughout our University and beyond.

Precisely one week after that ceremony, the Board of Trustees introduced Sarah Mangelsdorf to the University community as our next president. She will formally take office in the summer. I am delighted with this outcome and gratified that our University succeeded in attracting a leader with our president designate's talents, vision, and experience. Throughout her impressive career, Sarah Mangelsdorf has

studied, as well as schools of medicine and public health and of nursing, which are affiliated with UW Health, the integrated health system of the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Her portfolio also includes faculty and staff development, student life, enrollment management, information technology, libraries, diversity and inclusion, international engagement, and sustainability. In short, she is the perfect match that our community collectively described when we envisioned the University's next leader.

I look forward to working with President Designate Mangelsdorf to make a



**ROCHESTER GUESTS:** Donna Strickland '89 (PhD) invited Scott Carney '99 (PhD), director of the Institute of Optics, University President Richard Feldman, and Mike Campbell, director of the Laboratory for Laser Energetics, to be her guests for the Nobel Prize ceremony in Stockholm.

been a faculty member, a department chair, a dean, and a provost. She stands out to me, as she clearly did to the search committee, as an extraordinary leader who is widely respected and admired for her integrity and her ability to make hard decisions in a fair and transparent way. She is a strategic thinker, a collaborative leader, and also an accomplished scholar and teacher. I have no doubt that she will do great things here, building on a vibrant and thriving core.

As provost and chief operating officer at Wisconsin, Sarah Mangelsdorf has significant experience with oversight of academic programs and budget planning for 12 schools and colleges, including education, business, engineering, and graduate

smooth transition over the next several months. She has already begun the process of immersing herself in our traditions and practices, and certainly looks forward to reaching out to many more members of our extended community. I hope you will join me in extending her a heartfelt welcome.

I believe we can all take pride in being part of a university that claims among its faculty and alumni distinguished scholars such as Professors Strickland and Mourou, and is able to invest its future in the groundbreaking leadership of Sarah Mangelsdorf. Please join me in celebrating these notable accomplishments, recognizing the many ways in which *Meliora* fuels new ideas for a better world. 