HumBio Celebrates its 45th and Bill Durham’s Teaching Legacy

Nearly 40 years ago, Bill Durham kicked off his first lecture in the Core with the story of lactose. Students, then as now, needed both the social and natural sciences to understand his lactose malabsorption hypothesis, and right from the start this showed them how HumBio differed from Bio. But before Durham brought lactose to the Core as a professor, he came to the Core as a student.

Durham arrived on campus in the late 60’s, and was among the freshman who were greeted on their first day by a professor asking if they had burned their draft cards. Within this milieu, he not only became a member of the Stanford Band, but also an environmental activist who researched the effect of air pollution on student health.

In a super-charged interview, Durham recalled his experience as a student at HumBio’s inception, and his nearly 40 years of teaching.

In the spring of 1970, Durham was a senior and he took the first offering of HumBio 1: Man and Nature, taught by one of HumBio’s founders, Colin Pittendrigh. It was a life-changing experience for him, and he always remembered Pittendrigh’s parting words, “The two most important things in the history of life are the emergence of DNA as the information basis of life, and human language as the information basis of society. Human beings live in a world with both genes and language as forms of inheritance.”

“That’s it! That’s what I want to do!” Durham thought, “I want to study how genes and language and culture interact.” Durham was hooked, and a love child of HumBio’s A Side and B Side was born.

Continued on page 2.
Durham's excitement about this groundbreaking curriculum was shared by many other undergraduates. When the HumBio founders consulted students, including Durham as a junior, for feedback on whether their proposed program would draw 30-35 students, Durham answered, "You will have a lot more than that!"

Durham had just attended an anti-war protest march in San Francisco that numbered in the tens of thousands and where he had recognized many Stanford students. He assured HumBio's founders, "judging by who we are...our reaction to the Vietnam War, our involvement in everything, the kids are desperate for science that is relevant to human issues. Desperate."

His prediction for the program's popularity was confirmed when hundreds of students packed the seats, sat in the aisles, and lined the walls of Dinkelspiel.

Students were highly mobilized in the 60's and 70's, and in Durham's words, "students wanted to be able to study something at Stanford that would be on the right side of things." The founders of HumBio understood this and in their curriculum they addressed problems, such as environmental destruction and human aggression, from both the biological and social science perspectives.

"Pittendrigh's lectures were electric," Durham recalled. In one particular class, Pittendrigh told the story of what happened when he was a biologist in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during WW II. They had been sent to Trinidad to solve the malaria outbreak, and like good engineers, the Corps drained swamps. To their chagrin the malaria got worse. With the swamps all drained, he and his team realized that they needed to know more about the breeding habits of the vectors spreading this disease. There was a belligerent little mosquito, Anopheles bellator, that bred in bromeliads, a plant that grew wild in the trees and naturally trapped puddles of water. At the moment when Pittendrigh explained this, bromeliads dropped down from the rafters in Dinkelspiel right above their heads! Then, before a rapt audience, Pittendrigh covered mosquito reproductive ecology, and the ecology of disease.

The HumBio message is that humanity's problems are complex and cross the boundaries of academic disciplines. Therefore, an interdisciplinary perspective is a critical tool for understanding and solving our problems.

Durham took HumBio's interdisciplinary message with him to grad school at the University of Michigan, where his classmates were all studying non-human organisms such as frogs in a pond, oak trees in a grove, or deer in a reserve. Durham fought an unprecedented battle with the department chair to use the same ecological models that his classmates were using, but to work with humans as subjects instead. In Durham's words, "I followed scarcity and survival in Central America, and showed that scarcity affects humans just like frogs in a pond."

This research was the basis for his first book, Scarcity & Survival in Central America, and drew the attention of the McArthur Foundation, which awarded him a genius grant in 1983.

In 1977 Durham was recruited back to Stanford by Don Kennedy to teach Culture, Society and Human Evolution in the HumBio Core. Following his models and mentors, Pittendrigh and Kennedy, Durham knew that he had to show students right away that human biology and human culture evolve together. Lactose malabsorption provided a perfect example and an inspiring start to fall quarter. "My contribution was to bring back Pittendrigh's ending argument," Durham explained, "and make it my starting argument."

Durham's exuberant Core lectures continue a powerful legacy of strong Core instructors. One student recalled how Durham engages his students by inviting them on a scientific thought journey: "Instead of just taking us to the solution, Professor Durham guides us in using the scientific process to explore an issue. He asks a question, then says, 'what if we think about it like this...?' then he takes off in that direction, which often leads to a dead end. This is suspenseful.

"Students heard that you have to do your biology to make things better for humans, you can’t just send in the troops."
**SAVE THE DATE - 45th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION - FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2016**

**Please join HumBio for an afternoon celebrating our 45th anniversary**
Talks & entertainment will feature Human Biology alumni and Professor Bill Durham
Friday, October 21, 2016 from 2:30-5:30 pm
Homecoming Reunion Weekend ~ Stanford is celebrating its 125th!

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<th>Ari Bernstein, M.D., MPH, Associate Director, Center for Health &amp; the Global Environment, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health</th>
<th>Wende Hutton, M.B.A., General Partner, Healthcare Investor at Canaan Partners</th>
<th>Curt Langlotz, M.D., Ph.D., Professor of Radiology and Biomedical Informatics, Stanford University School of Medicine</th>
<th>Flora Lu, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Environmental Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz</th>
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**CALLING ALL LACTOSE WONKS**
HumBio is compiling alumni recollections of Durham’s famous lactose lectures.
To learn how to contribute to this project visit: [humanbiology.stanford.edu/alumni/humbio-celebrating-its-45th](http://humanbiology.stanford.edu/alumni/humbio-celebrating-its-45th)
Thank you for adding to the fun of this celebration!

**BILL DURHAM TEACHING FUND**
WE ARE EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE A NEW FUND IN HONOR OF BILL DURHAM
To make a gift, visit: [makeagift.stanford.edu](http://makeagift.stanford.edu)

**MAKE A GIFT**

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**GO HUMBIO!**
DURHAM: AS PROFESSOR

continued from page 2.

Instead of just skipping to the end of the book, you have to think, how do you get to that end, what questions did you have, what are the mistakes you made along the way, and what are the surprises that led you onto a different path?”

Durham is a masterful guide for students exploring the scientific process, getting them to think about and test hypotheses along the way. He is also a master at guiding students on soulful thought journeys, during scientific study. A participant on his Galapagos field seminar shared, “Durham instructed the group to, ‘let the experience invade you, don’t just think or see or hear it, but breathe it in and live it.’”

Through his research and instruction, Durham has inducted thousands of students into Human Biology’s interdisciplinary way of thinking about and living in the world. Who among them will master the anthropological, evolutionary, ecological, linguistic, sociological, and environmental disciplines needed to follow in his footsteps? Come to the reunion this fall to delight in the insights of four HumBio alumni influenced by Durham and the HumBio way. And be regaled, once again, by the inimitable Bill Durham.

Reunion information is on page 3!

In a video interview, Durham shares an amusing story about giving his first Core lecture, with HumBio’s founders looking on. (minute 8.50)

I began the lactose lecture saying, “I am going to talk about milk today.” The students would think, ho hum…then I would get into this thing, and they would literally slap their heads and say, “WOW, that’s it!”

One guy ran out of class. I asked, “did I say something wrong?” and he said, “no, I’m going to tell my mom! This is a problem in our family that we’ve all wondered about and I now understand.” It had that kind of energy!

What do HumBio alumni have in common from Japan to Washington, D.C., to the neighborhood grocery store? The answer is…

*LACTOSE * LACTOSE * LACTOSE * LACTOSE * LACTOSE *

When asked why the lactose lectures are so memorable Durham answered, “This is an example that everyone can relate to, and is a favorite of the students because it is one module all wrapped up. Lactose is made to order because it shows that to really understand why human beings are so interesting and different, you have got to have B Side, the social sciences, as well as A Side, the biological sciences. The hallmark of HumBio is that you can see the two tracks of inheritance and how they work."

“In lactose, students can see the analogy between DNA and language as our dual inheritance. It’s what I called coevolution. You can’t make any sense out of lactose malabsorption without agriculture. We call it agri-culture. Knowledge of raising dairy animals was passed on through culture. Students see that you can’t understand something as simple as why some human beings cannot drink milk and some can, unless you have culture."

“At the end of the Core I could feel their pleasure at understanding why HumBio was there and how it differed from biology. Student after student has told me that lactose is what got them hooked on HumBio. They saw the relevance of the social sciences which they had not appreciated before.”

DURHAM’S CORE VALUES

I value the HumBio students’ eagerness to challenge themselves and learn in the service of working for a better world. I value the dedicated HumBio faculty who, out of honor and commitment, put teaching excellence as high as research excellence. And I value the interdisciplinarity, and the creativity it inspires (such as modules). This is magic, and happens too rarely in universities.

I hope that students will remember:

1) Lactose: the evolution of adult lactose absorption emphasizes the importance of both natural and social sciences in understanding the unity and diversity of humankind.
2) Evolution: that all of life forms “one grand system” - once a single tree - wherein all organisms past and present, including Homo sapiens, are related to one single common origin, and have differentiated by understandable natural processes, often endowing them with amazing adaptations to life on earth.
3) Coevolution: one cannot understand human beings or our problems without integrating the key concepts of culture and social system into theory and analysis. Just as we evolved as products of coevolutionary processes, solutions to our problems require coevolutionary thinking.

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**The Program in Human Biology | Stanford University**

**STUDENTS’ WINNING WAYS**

**Four Score Deans’ Award for Academic Achievement**

Stanford’s Deans’ Award for Academic Achievement is given each year to between five and ten extraordinary undergraduate students. An unprecedented four Human Biology seniors were selected this year! This award recognizes academic endeavors in independent research, national academic competitions, and presentation or publication for a regional or national audience. Enjoy an introduction to HumBios’ winners, then read more about their accomplishments on the Deans’ Award Website.

**Megan Alexander** designed and implemented Empower Me, a ground-breaking self-administered exercise program for frail elders. Empower Me will last beyond Megan’s time at Stanford. The Health Trust has institutionalized her program as a formal part of Meals on Wheels.

**Ethan Katznelson** is a talented and meticulous experimentalist, whose contributions in Professor Bollyky’s lab resulted in identifying a role that certain bacteriophage play in the structural assembly of microbial biofilms. He is co-author on a paper published in Cell Host & Microbe.

**Lauren Wedekind** is dedicated to promoting health in marginalized populations locally and globally, especially for indigenous peoples and refugees. She has published articles on telemedicine in California, and on gestational diabetes, and social determinants of health of Guatemalan Mayan communities.

**Lina Vadlamani** is a founding member of SHIFT, “Stanford Health and Innovations in Future Technology,” and has brought innovation to HOPES, “Huntington’s Outreach Project for Education at Stanford,” where she launched several new initiatives including a campus-wide conference.

**Tanvi Jayaraman** will investigate the barriers to health care access and support for survivors of Intimate Partner Violence in Rende, Italy. She aims to help develop new and nuanced health programs and services for survivors.

**Grace Klaris** will study household decision-making in rural Shivgarh, Uttar Pradesh, India. She aims to develop a more equitable decision model that will lead to positive health outcomes for women and children.

**Hadley Reid** will work on a public health project.

**Three Fulbright Grant Recipients**

Chosen to represent the U.S. to help promote mutual understanding among nations.

**Grace Klaris** will study household decision-making in rural Shivgarh, Uttar Pradesh, India. She aims to develop a more equitable decision model that will lead to positive health outcomes for women and children.

**Two John Gardner Fellows for Public Service**

**John W. Gardner** was a builder of ideas and unifier of people and causes, and an active and distinguished participant in America’s educational, philanthropic, and political life. This Public Service Fellowship provides opportunities for graduating seniors to invest their talent, energy, and training in public service. Three fellows are selected from Stanford each spring.

**Jo Williams** will work to promote sexual health among foster youth.

**Notable for Notation in Science Communications**

Accepted into the university’s new program Notation in Science Communication (NSC), recent graduates Laurie Rumker and Keenan Rutledge assembled ePortfolios with artifacts that show their competency at communicating science to technical and non-technical audiences. This earned them a special notation on their transcripts - and more interested listeners. Laurie said she pictured herself sitting at her kitchen table, with her grandmother, striving to write her honors thesis on the stability and resilience of the human gut microbiota, in accessible and engaging prose. Keenan is a co-author on “Elucidating X chromosome influences on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and executive function” in the Journal of Psychiatric Research in Dr. Allan Reiss’s lab. He is pictured here in his portfolio preparation course as he planned for artifacts to include in his ePortfolio. Read more in the Stanford Report.

**Body language, the art of communications in gymnastics**

Ivana Hong’s gymnastic artistry has earned her two gold medals in international competitions. In The Artist, Ivana says that she strives for perfection, and to inspire others to reach higher than they thought possible. “One of the greatest things in life is to be able to do a little bit better, and to give a little bit more.”

**Elle Billman & Isabella Park** swim for Stanford’s Winning Team 2016 at the U.S. National Collegiate Synchronized Swimming Championships.

**HumBio Line Up Tackled the Rose Bowl**

#3 Michael Rector
#50 Sam Shober
#51 Joshua Garnett
#53 Torsten Rotto
ALUMNI NEWS

Retired runner is keeping it real
Lauren Fleshman (HB/Educ MA ’04) was recognized by the NYTimes for going the distance as an entrepreneur, and as an advocate for women in sports. Lauren started Picky Bars to meet performance needs in a real food bar, and since one of the founders has celiac, the bar is very gluten free. Lauren writes about keeping things real in her blog, “ask Lauren Fleshman.”

Go-fish style “Go Extinct!” game makes Science
Ariel Marcy, Core teaching assistant (CA), ’11-’12 has created several games in her effort to make science more approachable and fun. Enjoy reading more about her science education advocacy and outreach endeavors in Science.

Alumni join forces at Stanford over health and law
Drawn by the interdisciplinary emphasis of Stanford Law’s health and law, Maggie Thompson, J.D., (HB ’10), had an opportunity to work with fellow alumna Kavitha Ramchandran, M.D. (HB ’99), an oncologist and palliative care physician at Stanford’s School of Medicine. They studied the legal needs of patients with life-threatening illnesses. Maggie helped develop a needs-assessment questionnaire for Stanford Hospital, which is hoped to eventually address patients’ legal concerns through a partnership between law and medical schools. Read more in Stanford Lawyer’s cover story.

Faculty News

Laurence Baker’s study finds infertile men have higher risk rate of heart disease and diabetes
Baker, Professor of Health Research and Policy and Senior Fellow at the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research, and colleagues leveraged large data bases to analyze men’s medical visits before and after fertility testing. They found that infertile men had higher rates of most diseases that the researchers screened for: heart disease and diabetes. The average age of men studied was 30. Read more in Stanford Medicine’s News Center. Baker lectures on health policy in HumBio 4B: Environmental and Health Policy Analysis.

Laura Carstensen benchmark analysis on longer, healthier lives
Carstensen, Fairleigh S. Dickinson, Jr., Professor in Public Policy, is the founding director of Stanford’s Center on Longevity, and lectures on aging in HumBio 3B: Behavior, Health, and Development. The Sightlines Project: Seeing Our Way to Living Long, and Living Well in 21st Century America is a benchmark analysis based on data from more than 1.2 million Americans. Read more in the Stanford Report.

Russ Fernald’s fish in the news, flexible gene and social status
Fernald, Benjamin Scott Crocker Professor of Human Biology, found that gene regulation has the potential to change behavior throughout a lifetime. In a study published in PloS ONE, Fernald reported that social status in the cichlid fish may be regulated by DNA methylation. Fernald says, “It is remarkable that we could determine which fish became dominant by changing the range of genes expressed.” More in the Stanford Report.

Annette Salmeen awarded funds for innovative curriculum development
Salmeen, Ph.D., Core Course Coordinator, won a grant from Stanford’s Office of the Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning to develop computational biology curriculum. Human Biology is excited and looking forward to this new project.

All-Star alumni at Forbes 30 Under 30
Annie Kadavy (HB ’08), Forbes 2015, 30 Under 30, in the Venture Capital category, is the general partner for Charles River Ventures. Their portfolio company Laurel & Wolf continues to grow fast and raise new rounds of funding. In Founders Network, Annie discusses building relationships between founders and venture capital investors.

Josh Nesbit (HB ’09), Forbes 2012, 30 Under 30, in the Social Entrepreneurs category for his company Medic Mobile, continues to be inspired by the tireless efforts of frontline health workers around the world, and is thrilled to see Forbes shine a spotlight on their work and on his mission.

When Breath Becomes Air
Paul Kalanithi (HB ’00), M.D., passed away a year ago at the age of 36. He had earned five degrees and was at the end of his residency at Stanford. His wisdom lives beyond his short years in his #1 New York Times Bestselling memoir, “When Breath Becomes Air.” The review is written by Atul Gawande and the forward is by Abraham Verghese. Watch the PBS interview.

Rodolfo Dirzo is awarded the Miriam Aaron Roland Volunteer Service Prize
Dirzo, Bing Professor in Environmental Science, was recognized for establishing a mentoring program between Stanford students and high school students. In addition to HB 112: Conservation Biology, he teaches a Bing Overseas Studies course on biocultural diversity in Oaxaca, Mexico. He leads students on research projects in which they immerse themselves in the language and culture of indigenous communities. Read more in Stanford News.

Grant Miller team approach to international health
Miller, Associate Professor of Medicine and a Stanford Health Policy core faculty member and senior fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute, works with Indian ministries, nonprofit organizations, and faculty at Stanford on a collaborative effort to help residents in the state of India access micronutrients. Read about his team approach in Stanford Health Policy news.
Sanford (Sandy) Dornbusch, HumBio Founder, Reed-Hodgson Professor in Human Biology, Emeritus, Founder of the Sociology Department, and Co-Founder of the Center on Adolescence, died at the age of 89 on Feb. 9, 2016. A scholar renowned for his research on adolescence, Dornbusch was also the ace negotiator responsible for securing the Ford Foundation endowment that gave Human Biology its start as Stanford’s most popular undergraduate program.

Born on June 5, 1926, in New York City, Dornbusch’s difficult early life did not predict his later success. His home environment was stressful and depressing. He and his extended family of 10 shared a two bedroom apartment. Space was so tight that Dornbusch had to share a double fold-out cot with his uncle Mo. His mother and stepfather fought regularly, due to the stress his stepfather felt at being unable to provide for his family.

Realizing there was not much he could do to help his parents get along, Dornbusch escaped into the world of books that he lugged home by the armful from the public library. Dornbusch wrote, “reading was my recreational drug; it did little harm and unwittingly helped me prepare for my future life.”

One day Dornbusch devoted his one mile walk to the library reflecting on the meaning of the word vicarious. It was then that he realized the most pleasant part of his days were spent living vicariously within the pages of whatever novel he was reading. Enraptured in the tales of heroes on distant adventures, books by Joseph Altsheler held a special appeal. In his novels there was always a young boy who would survive a battle with dignity and a strong sense of purpose. Whereas typical writers of juvenile novels endorsed specific groups, Altsheler would write two books on the same battle, but have each book represent an opposing side. Dornbusch recalled crying over the death of Stonewall Jackson, leader of the Confederate forces in one book, and then in the next book rejoicing as the Union troops overwhelmed the Southern forces.

Dornbusch developed an ability to see both sides of a matter early in life, and would go out of his way to understand the motives and beliefs of those with whom he disagreed. These traits were bolstered when Dornbusch made good on his gift of relating to both sides of an issue. Dornbusch once said, “I try to expose myself to the views of those with whom I disagree. If I find they have some good points on their side, I admit this to myself. Indeed if I get annoyed and want to stop reading or listening to an opposing argument, I force myself to continue to give the opposition a fair reading. Such behavior is uncomfortable but worthwhile.”

Learn more about Dornbusch’s life and research in the Stanford Report, and in a video interview where he recalls highlights of founding HumBio, and tells on himself in his story on How Stanford Professors Don’t Make Mistakes...
HumBio Says So Long to Barb and Welcomes Matt and Sam

Barb Hunt retired after 8 years as HumBio’s Course Coordinator. She won two community awards while here, and was generous with her good humor, and stories about her grandkids.

Although Barb is a hard act to follow, Samantha Cooper has filled the position with great energy, and competence. She taught high school biology, so has a knack for getting faculty to do their homework.

Matt Kramer assists with student services and HumBio’s techy side. A recent Stanford grad with a communications major, Matt’s positive energy, Stanford street smarts, and amazing attention to detail make everyone’s administrative life at HumBio a lot easier.

Got Stories? read others’ - share yours

https://humanbiology.stanford.edu/alumni-stories

Send news and stories to Robyn: rlduby@stanford.edu

LINK-IN

Stanford Program in Human Biology (HumBio) Major Alumni LinkedIn Group.

Congratulations Lia on 20 years!

Lia Cacciari, HumBio’s inimitable student services officer, shepherdess of approximately 180 grads per year, and authoress of Hieros Gamos was celebrated this spring with Humanities and Sciences Service Award.

Thank you!

Human Biology appreciates our wonderful supporters.

To discuss HumBio gift opportunities contact Denise Ellestad, Senior Director of Development (650) 723-0023

BEYOND HUMBIO ALUMNI PANEL

To participate in a panel, contact Lia: cacciari@stanford.edu

GOT STORIES?

https://humanbiology.stanford.edu/alumni-stories

Send news and stories to Robyn: rlduby@stanford.edu

LINK-IN

Stanford Program in Human Biology (HumBio) Major Alumni LinkedIn Group.

Director’s message continued.

and constantly changing in a good way by looking at the feedback from the students and from the faculty and by trying to create a better match between what the students need and the environment in which they perform. It’s going to change, the nature of it, but without changing the underlying structure. No one is against the general purposes that Human Biology has. It will continue to thrive because it has a public, an audience, a group that continues to care about and support it. It’s just a thrill to think about the tremendous waves of distribution of ideas and thoughts that this particular pebble has put into the stream.”

Sandy was spot on. Human biologists are highly diverse and all encompassing, as is our curriculum. The major has evolved. We will continue to seek and apply interdisciplinary knowledge that advances human welfare.

Please stay in touch, pfisher@stanford.edu

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