

February 12, 2018 | By Kristin Schafgans

Family's Gift to Support Junior Faculty in Physical Sciences Celebrates the Life of Yinan Wang

After the sudden passing of their son, Jian Wang and Guozhen Luo wanted to find an enduring way to honor his memory. Yinan Wang was in his second year of postdoctoral research at the University of California San Diego when he and his wife, Rebecca, tragically died in a car accident while visiting Sequoia National Park in August of 2017. To celebrate his life and scientific ambitions, the family has made a gift of \$500,000 to the UC San Diego Division of Physical Sciences to create an endowed junior faculty fellowship that will benefit promising researchers in chemistry and biochemistry.

The Yinan Wang Memorial Chancellor's Endowed Junior Faculty Fellowship will provide funding, in perpetuity, to recruit and support the research of exceptional tenure-track and newly tenured faculty in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. To further the impact of their support, UC San Diego is providing a \$250,000 match from the Chancellor's Faculty Fellowship Challenge for the endowed fellowship.

"Fellow scientists and scholars remember Yinan as a tremendous scientist and a warm and caring friend," said Steven Boggs, dean of the Division of Physical Sciences. "We are deeply grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Wang for creating this new faculty position as a permanent tribute to Yinan's life, legacy and dreams. Endowed junior faculty fellowships provide critical support to jumpstart the careers of exceptional young scientists—the future of our university."

Following doctoral and post-doctoral studies at the University of Alberta, Yinan Wang joined the UC San Diego community in 2016 as a postdoctoral scholar in the lab of Professor Kamil Godula in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. Godula's lab is developing chemical tools for the manipulation of carbohydrate structures, called glycans, on the surface of stem cells. The team is particularly focused on understanding how glycan interactions are associated with cell differentiation,



Yinan Wang

and how these interactions could be tailored to increase the regenerative potential of stem cells in the complex settings of living tissue. Yinan, his family recalls, enjoyed being involved with research that is pivotal to emerging biotechnology.

“We are truly moved to be able to provide this gift of remembrance to UC San Diego in honor of our son, Yinan, and we look forward to learning about the work of the faculty who earn this fellowship over the years,” said Jian Wang and Guozhen Luo. “We know that these bright future stars will contribute much to the scientific field that Yinan was so passionate about.”

In addition to honoring their son’s memory, the family’s gift contributes to the [Campaign for UC San Diego](#), which is focused on enhancing the student experience, enriching the campus community and spurring breakthrough research and innovation. More information about supporting the Division of Physical Sciences can be found [here](#).

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