Charting a New Course

Lees Fund Marine Sciences Center

Leighton Lee II was an engineer who developed fuel controls for jet aircraft while working for the Chandler-Evans Company in Hartford. After World War II, he founded his own business in Westbrook, Connecticut. Today, the Lee Company is a world leader in the field of microhydraulics and electro-fluidic systems.

Continued on next page

Rob Lee '78 B.S., and his wife, Linda '88 M.B.A., aboard their sailboat on Long Island Sound, are charting new scientific waters for UNH.

Although Leighton was a hard-working businessman, he also knew how to play hard. He spent his Saturdays during the summer racing his 22-foot Ensign sailboat. In the process he instilled in his children both a love of sailing and a deep appreciation for Long Island Sound.

This year, his son Rob Lee, now executive vice president of The Lee Company and a member of the University's Board of Governors, honored both Leighton's love of the Sound and his father's well-known sense of civic responsibility. Rob, an avid sailor himself, and his wife Linda, both UNH alumni, recently donated $1 million to UNH to develop a marine sciences center. Dedicated to the study of marine aquaculture and sciences, the new Robert M. and Linda W. Lee Center for Marine Sciences will be built along the coast in the New Haven area.

"I grew up on the water," says Rob, '78 B.S., Mechanical Engineering. "I loved sailing with my dad when I was young. Linda and I have always valued our UNH education and we wanted to find a way to give something back to the University."

Linda Lee earned her M.B.A. from UNH in 1988. Growing up in New Jersey, she was a frequent visitor to the beautiful Jersey shore, which inspired her to consider studying marine biology. Although that didn't happen, she still holds a keen interest in this area.

"We're very grateful to Rob and Linda," says President Steven Kaplan. "They have a great passion for Long Island Sound. This gift not only helps the University, but also fulfills the Lees'

Carmela Cuomo, Ph.D., is building a Marine Biology program that is attracting increasing numbers of students.

desire to help preserve the Sound. Our Marine Biology program is a rising star. Enrollment has increased substantially in the past few years, and we are attracting a large number of students to the department who are very strong academically."

While the new center is still being planned, it is expected to house state-of-the-art research and teaching labs, a large wet lab, office space and public education space, says Carmela Cuomo, Ph.D., coordinator of UNH's Marine Biology program. Cuomo, who was named to direct the program eight years ago, has played a critical role in helping to attract increasing numbers of students to the department by providing valuable hands-on opportunities to participate in important research projects with top-notch faculty.

In addition to her high-profile development of the first protocols for successfully breeding horseshoe crabs in captivity, a feat that could prove a boon to the biomedical field while also protecting the ancient animals from extinction, Cuomo is an expert on low-oxygen marine environments, marine

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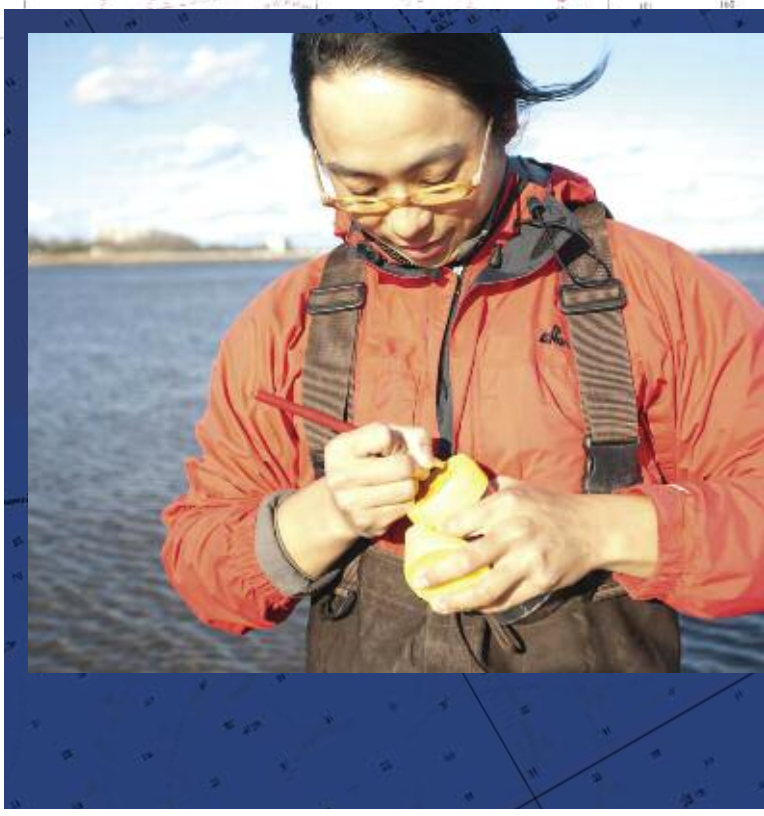
sediment geochemistry, biofuel development, aquaculture and a host of other topics. She currently works with undergraduate and graduate students on projects funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, Inc.

Linda says, "After meeting Dr. Cuomo last fall and hearing of her research, I mentioned to Rob that the proposed marine sciences center would be an especially meaningful project to which we could lend our continuing support to UNH."

Roman Zajac, Ph.D., chairman of the Biology and Environmental Science department, is engaged in a number of projects focused on tracking and assessing ecological conditions in Connecticut's coastal environments, and is working with graduate students on projects funded by the Connecticut/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Sea Grant Program and the Quinnipiac River Fund to study sea-floor communities in Long Island Sound and New Haven Harbor.

The increased student enrollment, in turn, has demanded the addition of new faculty. Last year, John Kelly, Ph.D., joined the faculty. "John is a marine vertebrate physiologist," says Cuomo. "He works on the ecophysiology of fish. He brings a lot of energy to our program." The University is also seeking a marine botanist to join the team for the fall semester.

"Our curriculum is designed to introduce students to careers and opportunities in marine biology as early as their first



freshman semester," Cuomo adds. Once the Robert M. and Linda W. Lee Center for Marine Sciences is completed, undergraduate students will take most of their marine classes there, enabling them to conduct groundbreaking research with UNH faculty throughout their undergraduate program.

To learn more about Professor Cuomo's horseshoe crab research, read the Boston Globe *story at:*
http://www.newhaven.edu/news-events/69821.pdf