The Randy Petter Scholarship will provide full access to the Kalamazoo College learning experience, including the land/sea adventure and study abroad.

Bill and Joyce Petter (pictured at their South Haven home) endowed the scholarship through a gift of a major piece of real estate in memory of their son Randy.

The Petter family has a long history with Kalamazoo College. Four of their five children attended the College. Randy and all of the family had a special affinity for the Lake Michigan shore and spent as much leisure time as possible in the area.

“The Lake Michigan shore area was Randy’s anchor,” says Joyce. For that reason, students from three Southwest Michigan area high schools — Fennville, South Haven, and Saugatuck/Douglas — are eligible for the Randy Petter Scholarship.

The scholarship seeks students who may not have yet discovered their full potential. Eligibility depends upon SAT and ACT scores rather than grade point average. The College hopes to enroll the first Randy Petter Scholarship recipient in the 2001-02 academic year. The scholarship may be awarded annually if eligible contestants apply.
Rain
by Camera

for the class next year. Bingham helped the students in class access the primary scientific literature written by the scientist each had chosen, and she acquainted herself with the research of all the scientists represented.

The Cold Spring Harbor Laboratories' 1997 summer course on mechanisms underlying neurological diseases, which Deb Burman had attended, served as the initial inspiration for this year's symposium.

The class members' role research culminates with the in-house publication of research monographs, a collection of student-written, up-to-date review articles, and a mock scientific workshop. Each student stays in character (one even grew a mustache in order to look like the scientist he was playing) throughout the workshop and presents his or her world class research.

“You had to be ready,” says Bhatt, because included in the audience were two “true-to-life” neuroscientists. Mark Gurney, leader of the neurological sciences division at Pharmacia Corporation delivered the morning plenary lecture, “ß-secretases, Alzheimer’s disease and Drug Discovery,” and Ray Roos, chairman of the department of neurology at the University of Chicago, presented the closing evening lecture, “Lou Gehrig’s, Mad Cows, and Alzheimer’s: What Causes Neurodegeneration.” Roos’s major role during the day was to ask probing questions of each student presenter. Those questions, says Bhatt, involved the entire gallery of student/world class scientists in some of the most enlightening scientific conversations Bhatt has experienced during his three years at Kalamazoo College. Bhatt played the role of Dr. Byron Caughey, a prion expert in the National Institutes of Health Rocky Mountain Laboratories. Prions, mysterious protein fragments somehow involved in slow neurodegenerative diseases, represent one of biology’s most fascinating frontiers. Not satisfied poring over Caughey’s primary research, Bhatt contacted the scientist by email prior to the mock meeting. He feels the presentation went well. “Dr. Roos asks great questions,” says Bhatt.

Such questions and the effort of preparation for the symposium help students narrow their potential SIP explorations. “Prior to the symposium I was undecided between a SIP that focused on Huntington’s or Alzheimer’s disease,” says Bhatt. “What I heard and learned at the symposium helped me decide to focus on Alzheimer’s disease and conduct my SIP with Dr. Gopal Thinakaran at the University of Chicago.”

According to Bhatt, the educational value of the neuroscience symposium is extraordinary. “It was the best experiential project in which I’ve been involved.”
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