

## Celebrating the Francisco J. Ayala Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences



Francisco Ayala, Hana Ayala, Charlotte Russell, and Bob Russell.  
Photo by Dana Davis

The GTU and its newest addition, the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences (CTNS), hosted a reception in February to celebrate a \$2 million pledge from renowned scientist Dr. Francisco J. Ayala. This generous gift will double the endowment of CTNS, bringing it to over \$4 million. In gratitude CTNS has been renamed the Francisco J. Ayala Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences.

Dr. Ayala's donation will complete the endowment of CTNS's Ian G. Barbour Chair in Theology and Science at the GTU, the Russell and Townes Fellowships, and the position of managing editor for the CTNS quarterly *Theology and Science*. It will support CTNS staff and programming, and will help ensure that CTNS continues to build on its 35-year history as a distinguished leader in the international field of science and religion. The addition of Dr. Ayala's name will provide CTNS with added credibility among the scientific community, which is often resistant to genuine dialogue between religion and science.

One of the pioneers in the fields of population genetics and evolutionary theory, Dr. Ayala holds three faculty positions at the University of California, Irvine. The author of 50 books and more than 1,000 articles, he was awarded the National Medal of Science in 2002, and was recipient of the Templeton Prize in 2010. Dr. Ayala joined the CTNS board of directors in 1997, has often served as a keynote lecturer in CTNS's international and interreligious programs, and was a CTNS Russell Fellow in 2008.

CTNS Director Robert Russell reflected, "Francisco Ayala's concern for constructive dialogue and mutual respect between science and religion led to our beginning a long professional partnership and a lasting friendship some two decades ago. His gift will continue CTNS's track record of outstanding interdisciplinary research and of academic excellence in seminary and doctoral education at the GTU, and will support CTNS's role in the future of the ecumenical and the interfaith dialogue and mutual interaction between the scientific and religious communities that is so deeply needed by our global world today."

