



# Louise Rossi Chair in Viticulture

Dr. Andrew Walker, Professor

Viticulture and Enology

wineserver.ucdavis.edu • awalker@ucdavis.edu

## ENDOWMENT PURPOSE

The Louise Rossi Endowed Chair in Viticulture and Enology, along with the Ray Rossi Endowed Chair in Viticulture and Enology, were created through an estate gift from the late Louise Rossi upon her passing in 2007. Louise Rossi and her brother, Ray, were ardent supporters of the Department of Viticulture and Enology at UC Davis during their lifetimes. To honor both Louise and Ray Rossi, the Department of Viticulture and Enology, in consultation with Rossi's estate executors, agreed that two endowed chairs should be established to support and attract faculty leaders in viticulture and enology at the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at UC Davis.

**College  
Celebration**

**Friday**

**OCTOBER**

**14**

**2016**

**5:30 - 8:00 p.m.**

**Pavilion  
UC Davis**

**We hope you will be  
able to join us.**

## RESEARCH

I am a grape breeder and geneticist working on developing rootstocks and Pierce's disease resistant wine grapes. The Rossi funds have allowed my lab to make strong progress breeding grapevines that resist powdery mildew - a key part of the future's sustainable vineyard and a project that is not well funded by the industry. I am also hiring a post-doc to help with nematode resistance breeding, and hope to get Daniel Pap back from Hungary. This position will be partially funded by the Rossi endowment.

## TEACHING

I have used the Rossi endowment to fund grape collection trips. I take graduate students with me and teach them the importance of knowing where and how the grape species exist. These trips usually cover 350 to 500 miles per day ... lots of time for teaching and nurturing student views of grapes and viticulture!

## **STUDENTS**

The Rossi funds were used to support Daniel Pap (working on powdery mildew resistance), Claire Heinitz (working on salt resistance and the ecological genetics of southwestern grape species and salt resistance) and Jake Uretzky (working on drought resistance and ecological genetics of the Texas grape species *Vitis berlandieri*). The Rossi endowment has funded numerous grape collection trips across the southwestern US, and have allowed the maintenance of an irreplaceable collection of about 1,500 grape species accessions. These species contain resistance to drought, salinity, dagger nematodes and Pierce's disease, and are threatened through out their native ranges. The Rossi funds allow me to help preserve this often vanishing resource.



## **OUTREACH**

I give 20 to 30 talks to grower groups each year at which I gratefully acknowledge the Rossi Chair funds. I also visit 20-30 vineyards per year to help with rootstock, disease and pest issues. I use the Rossi funds to pay for the transportation costs of these outreach and extension activities.

## **THANKS**

The Louise Rossi Chair has been a huge advantage to my breeding program. It allows me to address lab emergencies such as equipment breakdown and allows me enrich the lab by supporting post-docs and visiting scholars who contribute new ideas and techniques and help keep us advancing. Thank you very much!