Changes in sleep regulatory biology during adolescent development lead to a delay in the timing of this important behavioral state. Today's social pressures tend to co-opt the bioregulatory changes and lead to insufficient and irregular sleep patterns that some call social jet lag. Current emphasis by the American Academy of Pediatrics on restricting early start times for middle school and high school stem from this research path. Our most recent studies in first-year college students—who also have challenges with their sleep—treat sleep as an “environmental exposure” that can interact with genotype to influence such outcomes as depressed mood. Findings and speculation about sleep's role as a mediator of behavioral, psychological, and health outcomes will be presented. I will also comment on the role of my Gettysburg undergraduate education in preparing me for my career in behavioral science research.

Dr. Carskadon is a distinguished alumna of Gettysburg College with a doctorate in neuro- and bio-behavioral sciences from Stanford University. An authority on adolescent sleep, Prof. Carskadon’s research has raised public awareness about the consequences of insufficient sleep in adolescents and has influenced education policy, prompting many school districts to delay school start times for teens.

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MARA AUDITORIUM

An Informal Reception will Follow