

## **Leahy-Filipi Family Graduate Scholarship in Science**

Francisco Huizar, a graduate student in the Zartman laboratory is the first recipient of the Leahy–Filipi Family Graduate Fellowship in Science for research in Neuroscience. The Leahy–Filipi graduate endowment was established in 2019 by Rev. Jody Leahy Filipi and Dr. Dave H. Filipi. David was diagnosed with a rare neurological disease, and together, they set up an endowment to help improve the life of others who also struggle with neurodegenerative diseases. With an astounding five million people in the United States suffering from Alzheimer's disease, and a projected 12 million people suffering from neurodegenerative diseases within the next 30 years, there is an urgent need to develop drugs that may significantly improve cognitive defects and neurodegeneration. The long term goal of Huizar's project is to discover safe, more effective chemical inhibitors of DYRK1a, a protein linked to neurodegeneration and cognitive defects, to ameliorate Alzheimer's disease. The project is in collaboration with the Ashfeld group and has received seed funding from an AD&T Discovery award. The generosity of the Leahy-Filipi Family Endowment serves to provide a tremendous boost to his motivation as he strives to honor the efforts of Jody Leahy Filipi and Dr. David Filipi to improve the quality of life for those suffering from neurodegenerative diseases.