

# SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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## **DALLAS UROLOGIST'S BEQUEST OF MORE THAN \$4 MILLION WILL ENHANCE UROLOGY RESEARCH AT UT SOUTHWESTERN**

DALLAS – August 21, 1998 – A Dallas physician who served in both world wars and traveled the globe with his wife has bequeathed more than \$4 million to a place close to his heart: the Department of Urology at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas.

The bequest from Dr. Ralph Smith, who died in 1996 at age 104, provides key funding for the Department of Urology's plan to enhance the education of its residents and further its research into causes of and treatments for prostate disease and urologic cancer, as well as adult and pediatric bladder disorders.

"This is an amazing gift intended to support urologic education and clinical advancement, which were so important to Dr. Smith," said Dr. John McConnell, chairman of urology, director of the Dr. Bob Smith Foundation Center for Prostate Research and holder of the E.E. Fogelson and Greer Garson Fogelson Distinguished Chair in Urology. "His gift gives us the funding and the flexibility to develop our urological research program and recruit new faculty to solidify a first-class educational environment."

Smith first discussed the gift to UT Southwestern during a 1970 pre-dawn breakfast with Dr. Paul C. Peters, then the urology chairman. Within a few months Smith and his wife, Sarah Pearl Smith, informed UT Southwestern that they would bequeath a considerable portion of their estate for urology. Though in his late 70s, Smith still was a few years from retiring from the Dallas Veterans Affairs Medical Center, where he directed the urology clinic for many years.

"He was a very good clinical urologist, but he also was a teacher," said Peters, now a

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professor emeritus. "For years he ran the VA residency program to train new urologists, and he was an outstanding role model."

Peters said that is why Smith, who believed that medicine demands a lifetime of learning, wanted to support UT Southwestern's mission to educate specialists in the evolving world of urology and to be a leader in patient care.

Smith's longtime friend and accountant, Karen Williams of DeSoto, said he served in the Army in World War I and the Navy in World War II, attaining the rank of captain and helping establish a naval hospital on Guam. After the war he served in the Air National Guard while working at the veterans hospital in McKinney, then in Dallas. Sarah Smith managed rental properties they owned and taught music lessons on a grand piano in their home.

The Smiths, who had no children, devoted much of their time to their passion: travel. They took cruises around the world, returning with sightseeing memories for souvenirs. Late in their lives they sold their home in Highland Park, but not the stock they had bought in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s and held onto through bear and bull markets. They had been married more than 70 years when Mrs. Smith died in 1989 at age 92 at the Dallas retirement home where they lived.

"I have this vivid memory of the day I asked Dr. Smith what he considered most remarkable of all the significant events he had lived through," Williams said. "I was thinking it was a man on the moon or something like that. But he said, 'It was graduating from high school.' His parents sacrificed so he could go to high school instead of working in the fields of East Texas or taking another job to help support his family. He never forgot that."

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