

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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LEADING TEXAS BREAST-CANCER SURGEON MOVES PRACTICE TO UT SOUTHWESTERN

DALLAS — July 22, 1996 — Dr. George Peters, a leading Texas breast-cancer surgeon, has moved his practice to UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas to expand the medical center's comprehensive clinical breast-care program.

Peters has been named executive director of the UT Southwestern Center for Breast Care, located in the James W. Aston Ambulatory Care Center. He joined the faculty as a professor of surgery earlier this month.

"Dallas and UT Southwestern have all of the elements necessary to make an impact on breast care," Peters said. "It's an honor to be here."

Peters said the center will be innovative in research and patient care. "Basic research in genetics and molecular biology will lead us to the cure for breast cancer, and in that area UT Southwestern is one of the strongest research centers in the country. For me, it's a unique opportunity to develop an excellent clinical service in the midst of a strong, basic-science program," Peters said.

Peters has been on the staff and served as clinical instructor in surgery and surgical oncology at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas since 1980.

"Our goal is to establish an outstanding center of excellence in breast care," said Dr. Willis C. Maddrey, UT Southwestern's executive vice president for clinical affairs. "We believe Dr. Peters will help us build on the foundation established by Dr. Marilyn Leitch and the breast-center staff and take us to the next level." Leitch is associate professor of surgery and is medical director of the center.

Peters holds undergraduate and medical degrees from the University of Mississippi. He completed his internship and residency training at Baylor and a fellowship at the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons.

He has been recognized by the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation as its "Man of the Year" and is a recipient of the American Cancer Society's Sword of Hope

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Award. He also has served as president of the Texas Division of the American Cancer Society, is past president of the American Society of Breast Disease, and has been listed in a new edition of *The Best Doctors in America: Central Region* as one of the best specialist physicians in the U.S.

The son of a Greek immigrant turned Mississippi grocer, Peters' mother inspired him to pursue medicine and cancer treatment. She died of colon cancer when he was eight.

"At the time, the only place you could go for treatment was the Ochsner Clinic in New Orleans. That's a long drive from northwest Mississippi," he recalled. "I decided then that if I practiced medicine, I would do everything I could to bring the best medical care to as many people as possible."

While Peters expects his appointment at UT Southwestern to help him accomplish that goal, his medical career hasn't always looked so promising.

"I'm still not sure what happened, but I was turned down the first time I applied to medical school," he said. "But I was determined, so I entered the Ph.D. program in anatomy because its curriculum matched the course load of the first year of medical school. I told them, 'Give me two years to prove to you I should be in medical school. If I don't, I'll go back and be the best anatomy teacher you ever had.' Obviously they took the offer, and things have worked out pretty well."

Peters said he will use that same persistence and hard work to help UT Southwestern "build the breast-care program this region deserves."

In the UT Southwestern center, patients will be offered more than diagnosis and treatment. Patient convenience will be a priority, Peters said. "As an example, often women have to undress and dress several times as they move from exam room to the mammography unit and the like. We will have almost all services in a single setting which will reduce the stress of the office visit. Education and psychosocial support will be available to the patient from the moment of diagnosis through treatment," Peters said.

Many former breast-center patients serve as volunteer counselors at the clinic and are available to answer questions and provide information. Formal groups will be facilitated by professional staff.

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