

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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EMERGENCY MEDICINE PHYSICIAN SHARES HIS SUCCESS WITH UT SOUTHWESTERN

DALLAS -- June 7, 1996 -- A \$250,000 gift from Dr. Leonard Riggs will assist young physicians training to be emergency medicine specialists at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas.

As a student at Southwestern Medical School in the 1960s, Riggs found inspiration in the emergency department at Parkland Memorial Hospital, the hospital utilized by UT Southwestern's faculty for teaching students and residents. On his rotations through the department, and while working part time sewing up patients' lacerations one summer, he became interested in the special knowledge required of physicians who treat medical emergencies every day.

Riggs, who went on to mold emergency medicine as a specialty and then to become the chairman and chief executive officer of EmCare Holdings, has endowed a chair through Southwestern Medical Foundation to support emergency medicine at UT Southwestern.

His \$250,000 gift will be matched by Southwestern Medical Foundation and an anonymous donor, establishing the Riggs Family Chair in Emergency Medicine.

Riggs said he hopes the endowment will strengthen UT Southwestern's efforts to receive accreditation for a residency training program in emergency medicine.

UT Southwestern's application is under consideration.

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"I always believed that UT Southwestern and Parkland would be a great place for a residency program in emergency medicine," Riggs said. "I have this fortuitous circumstance to be able to help, to show my support for the effort to develop an excellent program at UT Southwestern."

The holder of the Riggs Family Chair in Emergency Medicine will be Dr. James Hayes, chairman of emergency medicine.

"This gift is a sign of the broad-based community support for our young emergency medicine program," Hayes said. "Dr. Riggs is one of the notable entrepreneurs in emergency medicine who has been extremely encouraging of the program from its inception."

Hayes said he plans to use interest from the endowment to help support emergency medicine residents' academic pursuits.

"As part of their training, residents need to pursue academic interests," Hayes said. "That involves costs for everything from start-up monies for their projects to making slides to present their research at scientific meetings. We don't have money for that now. We are grateful to Dr. Riggs for his generous gift to UT Southwestern."

Riggs graduated from Southwestern Medical School in 1968. He served as a physician in the Navy during the Vietnam War, then returned to Dallas with firsthand experience of the demands of immediate care and a year-long wait until the beginning of his residency in ophthalmology.

During that wait, Riggs worked full time as a physician in the emergency

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department at Baylor University Medical Center. Instead of training to be an ophthalmologist, he chose to stay with emergency medicine, a specialty in its infancy.

"I always had a love for the emergency department -- the excitement of never knowing what was coming through the door next and the satisfaction of helping people immediately," he said.

In 1975 he was appointed to the first task force that wrote the exam for board certification in emergency medicine. His involvement in emergency medicine broadened, and in 1980 he served as president of the American College of Emergency Physicians. Later he served on the American Board of Emergency Medicine.

By 1980 Riggs had realized that emergency physicians didn't need the extra hassle of dealing with business issues such as billing and collecting. His company, EmCare, is a leading provider of physician-services management in hospital emergency departments and other practice settings. At the beginning of this year, the company had contracts involving 75 emergency departments in 17 states.

"To put it mildly, it has grown into a larger entity than I ever imagined," Riggs said. "And it has allowed me to make this endowment, helping emergency medicine physicians in ways I never expected."

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