

News

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****Harold C. Simmons commits additional \$41 million
to UT Southwestern for medical research

DALLAS -- Dallas entrepreneur and philanthropist Harold C. Simmons has committed an additional \$41 million to The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas for cancer and arthritis research. The funds will be provided through the Harold Simmons Foundation and related organizations.

The sum represents the largest single private commitment in the history of Texas higher education or medical research. When added to the \$7 million in funds already provided by Simmons for arthritis research at UT Southwestern, the total amount is believed to be the largest cumulative commitment to Texas higher education from any individual to date.

The commitment was announced jointly today by Dr. Kern Wildenthal, president of UT Southwestern, Texas Governor William P. Clements Jr. and Jack Blanton, chairman of the UT System Board of Regents.

"Harold Simmons' support is a stunning example of one man's wealth being translated into the hope of better health for all mankind," said Wildenthal. "This investment in UT Southwestern offers unparalleled opportunity for growth and development in areas of research that are top priorities."

Simmons, 57, a native Texan who is one of a handful of self-made American billionaires, is the middle son of poor rural schoolteachers. After he graduated from The University of Texas at Austin with a master's degree in economics and a Phi Beta Kappa key, Simmons admits he had no career plan. "I was married and had a new child when it suddenly came to me -- I had to go to work," he said. Starting as a trainee in a Dallas bank, he later decided banking was not challenging enough so he went into business for himself.

With \$5,000 from savings, he made the down payment on a small neighborhood drug store. From that humble start, Simmons has built a worldwide collection of corporations with assets worth more than \$5 billion, including sugar, chemicals, timber products, petroleum services and fast food.

The boyish-looking grandfather is a fully rated jet pilot who is the pilot-in-command whenever he is on board one of his private jets. The lean Texan plays a hard-hitting game of tennis, and for relaxation he rides dirtbikes.

Simmons said he considers his support of basic scientific research an "investment with the potential to pay lasting dividends in my own lifetime and for future generations."

Of the \$41 million total Simmons is providing UT Southwestern over a 20-year period, \$24 million will be devoted to cancer research; \$5 million will help construct a building for cancer research; and \$12 million will ensure further developments in arthritis research.

The \$24 million for cancer research will fund a Comprehensive Cancer Center, which will allow new initiatives in a broad spectrum of cancer research. Pending approval by the UT System Board of Regents, the center will be named the "Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center." A national search will be conducted for a director.

The Comprehensive Cancer Center will incorporate the activities of two specialized research efforts -- the Cancer Immunobiology Center under the direction of Dr. Ellen Vitetta, professor of microbiology, and the Komen Alliance

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Center for Breast Cancer Research. The Simmons funds will be used to enhance the existing specialized centers as well as to create the new comprehensive center.

"The Simmons Center will create a tremendous new resource for cancer research covering all cancer areas and moving UT Southwestern forward into an area of recognized need," Wildenthal said.

Within the expanded cancer research effort at Southwestern, four newly endowed distinguished chairs will be established and named for Harold Simmons' four daughters. These chairs are in addition to the Annette Simmons Distinguished Chair in Breast Cancer Research, which is being established through the Komen Alliance to honor his wife.

The new distinguished chairs include the Lisa K. Simmons Distinguished Chair in Comprehensive Oncology, the Scheryle Simmons Patigian Distinguished Chair in Cancer Immunobiology, the Andrea L. Simmons Distinguished Chair in Cancer Immunochemistry and the Serena S. Simmons Distinguished Chair in Cancer Immunopharmacology.

The \$5-million building commitment will help finance a structure to house the comprehensive cancer research activities. The building, which will be constructed pending approval of The University of Texas System Regents and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, is designed to be the first of six major research towers on UT Southwestern's new 30-acre North Campus site (a gift of the MacArthur Foundation). It will be named the Simmons Biomedical Research Building in honor of Reuben Leon and Faïress Clark Simmons, parents of Harold C. Simmons. This building, along with an energy building, will represent the second stage in implementing UT Southwestern's 20-year master plan for the North Campus.

The \$12-million identified for arthritis research adds to the \$7 million already received by UT Southwestern from Simmons since 1983. It will continue to support basic scientific research into inflammatory arthritis at the Harold C. Simmons Arthritis Research Center. Dr. Peter Lipsky, chief of the Rheumatic Diseases Unit in the Department of Internal Medicine, directs the Simmons Arthritis Center.

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Note: For interviews with Mr. Simmons, additional background information or photographs, contact Largent Parks Jr., Mr. Simmons' public relations adviser, (214) 233-9995.

The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas comprises Southwestern Medical School, Southwestern Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and Southwestern Allied Health Sciences School.