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**'FEAST FOR THE EYES' TO RAISE MONEY,
SUPPORT FOR MACULAR DEGENERATION**

DALLAS – March 19, 2001 – Prevent Blindness Texas will present “A Feast for the Eyes Gala” May 19 at the Wyndham Anatole Hotel to raise funds for macular degeneration research, education and screening. Half the net proceeds will go to UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas and half will go to Prevent Blindness Texas.

Macular degeneration is the leading cause of visual loss in older Americans. One in three over the age of 75 have it, and 7 percent of the over-75 population have the disease in late stages that cause blindness. The causes of the disease remain unknown, but with an aging population, the number of macular degeneration cases is expected to triple over the next two decades.

Prevent Blindness was founded more than 90 years ago “to help preserve one of life’s most precious gifts, eyesight.” Educating the public about macular degeneration is a key goal for the organization. UT Southwestern is likewise concerned. Its ophthalmologists treat about 2,000 patients with macular degeneration every year, and it continues to lead the way with groundbreaking research in that area.

Dr. James McCulley, UT Southwestern chairman of ophthalmology, pointed out that this year’s “Feast for the Eyes” is a revival of a gala event, “The Eye Ball,” that was last held in the 1980s.

“This is of significant importance, not only to Prevent Blindness but also to the Department of Ophthalmology, which will share in the proceeds from the event to be directed toward support of age-related macular degeneration research,” said McCulley, director of the Jean H. & John T. Walter Center for Research in Age-Related Macular Degeneration.

Chairing the host committee for “Feast for the Eyes” is Karol Lynn Wilson. Honorary chairmen are Jean and Tom Walter.

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Committee members include Mrs. Laura J. Allen, Carla and Paul Bass, Bettye and Byron Behrens, Diane and Hal Brierley, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Bullwinkle, Sue and Bill Cooper, Ed Cox, Cindy and Gregg Engles, Carmen and Donald Godwin, Joe and Isabell Haggard, Carol and Jeff Heller, Edie and Charlie Hickox, Sheryl and Byron Howard, Caroline Rose Hunt, Elizabeth L. Keating, Teresa and Luther King, Patty and James E. Kirby, Cece and Ford Lacy, and Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Leibovitz.

Others are Nancy and Michael Lunceford, Linda and Stanley Marcus, Jennifer and Steve Martin, Dr. and Mrs. James P. McCulley, Mr. and Mrs. Robert G. McKenzie, Mr. and Mrs. Michael C. Mewhinney, Susan and Ben Odom, Mike and Lynn (Ehrhardt) O'Neal, B.J. and Tim Parra, Margot and Ross Perot, Agness and Tom Robertson, Frances and Henry Rutledge, Pete and Pat Schenkel, Harmon Schepps, Rae and Ed Schollmaier, Tim and Judith Sear, Mrs. Charles E. Seay Jr., Mike and Cathie Seibold, Patsy Swank, Mr. and Mrs. David M. Taylor, Jimmy Westcott, Dee Dee and Harvey Williams, and Jim and Mary G. Wright.

Several underwriting levels are available, including Crystal for \$25,000; Platinum, \$15,000; Gold, \$10,000; Silver, \$5,000; Bronze, \$2,500; and Donor, \$1,500. Individual tickets are available at the \$250, \$500 or \$1,000 levels.

For ticket information, call Linda Ziegler, Prevent Blindness executive director, at 214-528-5521.

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