

# News

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## \*\*\*\*Hudspeth new chairman of Cell Biology at UT Southwestern

A. James Hudspeth, M.D., Ph.D. has assumed the post of chairman of the Department of Cell Biology and Anatomy at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical School at Dallas.

Hudspeth, a neuroscientist, is well-known for his studies of hearing. His research focuses on understanding how hair cells of the inner ear normally function and why they so often deteriorate irreversibly. "Inherited traits, infection, drug treatments, aging and acoustic trauma can all affect one's ability to hear. And roughly 20 million people in the United States suffer hearing problems -- ranging from modest difficulty in hearing to acute deafness," Hudspeth said.

"The ear's technical prowess and its vulnerability stem from the abilities of the hair cells in the inner ear," he added. "When sound energy reaches the inner ear, it vibrates the hair cells, opening pores in the cell membranes, causing an electrical signal to be sent to the brain."

In 1975 Hudspeth and several colleagues developed techniques for taking hair cells out of the ear and successfully growing them in the laboratory for study. They also developed techniques for applying direct mechanical stimulation to the hair bundles to analyze accurate-

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ly the way they function.

Hudspeth comes to UT Southwestern after having spent the last six years at the University of California School of Medicine, San Francisco. He was named director of the cell biology program in 1986, served as vice chairman of the department of physiology, and taught in the physiology and neuroscience programs. From 1975 to 1983 he taught in the division of biology at the California Institute of Technology.

In 1975 he was awarded the W. Alden Spencer Award by the Center for Neurobiology and Behavior at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University. The same year he received the Dr. Harold Lamport Award for Young Investigators in Physiology or Biophysics from the New York Academy of Sciences.

He is an active lecturer and is co-editor and co-founder of Neuron, a two-year-old publication for cellular and molecular biologists. A graduate of Harvard Medical School and of Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences' Department of Neurobiology, Hudspeth also received his bachelor's degree from Harvard College.

Effective Sept. 1, 1989, the name of the Department of Cell Biology and Anatomy will officially change to Department of Cell Biology and Neuroscience. This new name reflects the emphasis that Hudspeth will place on neuroscience in the department's research and teaching.

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Note: 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.