

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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Dr. Bob and Jean Smith Foundation gives \$1 million to support neuromuscular disease research at UT Southwestern

DALLAS – Aug. 5, 2004 – A \$1 million gift from the Dr. Bob and Jean Smith Foundation will advance neuromuscular disease research at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas.

Dr. Smith, a prominent Dallas pediatrician, and his wife, Jean, have been longtime supporters of UT Southwestern programs. Their latest contribution, part of UT Southwestern's *Innovations in Medicine* campaign, establishes the Dr. Bob and Jean Smith Foundation Distinguished Chair in Neuromuscular Disease Research. It will be held by Dr. Gil Wolfe, associate professor of neurology and co-director of the Muscular Dystrophy Association Clinic at UT Southwestern.

"We don't view this as a gift; we think of it as an investment in the future of health care – and really, in the future of human beings," said Dr. Smith, founder of Doctors Hospital of Dallas. "A tremendous amount of progress has been made in recent years in the understanding of neuromuscular diseases, but there still is much to be done in the diagnosis and treatment of these often devastating illnesses. We have always been impressed by the caliber of research being done at UT Southwestern, and so this project is a natural extension of our foundation's commitment to the medical center and our community."

The Smith Foundation's gift, which was made to Southwestern Medical Foundation, will advance Dr. Wolfe's research into the management of hereditary and degenerative neuromuscular disorders. It is estimated that 1 million Americans are affected by one of the more than 40 major types of neuromuscular disease.

"This generous gift will provide key support for maintaining and strengthening our research programs and clinical staff as we move forward toward a brighter future for the thousands of UT Southwestern patients affected by neuromuscular disease," Dr. Wolfe said. "The Smiths have been wonderful friends of the medical center through the years, and I'm very grateful for their support. It is my hope that in the near future we will see major advances in the

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treatment of these challenging disorders, which our patients face each and every day. With the Smiths' help, we are another step closer to a cure.”

A graduate of Baylor College of Medicine and a former U.S. Air Force flight surgeon, Dr. Smith has for decades been an important figure in the Dallas medical community. In 1959 Dr. Smith, then a pediatrician with a thriving private practice, founded the 300-bed Doctors Hospital and 325-bed Doctors Nursing Center in East Dallas. When the medical facility was sold in 1986, the proceeds established the Bob Smith, M.D., Foundation, later renamed the Dr. Bob and Jean Smith Foundation.

The Smith Foundation contributes to a variety of cultural and educational organizations, including the American Red Cross, Salvation Army and Southern Methodist University, Dr. Smith's alma mater. In 1993 the foundation established the Bob Smith, M.D., Center for Research in Pediatric Psychiatry at UT Southwestern with a \$1 million gift, and in 1997 the Smiths gave \$1 million to establish the Dr. Bob Smith Foundation Center for Prostate Research.

Between 1998 and 2003, another \$1.1 million was donated for various programs including neuromuscular disease research. The foundation also has made major contributions to Zale Lipshy University Hospital and Children's Medical Center Dallas for support of programs affiliated with UT Southwestern.

“The role that the Smith Foundation has played in our progress as a world-class medical institution is critical, and we are all very grateful for their continued endorsement of our efforts,” said Dr. Kern Wildenthal, president of UT Southwestern. “The Smiths' generosity is an important symbol to others of the importance of private philanthropy in furthering the public good, and we are honored by their loyal commitment to our institution.”

Dr. Smith is chairman of the board of the Smith Foundation and is a trustee of both Southwestern Medical Foundation and University Medical Center Inc. In 2001 Southwestern Medical Foundation honored him with its Charles Cameron Sprague Community Service Award.

Dr. Gil Wolfe earned his undergraduate degree from Princeton University in 1985. In 1989 he graduated at the top of his class from Southwestern Medical School. After he completed

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an internship, neurology residency and neuromuscular fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, Dr. Wolfe returned to Dallas in 1994 to join the UT Southwestern faculty.

Dr. Wolfe is active in numerous professional organizations, including the American Academy of Neurology and the American Association of Electrodiagnostic Medicine. He serves on the medical advisory boards for the Myasthenia Gravis Foundation, the Charcot-Marie-Tooth Association, and the Neuropathy Association. He also heads the Peripheral Neuropathy Clinic and the neuromuscular and clinical neurophysiology fellowship training programs at UT Southwestern and serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Clinical Neuromuscular Disease*.

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