

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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DR. W. ROBERT BEAVERS MERGES FAMILY STUDIES CENTER OF DALLAS WITH UT SOUTHWESTERN'S PSYCHIATRY DEPARTMENT

DALLAS – Jan. 31, 2004 – One of the country's foremost authorities on family dynamics and a leading proponent of family-based therapy, Dr. W. Robert Beavers has joined the UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas faculty as professor of psychiatry. At the same time, the Family Studies Center of Dallas – a nonprofit counseling center he founded in 1973 – has come under the UT Southwestern umbrella as a new division of the Department of Psychiatry.

The board of directors of the Family Studies Center voted in December 2003 to transfer all its assets to Southwestern Medical Foundation to support the center at UT Southwestern. In addition, Dr. Beavers has established a \$1.3 million charitable remainder trust, which will create a chair in his name to support future directors of the UT Southwestern Family Studies Center.

The center, which is devoted to advancing family approaches to treating mental disorders, will serve as a training facility for psychiatry residents, psychology graduate students and medical students. The clinical work at the center not only will extend to patients and their families, but also to affiliated hospitals and other community agencies, through which the center will promote the application of family interventions.

"The importance of this effort – to UT Southwestern and to Dallas – is immeasurable," said Dr. Eric Nestler, chairman of psychiatry at UT Southwestern. "Not only will the center add an important new dimension to our psychiatry department, it will dramatically increase the number of children and families that can be served. Thanks to Dr. Beavers' foresight and generosity, the Family Studies Center can continue its critical work while expanding its research initiatives and family-therapy efforts."

Clients of the clinic, who are billed on a sliding fee scale, are referred by a variety of nonprofit organizations, private physicians and public agencies. The Family Studies Center, funded largely through private donations, also contracts with the Dallas and Highland Park school districts to aid students and their families facing emotional difficulties.

Dr. Beavers, who will continue to serve as director of the center in the interim, said, "Early in my career I recognized that there were many patients who were falling through the cracks – financially and emotionally. Their mental health needs, and the needs of their families,

(MORE)

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simply weren't being met by traditional counseling. It became obvious to me that they needed something more and that we in the psychiatric community needed to find a way to better serve those in crisis. Out of that void came the Family Studies Center, which has made the complex interplay between clients and their families its focus."

Dr. Beavers, who earned his medical degree from UT Southwestern in 1953, has been a volunteer clinical professor of psychiatry at the medical center since 1979. He also served on the faculty of Southern Methodist University (1997-2000); was president of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (1987-1989); and was the founder, executive director and director of research of the Southwest Family Institute (1978-1993). Dr. Beavers, who continues to maintain a private practice in Dallas, has chaired numerous national committees, including the Group for Advancement of Psychiatry Family Committee (1985-1988), and has received many national and regional awards, including three from the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy.

Dr. Beavers has published numerous papers and has authored or co-authored four books on family systems, which are seminal in family approaches to treatment. The books have been translated into a total of seven languages and are used in at least 15 countries.

"The Family Studies Center has helped a great many patients and their families in the community over the years. We are very grateful that Dr. Beavers has decided to entrust UT Southwestern with carrying on his life's work, and we are especially pleased that he has joined the faculty to oversee the transition," said Dr. Kern Wildenthal, president of UT Southwestern. "Not only has he given generously of his resources, he has shared with us his passion for helping people."

The clinic, which is housed temporarily at St. Paul University Hospital, will be relocated this spring to a newly refurbished space at Exchange Park, adjacent to the medical center's North Campus.

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