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**Sweetheart Ball generates record \$1.16 million for  
cardiovascular research at UT Southwestern**

DALLAS – Oct. 12, 2006 – The 2006 Sweetheart Ball, which has provided more than \$10 million in support of UT Southwestern Medical Center cardiovascular research in the past 25 years, raised a record \$1.16 million this year.

Chaired by Gene Jones, the event has become a tradition since it was begun 25 years ago by Dallas philanthropic leaders. At that time, a group of civic-minded women committed themselves to battling the nation's leading cause of death.

Since then, the Sweetheart Ball has become one of the most prestigious charity events in Dallas. Its purpose: To support and make contributions to Dallas County organizations that focus primarily on the prevention and treatment of heart disease.

This tremendous community support has laid the foundation for groundbreaking research into the causes of cardiovascular disease, for which scientists and physicians at UT Southwestern have become known worldwide.

Proceeds from the Sweetheart Ball's early years were designated for the establishment of the Gail Griffiths Hill Chair in Cardiology, named for one of the founding members who died in 1984.

Since 1992 the funds generated by the gala have been directed to the Sweetheart Ball Fund for Cardiology Research. This endowment fund has fueled the search for new therapies to prevent and cure heart disease, including research into treatments for those genetically predisposed to heart disease, which affects 13 million people in the United States.

Funding also has enabled UT Southwestern scientists to understand the genetic causes of heart disease, the molecular pathways within muscle fibers, and to begin research into new pharmacological interventions for those suffering from heart disease.

Sweetheart Ball support has not only boosted basic research into cardiovascular disease, but also has helped fund innovative pilot projects, such as research into a genetic vaccine for heart disease, and has helped attract some of the world's top cardiovascular experts to UT Southwestern.

(MORE)

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“The tremendous success of the Sweetheart Ball supporters’ has allowed us to move forward in our mission to find more advanced ways of detecting, treating and preventing heart disease,” said Dr. Joseph Hill, chief of cardiology. “It is extremely gratifying to see people such as these come together for a common, altruistic goal, and we are excited about the opportunities that this level of support will mean to our research efforts.”

Dr. Hill was recruited four years ago from the University of Iowa College of Medicine with the help of Sweetheart Ball proceeds.

His research on the molecular processes that lead to heart enlargement and heart failure, coupled with many other research initiatives, helped UT Southwestern continue finding causes and treatments for many cardiac diseases.

“The Sweetheart Ball has created a legacy of generosity that benefits the entire community,” said Dr. Kern Wildenthal, president of UT Southwestern. “It has been instrumental in helping us build one of the top-ranked cardiology programs in the nation. The research breakthroughs generated by Sweetheart Ball funds will lead to better diagnostic procedures and treatments for patients with heart disease around the world.”

Next year’s Sweetheart Ball will be chaired by Mrs. William A. Custard.

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### **About UT Southwestern Medical Center**

UT Southwestern Medical Center, one of the premier medical centers in the nation, integrates pioneering biomedical research with exceptional clinical care and education. Its more than 1,400 full-time faculty members – including four active Nobel prize winners, more than any other medical school in the world – are responsible for groundbreaking medical advances and are committed to translating science-driven research quickly to new clinical treatments. UT Southwestern physicians provide medical care in 40 specialties to nearly 89,000 hospitalized patients and oversee 2.1 million outpatient visits a year.

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