

# SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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## **PROTHRO FOUNDATION PLEDGES \$5 MILLION FOR NEUROSCIENCE CENTER AT UT SOUTHWESTERN**

DALLAS – August 26, 2002 – The Vin and Caren Prothro Foundation has pledged \$5 million to endow a research center in basic neuroscience at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas in honor of the late C. Vincent Prothro – a tireless proponent of medical research and biotechnology.

The gift was made to the Southwestern Medical Foundation, for which Vin Prothro served as a trustee from 1986 until his death in 2000. His wife, Caren Prothro, currently serves as a trustee.

The new neuroscience research center will be an integral component of UT Southwestern's *Innovations in Medicine* campaign to raise \$450 million for clinical advances and medical research. Among the campaign's priorities is an emphasis on Alzheimer's disease and other neurological disorders.

"I know how pleased Vin would be to contribute to the development of a center devoted to brain research," said Caren Prothro. "The neuroscience area is one that particularly appeals to our family, as there are so many exciting possibilities for breakthrough work in diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and depression.

"Participating in a campaign like this is a way we can take something tangible and be a part of the growth of that research center. We are extremely fortunate in Dallas to have a medical center that is exploding with all kinds of scientific and clinical breakthroughs and the potential to bring even greater discoveries. This campaign will catapult UT Southwestern into a position of being one of the great research centers of the world."

Vin Prothro – the former chairman, chief executive officer and founder of Dallas Semiconductor Corp. – was instrumental in helping UT Southwestern obtain the land for its North Campus by playing a leading role in persuading the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur

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Foundation of Chicago to donate the property. A plaza connecting three biomedical buildings on the North Campus, the C. Vincent Prothro Plaza and Gardens, was dedicated in honor of the business and civic leader last year. Prothro, 58, died unexpectedly in November 2000.

“It is a special honor that a major research center in one of the most exciting scientific arenas of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be linked with Caren and Vin Prothro,” said Dr. Kern Wildenthal, president of UT Southwestern. “This exceptional commitment is a perfect example of the significance of private enterprise and philanthropy joining together to further public good. Vin’s vision and passion for positioning UT Southwestern as a global force in biotechnology research is shared by his wife and family, for which we are extremely grateful.”

W. Plack Carr Jr., president of Southwestern Medical Foundation, also praised the Prothro Foundation and its dedication to UT Southwestern.

“Vin was a member of the executive committee and chairman of the finance committee of Southwestern Medical Foundation, and the time he gave to both positions was remarkable. He and Caren always looked at the larger picture for the medical center and the community, in whatever endeavor they undertook. Because of their generous financial contributions and their countless gifts of time and energy, the landscape of the local medical community has forever been enhanced.”

Vin Prothro supported UT Southwestern throughout his adult life. In 1985 he personally raised \$15 million in venture capital to launch Dallas Biomedical Corp., a company that invested in start-up biotech initiatives at the medical center during the 1980s and early 1990s. He also served for more than a decade as chairman of the Friends of the Center for Human Nutrition, which contributed more than \$2 million under his leadership for nutrition research at the medical center. The C. Vincent Prothro Chair in Human Nutrition Research was established in his honor in 1999 by an anonymous donor. And, he was a leading member of the steering committee of UT Southwestern’s Fund for Molecular Research campaign, which raised more than \$160 million.

The Prothros also made several personal gifts to UT Southwestern over the years and received the Southwestern Medical Foundation Charles Cameron Sprague Community

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Service Award in 2001.

Dr. Thomas Südhof, director of the Center for Basic Neuroscience at UT Southwestern, said a new thrust in neuroscience research will be of great value for the school's programs in brain disorders. Südhof, an investigator in the Howard Hughes Medical Institute at UT Southwestern and holder of the Gill Distinguished Chair in Neuroscience Research and the Loyd B. Sands Distinguished Chair in Neuroscience, has received international recognition for his research on Alzheimer's disease and on the basic molecular mechanisms by which brain cells communicate with each other.

"Obviously, a gift of \$5 million will have a tremendous impact, and we very much appreciate the support and consideration given neuroscience," said Südhof, who was recently elected to the prestigious National Academy of Sciences. "This is not only the last major frontier in biology, but also one of that has been overlooked for decades."

Funds from the Prothro gift will be used to recruit the "best and brightest" neuroscience researchers to the campus, Südhof said. They also will help purchase state-of-the-art equipment necessary for advanced research.

Vin Prothro, who earned degrees from both Stanford University and Harvard Business School, began his career at Texas Instruments, where he was one of the early pioneers of the semiconductor industry. In 1969 he helped found Mostek Corp. before launching Dallas Semiconductor in 1984.

Caren Prothro currently serves in leadership positions throughout Dallas, including the boards of Southern Methodist University, the Salvation Army, the Dallas Museum of Art, the School of American Research, Dallas Center for the Performing Arts Foundation, the Hoblitzelle Foundation, the Letot Center Capital Foundation and Connemara Conservancy.

The Prothros also have been supporters of many other civic and professional organizations, including the Dallas Zoological Society, the Dallas Foundation and the Governor's Committee on Science and Technology.

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