

# SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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## TWO UT SOUTHWESTERN SCIENTISTS ELECTED TO NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES' INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE

DALLAS – Oct. 15, 2001 – Two internationally recognized researchers at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas have been elected to the Institute of Medicine, a component of the National Academy of Sciences.

Dr. Norman F. Gant Jr., professor of obstetrics and gynecology, and Dr. Eric Olson, chairman of molecular biology, were named today to the prestigious organization charged with addressing national health issues.

Gant and Olson bring the total number of UT Southwestern faculty members inducted into the institute to 16. UT Southwestern has more IOM members currently on faculty than any other Texas medical institution.

Members of the Institute of Medicine shape policies affecting public health and advise the federal government on issues involving medical care, research and education. Selection is based on international distinction in science, clinical medicine, public health or medical administration. Inductees are elected by incumbent members.

"We are extremely pleased that two of UT Southwestern's most accomplished and recognized researchers have earned this distinction," said Dr. Kern Wildenthal, president of UT Southwestern and also a member of the Institute of Medicine. "Dr. Olson and Dr. Gant set a great example for the scientific community and are role models for other researchers. They will make positive, far-reaching contributions to the Institute of Medicine."

Gant is a director on the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology and has served as the board's executive director since 1993. He has written numerous scientific papers on fetal development and pregnancy complications, particularly pregnancy-induced hypertension. Gant also developed a simple diagnostic test for this disorder, a potentially lethal condition that can cause death or injury to developing infants and imperil the health of the mother. He has been named by *Good Housekeeping* magazine and *The Best Doctors in America* as one of the top doctors for women in the United States, and was inducted as a fellow in the British Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. He received his medical degree in 1964 from

(MORE)

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## **INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE - 2**

Southwestern Medical School.

"I'm honored to have been elected to the National Institute of Medicine not only because of the individuals around the country who are involved in the organization but because I'm joining a group of faculty at UT Southwestern that I've always admired," Gant said.

Olson is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He serves as director of UT Southwestern's Nancy B. and Jake L. Hamon Center for Basic Research in Cancer and holds the Nancy B. and Jake L. Hamon Distinguished Chair in Basic Cancer Research and the Robert A. Welch Distinguished Chair in Science. He also directs the Nearburg Family Center for Basic Research in Pediatric Oncology. He is internationally recognized for his research into the genetic mechanisms of skeletal, cardiac and smooth-muscle cell proliferation and differentiation. He studies basic regulatory mechanisms in developmental biology, including those that control formation of the heart and vasculature. He and his group of researchers recently discovered a way to block the formation of enlarged hearts in mice.

"I am very appreciative of this recognition of our research, which would not have been possible without the combined efforts of the many members of my laboratory that have contributed to our understanding of the genetics of heart development and disease," Olson said. "As a basic scientist working on problems with direct clinical relevance, I hope to be able to bring a unique perspective to the issues being addressed by the IOM."

Other Institute of Medicine members at UT Southwestern and the year of their induction are Wildenthal, 1999; Dr. Eric Nestler, 1998; Dr. Ron Anderson, 1997; Dr. Scott Grundy, 1995; Dr. Jean Wilson, 1994; Dr. Daniel Foster, 1989; Dr. Alfred Gilman, 1989; Dr. Michael Brown, 1987; Dr. Joseph Goldstein, 1987; Dr. Paul MacDonald (deceased), 1987; Dr. Charles Sprague, 1979; Dr. Ronald Estabrook, 1975; Dr. Donald Seldin, 1974; and Dr. Bryan Williams, 1970.

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