

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

Media Contact: Mindy Warren
(214) 648-3404

Melinda.Warren@email.swmed.edu

DEPARTMENT OF OPHTHALMOLOGY AWARDED THREE GRANTS FROM RESEARCH TO PREVENT BLINDNESS

DALLAS – The Department of Ophthalmology at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas has received three grants totaling \$325,000 from Research to Prevent Blindness (RPB), a New York-based nonprofit organization that funds research into blindness.

Departmental Grant

A \$100,000 unrestricted grant to the Department of Ophthalmology will support research into the causes, treatment and prevention of blinding diseases.

Dr. James McCulley, chairman of ophthalmology, will direct the research. He said receiving a grant from RPB lends not only financial support but also prestige to the department.

“We are glad for the support of an organization like RPB because it sets us and our research apart,” McCulley said. “RPB departmental unrestricted grants are the equivalent of ophthalmology’s ‘Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval.’”

To date, RPB has awarded grants totaling \$1.586 million to UT Southwestern.

Senior Scientific Investigator Award

The second grant of \$60,000, a Senior Scientific Investigator Award, went to Dr. Jerry Niederkorn, professor of ophthalmology.

RPB Senior Scientific Investigator Awards support nationally recognized senior scientists conducting eye research in ophthalmology departments at medical institutions in the United States. Niederkorn is one of 100 scientists at 45 institutions honored since the award was established in 1987. He received the same award in 1991.

A leading expert on eye immunity and corneal transplantation, Niederkorn said the money will help him pursue research into corneal transplantation and immunity as well as new areas of research.

“I’m honored to have been chosen for this award, and I look forward to continuing some

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ongoing research with additional funds,” said Niederkorn, the George A. and Nancy P. Shutt Professor in Medical Science.

Research Career Development Award

Dr. Albert Edwards received the third grant, \$165,000, to support eye research over a four-year period.

An assistant professor of ophthalmology, Edwards is an expert on macular degeneration, one of the leading causes of blindness in America.

The RPB Research Career Development Award Fund, which now totals nearly \$13 million, was established in 1990 to attract young physicians and basic scientists to eye research. To date, the program has recruited 56 vision scientists to research positions in departments of ophthalmology at universities across the country. This marks the third time UT Southwestern has received a Career Development Award.

RPB is the world’s leading voluntary organization supporting eye research. Since it was founded in 1960, RPB has channeled more than \$162 million to medical institutions for research into the causes, treatment and prevention of blinding eye diseases.

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