

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

Media Contact: Roy Bode, 214-648-7500
or Philip Schoch, 214-648-3404
philip.schoch@utsouthwestern.edu

\$10 MILLION SOLOMON GIFT ENDOWS GENERAL MEDICINE DIVISION, LAUNCHES SPECIAL PROGRAM FOR CLINICAL SERVICES AT UT SOUTHWESTERN

DALLAS – Feb. 3, 2003 – UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas will use a \$10 million gift from Mr. and Mrs. William T. Solomon to help develop a model for clinical service in general internal medicine, enabling physicians and staff to center their attention on patients in a time when health care has become increasingly impersonal and perplexing.

American medicine has been buffeted by massive change in the past decade. A technology explosion, managed-care systems intended to control rising costs and other developments have made obtaining medical attention more complex for patients, Dr. Kern Wildenthal, UT Southwestern president, observed. In addition, he pointed out, clinical programs at UT Southwestern have grown dramatically since the 1980s, straining the institution's ability to handle efficiently more than 400,000 referral outpatient visits last year while caring for thousands more patients in affiliated hospitals.

Solomon, a Dallas businessman who is chairing UT Southwestern's *Innovations in Medicine* capital campaign, said the contribution will help highlight clinical service as an integral element of the \$450 million drive to advance research and treatment programs. The gift will be made to Southwestern Medical Foundation from the William T. and Gay F. Solomon Fund of Communities Foundation of Texas and the William T. and Gay F. Solomon Advised Fund of The Dallas Foundation. "UT Southwestern's increased focus on improving patient services will require a major commitment of financial resources," he said. "This new emphasis expands the scope, relevance and purpose of the campaign. UT Southwestern is prepared to make a commitment to revolutionize patient care with the help of private philanthropy." In all, he said, about \$100 million will be required to fund the clinical portion of the campaign.

"Since becoming chairman of the capital campaign, I have had an opportunity to get an

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up-close view of what UT Southwestern is doing,” he continued. “Gay’s and my personal commitment at this level is a testimony to what we see as the importance of these efforts, their prospects for success and the opportunity that presents itself at this time to us and others to help the medical center achieve its goals.”

Wildenthal said the Solomons’ support will allow implementation of enhanced services in UT Southwestern’s general internal medicine division, whose physicians see the largest number of patients at the medical center. The division will be named the *William T. and Gay F. Solomon Division of General Internal Medicine* in recognition of the couple’s support.

“The intent of the Solomons is to enable general internal medicine to be a proving ground to perfect a seamless system of clinical care, combining exemplary patient-centered services with the latest technology and physician expertise,” he explained. “Because this is a key issue for the entire American health-care system, we hope our work will create a model for improved doctor-patient relations in other environments around the country.”

These are among the clinical initiatives that should simplify access of patients to their doctors, expedite their care and allow their physicians to provide more individual attention:

- Emphasizing a more patient-centered culture in which the quality of clinical care and services matches UT Southwestern’s world-class research and teaching.
- Creating a streamlined appointment scheduling system, so patient visits to various specialists can be coordinated easily.
- Implementing a new patient-friendly telephone system, so calls can be completed without delay and frustration.
- Installing an electronic medical record system so all physicians involved in a case can simultaneously access data while maintaining confidentiality.
- Enhancing customer-service training, performance measures, recognition and incentives for staff.
- Making cutting-edge clinical treatment trials readily available to patients, and facilitating enrollment and participation in them.
- Unifying management for all patient-related services so that accountability is clear.

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UT Southwestern drafted a detailed plan late last year after internal studies, consultation with a panel of experts from other well-known American medical centers, and site visits to other top clinics where both strengths and weaknesses were evaluated. Implementation of its primary stages has already begun.

“UT Southwestern has achieved an international reputation over the past two decades, with recognized eminence in biomedical science, teaching and clinical expertise,” said Dr. Willis C. Maddrey, executive vice president for clinical affairs at UT Southwestern. “We now are focusing as well on the quality of the patient experience. We are committed to ensuring that the services and attention we give our patients is unsurpassed.”

Dr. John D. McConnell, executive vice president for administration, added, “Doctors and patients alike recognize that efficient, patient-friendly care is not only more pleasant but also contributes to successful medical outcomes. Together with the outstanding hospitals with which we are affiliated, UT Southwestern will build an integrated clinical delivery system that minimizes the bureaucracy of medicine and maximizes its quality.”

Solomon, chairman of Austin Industries, leads a committee of more than 100 prominent civic and business leaders who have volunteered in UT Southwestern’s current capital campaign. A year ago, he and his wife committed a lead gift of \$1 million to the drive. “The more we learned about UT Southwestern and its plans, the more we became convinced that there is a unique opportunity at this point to achieve real breakthroughs both in the quality of clinical service and in research,” Solomon said. “Gay and I decided to increase our support significantly because we believe so strongly in what they are accomplishing. We are convinced that the development of new models of patient-centered care coupled to the best of modern technology will be important for the health-care system nationally, as well as for North Texas patients.”

A Dallas native, Solomon is a member of the boards of Belo, Hoblitzelle Foundation and Southwestern Medical Foundation. He has previously served as chairman of the Dallas Citizens Council, Dallas Together Forum, Greater Dallas Chamber and is involved in a number of other community organizations. A graduate of Southern Methodist University and Harvard University, he was named to the Texas Business Hall of Fame in 1996 and Texas Minority Business

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Advocate of the Year in 1995.

Gay Ferguson Solomon, a homemaker, painter and interior designer, is an ardent supporter of a variety of civic and religious organizations. An honors graduate of UT Austin, she currently serves on the board of the Dallas County Community College District Foundation and on the advisory committee of the CONTACT Counseling and Crisis Line.

“The dedicated support of Bill and Gay Solomon in our campaign generally, and for our initiative to enhance clinical care and service particularly, will enable UT Southwestern to achieve a new standard of excellence,” Wildenthal said. “Their foresight and the support of others who join them in this effort will surely be seen by future generations as one of the most lasting and significant contributions ever made to our community.”

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