

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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PEROT FOUNDATION ESTABLISHES ENDOWMENT FOR UT SOUTHWESTERN GULF WAR SYNDROME RESEARCHER

DALLAS – October 12, 2000 – The Perot Foundation has recognized America's war veterans and a UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas researcher who has been their champion with a \$1 million gift.

After two decades of supporting medical research at UT Southwestern, the Perot Foundation's latest gift establishes the U.S. Armed Forces Veterans Distinguished Chair for Medical Research, Honoring Robert Haley, M.D., and America's Gulf War Veterans.

Haley, chief of epidemiology, began researching Gulf War syndrome in 1994. In three articles published together in the Jan. 15, 1997, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Haley and colleagues identified three distinct Gulf War syndromes, traced them to organic brain damage and identified exposures to neurotoxic chemicals as the likely cause. This groundbreaking work pointed to a medical reason for the illnesses experienced by thousands of Gulf War soldiers. Ultimately, the work may have important implications for similar illnesses in the civilian world.

Ross Perot began funding Haley's work in 1994 after hearing stories of soldiers who returned from the Gulf War sick or disabled for unknown reasons.

"I knew we needed to get to the bottom of the problem for these brave men and women," said Perot, a Dallas businessman and graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy. "Dr. Haley has done exceptional work to discover why these soldiers are sick."

The Perot Foundation gave UT Southwestern \$20 million in 1988 and \$23.3 million in 1996 to strengthen training for medical scientists and enhance biomedical research in the laboratories of Nobel laureates and their colleagues.

"This latest gift is especially noteworthy because it honors Dr. Robert Haley's work, which has been supported by the Perot Foundation for several years," said UT Southwestern

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President Dr. Kern Wildenthal. "Without the assistance of Ross Perot, Dr. Haley could not have produced such promising findings."

Since 1997, with colleagues at UT Southwestern and other universities, Haley has published a series of major papers outlining discoveries about Gulf War syndrome, relating it to neurotoxic brain damage from wartime chemical exposures, uncovering a genetic predisposition for the injuries and identifying innovative diagnostic approaches. He has briefed the nation's top military and political leaders and testified before Congress on Gulf War syndrome.

"Ross Perot's contribution to our research is inestimable," Haley said. "In view of the complexity of the research problem and the initial skepticism about the existence of Gulf War syndrome, this work would never have been done without his selfless support. Gulf War veterans and all who serve in the future are indebted to this great American."

In October 1997 Haley received a \$3 million grant from the Department of Defense to test and treat veterans suffering from Gulf War syndrome.

A fellow of the American College of Physicians and the American College of Epidemiology, Haley graduated from UT Southwestern in 1971 and completed his internship and residency in internal medicine at Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas. Haley joined the UT Southwestern faculty in 1983 after spending 10 years at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. His work there won him the U.S. Public Service Commendation Medal.

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