

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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Dr. Bob & Jean Smith Foundation donates \$400,000 to support stem-cell research at UT Southwestern

DALLAS – March 29, 2005 – The Dr. Bob & Jean Smith Foundation has given \$400,000 to support stem-cell research at UT Southwestern Medical Center.

Dr. Smith, a prominent Dallas pediatrician, and his wife have been longtime supporters of UT Southwestern programs. Their latest contribution will support the work of Dr. Rita Perlingeiro, assistant professor in the Center for Developmental Biology and a leading researcher of the therapeutic potential of non-embryonic stem cells derived from umbilical cord blood (UCB). The donation will be used to study the potential role of UCB stem cells in the treatment of nonhematological diseases, such as neurodegenerative disorders, diabetes and cardiovascular conditions.

“We believe that proponents – as well as opponents – of stem-cell research universally agree that significant progress in the treatments and cures of a plethora of diseases may very well be possible through stem-cell therapy,” said Dr. Smith. “Knowing that UT Southwestern is in its infancy of developing a stem-cell program by recruiting the best and the brightest of young scientists, we felt it was timely and appropriate to again partner with the medical center in its pursuit of being a world-class medical institution and as an investment in the future of medicine.”

A graduate of Baylor College of Medicine and a former U.S. Air Force flight surgeon, Dr. Smith has for decades been an important figure in the Dallas medical community. In 1959 Dr. Smith – then a pediatrician with a thriving private practice – founded the 300-bed Doctors Hospital and 325-bed Doctors Nursing Center in East Dallas. When the medical facility was sold in 1986, the proceeds were used to establish the Bob Smith, M.D. Foundation, later renamed the Dr. Bob & Jean Smith Foundation.

The foundation contributes to a variety of medical, cultural and educational organizations, including the American Red Cross, Easter Seals, Habitat for Humanity and Southern Methodist University, Dr. Smith’s alma mater, in addition to UT Southwestern. In 1993 the foundation

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established the Bob Smith, M.D. Center for Research in Pediatric Psychiatry at UT Southwestern with a \$1 million gift, and in 1997 the Smiths gave \$1 million to establish the Dr. Bob Smith Foundation Center for Prostate Research. In 2004 the foundation gave \$1 million to create the Dr. Bob & Jean Smith Foundation Distinguished Chair in Neuromuscular Disease Research at UT Southwestern.

Between 1998 and 2004, another \$1.1 million was donated for various programs including neuromuscular disease research. The foundation also has made major contributions to UT Southwestern University Hospitals and Children's Medical Center Dallas for support of programs affiliated with UT Southwestern.

"Our medical center could never aspire to be a truly outstanding institution without stalwart supporters like Bob and Jean Smith," said Dr. Kern Wildenthal, president of UT Southwestern. "This latest gift will support an extremely important program. Gifts such as this enhance and expand our research programs and enable us to remain at the forefront of medical and scientific achievement."

Dr. Perlingeiro earned a doctorate in biological sciences in 1997 from the University of Campinas in Sao Paulo, Brazil, where she had completed a Master of Science in pharmacology in 1993. She served as an assistant professor at the University of Mogi das Cruzes in Sao Paulo from 1995 to 2000. Dr. Perlingeiro joined the UT Southwestern faculty in 2003, following a fellowship in stem-cell biology at the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research.

"Recent advances in stem-cell biology have brought new hope for the treatment of many chronic and degenerative diseases for which modern medicine has yet to find a cure," said Dr. Perlingeiro. "We are deeply indebted to Dr. Bob and Jean Smith for their generous partnership in this critically important research, and are excited about where our new investigations will take us."

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