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News

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Honored Southwestern Medical School scientist to head department.

DALLAS--Dr. Joseph Goldstein, one of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School's most honored research scientists, has been named chairman of a newly structured basic science department at the school combining molecular genetics and biophysics.

The appointment was announced by Dean Frederick Bonte of Southwestern, a component of The UT Health Science Center at Dallas. The promotion, Bonte said, was effective immediately.

Dr. Goldstein and his associate, Dr. Michael Brown, have won numerous national and international awards for their research findings which have led to a new understanding of coronary artery disease.

Latest of these honors was the Albion O. Bernstein, MD Award for Scientific Achievement, awarded by the Medical Society of the State of New York. A scroll and \$2,000 prize were presented Oct. 4 in New York City to the two Dallas scientists, who were cited "for their outstanding medical contributions clarifying the pathogenesis and evolution of arteriosclerosis and coronary disease."

In announcing Dr. Goldstein's new medical school appointment, Dean Bonte said the scope of the department's activities will be directed toward the area of experimental genetics--"a field in which Dr. Goldstein and Dr. Brown have received international acclaim."

It is contemplated, Dr. Bonte said that a major component of the department will be a new center for the study of genetic disease, to be headed by Dr. Brown. Details of the planned center are still being formulated and will be announced later.

Drs. Goldstein and Brown have received widespread recognition for their discovery of a specific inherited defect in body cells which results in high levels of cholesterol--a condition leading to artery and heart disease. The investigators found that a scarcity or sometimes complete lack of specialized "receptors" on the cell's outer membrane caused fat production inside the cell to go out of control.

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Their discovery holds major implications for both heart disease research and the study of other genetic disorders, which also ultimately may prove to result from inherited abnormalities in cell receptors.

Initial focus of his department, Dr. Goldstein said, will continue to be on the molecular nature of these membrane receptors and "the identification of other human diseases that owe their origin to defects in those receptors."

He said he foresees the research later extending beyond cardiovascular disorders, with one major new area of interest being the interaction of viruses with membranes and the possible relationship of this interaction to human disease processes.

Brown and Goldstein will continue as co-holders of the Paul J. Thomas chair in internal medicine at the medical school, a post awarded them last summer. The chair was made possible by a gift to the Southwestern Medical Foundation by former Dallas mayor and Mrs. J. Erik Jonsson.

A primary goal in the appointment of Dr. Goldstein and ultimate establishment of the center to be headed by Dr. Brown is, according to Dr. Bonte, "to provide them with the optimum environment for their research program. This is one of the most promising areas of medical research, one that has implications for hundreds of thousands of persons who have coronary artery disease."

Dr. Goldstein, a 1966 graduate of Southwestern, began his work on the role of cholesterol in heart attacks while at the University of Washington School of Medicine. He continued the work here after joining the SMS faculty in 1971, and began his collaboration with Dr. Brown in 1972.

Among other major awards the pair has received in recent years are Germany's Heinrich Weiland Prize and the American Chemical Society's Pfizer Award for Enzyme Chemistry. Also, they have been chosen to deliver the prestigious Harvey Lecture at Rockefeller University, New York, Nov. 17.

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