

Media Contact: Rachel Skei Donihoo  
214-648-3404  
[rachel.donihoo@utsouthwestern.edu](mailto:rachel.donihoo@utsouthwestern.edu)

**Dr. Robert C. Atkins Foundation gives \$2 million  
to support obesity, diabetes research at UT Southwestern**

DALLAS – June 27, 2006 – The Dr. Robert C. Atkins Foundation has given \$2 million to support the study of obesity and diabetes and establish a chair at UT Southwestern Medical Center.

The gift, made to Southwestern Medical Foundation, will establish the Dr. Robert C. and Veronica Atkins Chair in Obesity and Diabetes Research. The chair will be held by Dr. Jay Horton, associate professor of internal medicine and molecular genetics.

“We established the Atkins Foundation to fund research at such distinguished institutions as UT Southwestern where, like my husband, accomplished individuals are pushing the envelope of conventional thinking – literally putting ideas under a microscope and applying acceptable scientific methods to test them. On behalf of the foundation, we are thrilled to endow this professorship to such a highly-regarded investigator as Dr. Horton and to help advance his pioneering work,” said Veronica Atkins, chair of the Atkins Foundation, a grant-making organization dedicated to research into the role of metabolism and nutrition in the management of such major health issues as obesity and type 2 diabetes.

“Obesity and its associated diseases comprise the biggest health problems facing developed countries, contributing to heart disease, stroke, diabetes, hypertension, and a long list of other devastating illnesses,” said Dr. Kern Wildenthal, president of UT Southwestern. “We are honored to have a chair named for Dr. Atkins, who was so passionate about obesity prevention, and we’re very grateful to his wife, who is so successfully continuing his mission.”

One of the most influential authorities on diet of the last 40 years, Dr. Robert Atkins was the founder of the Atkins Center for Complementary Medicine in New York City and wrote more than a dozen books – including the 1972 bestseller “Dr. Atkins’ Diet Revolution,” which has sold more than 10 million copies – during his four-decade career. His pioneering controlled-carbohydrate approach to weight management and the treatment and prevention of disease famously challenged conventional medicine and nutritional science.

Following Dr. Atkins’ death in 2003, the Atkins Foundation was established with a \$40 million gift as a supporting organization of National Philanthropic Trust, an independent public charity. In addition to endowed chairs, the foundation awards individual study grants for independent, scientific

(MORE)

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SOUTHWESTERN MEDICAL CENTER AT DALLAS

UT Southwestern Medical School • UT Southwestern Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences • UT Southwestern Allied Health Sciences School  
UT Southwestern University Hospitals & Clinics

Office of News and Publications • 5323 Harry Hines Blvd., Dallas TX 75390-9060 • Telephone 214-648-3404 • Telefax 214-648-9119  
[www.utsouthwestern.edu](http://www.utsouthwestern.edu)

## Atkins Foundation gift – 2

research that examines the role of metabolism and nutrition in obesity, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease and other serious health concerns. It also provides significant funding for public policy analyses and educational programs. Since 2004 the foundation has awarded academic chairs to seven other nationally recognized medical centers, for a total of \$15.5 million in endowments.

An active participant in the Atkins Foundation's grant review process, Mrs. Atkins is committed to continuing her husband's mission to positively impact disease prevention and health management worldwide by supporting research as well as public advocacy programs, planning grants and endowed professorships. She is passionate about addressing the obesity epidemic, particularly in children, hoping to see the eradication of childhood Type II diabetes (and its link to obesity) within her lifetime through her work with the foundation. Named as one of *BusinessWeek's* top philanthropists in 2005, Mrs. Atkins also supports several Russian orphanages and writes feature articles to help educate the public about important health issues.

Dr. Horton, a noted digestive and liver disease researcher, earned his medical degree from the University of Iowa Roy J. and Lucille A. Carver College of Medicine in 1988. He joined the UT Southwestern faculty in 1997, after completing a residency and fellowship here. A former Pew Scholar (2000-2004), Dr. Horton is a consulting editor for the *Journal of Clinical Investigation* and the *Journal of Lipid Research*. In 2004 he was named principal investigator of an NIH Interdisciplinary Research Center for obesity and metabolic syndrome at UT Southwestern. Dr. Horton and 23 other UT Southwestern investigators from various disciplines are examining the behavioral, metabolic and molecular mechanisms that cause obesity and metabolic syndrome.

"It is an honor to be selected to receive this wonderful chair, which will be used to support our interdisciplinary research effort to develop strategies to prevent obesity and its metabolic complications," said Dr. Horton, whose current research efforts are focused on developing an understanding of why fat accumulates in liver and how it subsequently causes liver injury. "The award further strengthens UT Southwestern's position as a leader in the fields of obesity and metabolic disease research and will be an important component of our ongoing research efforts."

W. Plack Carr, president of Southwestern Medical Foundation, added, "This is an enormously generous and far-reaching gift, and we're very grateful to the Atkins Foundation for its confidence in us and its continued commitment to a health issue of such critical importance."

###