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Dallas designer donates Two Helens clothing line profits to support neuromuscular disease research at UT Southwestern

DALLAS – April 4, 2011 – Dallas clothing designer Cissy Jones admits she has a hard time sitting still. So, when her beloved mother – the inspiration behind her Two Helens clothing line – was diagnosed with a devastating neuromuscular disease in 2004, she had to “get up and do something.”

Mrs. Jones’ love for her mother, coupled with her passion for design, has translated into a pledge to support UT Southwestern Medical Center’s research into amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). Determined to help find a cure for the disease afflicting her mother, Helen “Petie” Hewett, Mrs. Jones is donating 10 percent of her clothing sales to Southwestern Medical Foundation.

“This obviously is a cause near and dear to my heart, and I’m excited to have the opportunity to raise awareness about ALS, which has profoundly affected our family,” said Mrs. Jones. “I’m incredibly grateful for everything UT Southwestern has done for all of us and am optimistic about the progressive research being done there. My mom is a very special person who has always been devoted to ‘giving back.’ This is a great way for me to honor her, while doing a little ‘giving back’ of my own.”

Dr. Kern Wildenthal, president of Southwestern Medical Foundation, said, “Cissy Jones and her parents have been great friends of the medical center, and it is an honor that Cissy has chosen to entrust us with this opportunity to excel further. I want to express our gratitude on behalf of all those in the future who will benefit from her generosity.”

ALS, which affects as many as 30,000 people in the U.S., is a progressive, terminal neurodegenerative disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and the spinal cord. Commonly referred to as Lou Gehrig’s disease, the devastating disorder affects the function of nerves and muscles. There is no cure or proven treatment for the disease.

At UT Southwestern, researchers are conducting studies to increase their understanding of genes that may cause the disease, mechanisms that can trigger motor neurons to degenerate in ALS, and approaches to stop the progress leading to cell death.

“Finding an effective treatment for ALS is of paramount importance not only to Cissy Jones and her family, but also to all of us at UT Southwestern. This generous gesture adds fuel to our quest

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to find a cure for this devastating disease,” said Dr. Daniel K. Podolsky, president of UT Southwestern. “This gift is an inspiration, and a wonderful expression of Mrs. Jones’ desire to help others.”

Mrs. Jones says she has loved fashion as long as she can remember. Her penchant for “dressing” her friends turned from hobby to career soon after her oldest child, also named Helen, was born.

“I knew it was time to give up a 9-to-5 job, but I wanted a creative outlet,” said Mrs. Jones, a former elementary school teacher and personal shopper. “I began hand-painting T-shirts, and before I knew it my little hobby had turned into a full-fledged line of casual clothing.”

The current Two Helens collection features asymmetrical painted tops and sponge-painted vests. Future collections will leave the paint behind to concentrate on more fashion-forward designs.

“I think women respond to the designs because they’re flattering and fun to wear,” she said.

In 2008, Mrs. Jones’ mother and father, real estate developer Art Hewett, donated \$72,000 to foster ALS research at UT Southwestern. Their gift created the Helen B. and Arthur E. Hewett Fund to Support Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Research, in Honor of Dr. Albert D. Roberts, M.D. Contributions from Mrs. Jones’ latest effort will support the fund established by her parents.

Mrs. Jones and her husband, Craig, a real estate executive, live in Dallas with their three children.

For more information on Two Helens, please visit www.twohelens.com . Visit <http://www.utsouthwestern.org/neurology> to learn more about neurology services, including ALS and other neuromuscular disorders, at UT Southwestern.

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