

# SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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## SWEETHEART BALL FUNDS MOLECULAR CARDIOLOGY RESEARCH

DALLAS — October 3, 1995 — Proceeds from the 1996 Sweetheart Ball will fund UT Southwestern research into new therapies to prevent and cure heart disease. An anonymous donor will match funds raised by the Ball.

"The research that these funds will make possible is extremely exciting," said Dr. Kern Wildenthal, UT Southwestern president. "In animal models, our researchers have proven the feasibility of 'inoculating' against heart disease with genes that will reduce levels of low-density lipoproteins (the bad cholesterol) or raise levels of high-density lipoproteins (the good cholesterol). If we can overcome the current limitations in gene-delivery technology, it is conceivable that this could become a new treatment in humans."

This research is led by Dr. R. Sanders Williams, chief of cardiology, director of the Frank M. Ryburn Jr. Cardiac Center and holder of the James T. Willerson, M.D. Distinguished Chair in Cardiovascular Diseases. He and his colleagues are building on the Nobel Prize-winning work of Drs. Michael Brown and Joseph Goldstein. Goldstein and Brown, who have been UT Southwestern faculty members since 1972, discovered the basic mechanism of cholesterol metabolism.

"We are very proud to be involved in such cutting-edge research," said Alinda Hill Wikert, chairwoman of the 1996 Sweetheart Ball. "We believe gene manipulation for the treatment and prevention of heart disease is very interesting, exciting and hopeful."

Dr. Wildenthal said much work must be done to prove the practicality of a 'gene inoculator.'

"Seed dollars for early funding of the research from the Sweetheart Ball will be of critical importance for advancing the work far enough to prove its feasibility," he said.

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