

News

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****UT Southwestern receives grant for innovative programs from Research to Prevent Blindness

DALLAS -- The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas has received a \$40,000 grant from Research to Prevent Blindness. The organization annually makes awards to 57 medical schools across the United States to advance research into the causes, treatment and prevention of blinding diseases.

Dr. James McCulley, chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology, noted that over the years his department has received \$186,000 from Research to Prevent Blindness. This is the third year UT Southwestern's grant has increased by \$5,000.

"These awards are particularly significant because they are unrestricted and make it possible to explore new and potentially fruitful areas," said McCulley.

"Once a project is under way and promising, it is easier to find additional support from other sources."

Much of the ophthalmology research at UT Southwestern was initiated with "seed money" from Research to Prevent Blindness. Those projects include studies to elucidate the rejection process occasionally associated with corneal transplantation, studies evaluating the disease processes associated with ocular tumors, the advancement of the new surgical technique of epikeratoplasty (sewn-on living contact lens), studies of "how the brain sees," experiments designed to find laboratory alternatives to toxicity testing in animals and many more.

Research to Prevent Blindness is the world's leading voluntary organization in support of eye research. In conveying the gift, its chairman, Lew R. Wasserman, said, "Eye diseases inflict misery and disability upon a huge segment of our population and cost this nation \$16 billion annually. With judicious investment by government and private philanthropy in eye research, we can reduce the tragedy of visual impairment and lessen the financial burden it imposes upon the American people."

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Note: The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas comprises Southwestern Medical School, Southwestern Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and Southwestern Allied Health Sciences School.