

news THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER AT DALLAS

southwestern medical school - graduate school of biomedical sciences - school of allied health sciences

May 20, 1977

Contact: John Weeks

Work: 688-3404

Home: 348-6555

*****Southwestern's Dr. Gant, noted
obstetrical researcher, permanent
chairman of department.

DALLAS--Dr. Norman F. Gant, leader in developing an acclaimed new test procedure for diagnosing complications of pregnancy, has been named permanent chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical School.

Dr. Gant had been acting chairman of the department since January, when Dr. Paul C. MacDonald resigned the chairmanship to assume fulltime direction of the Cecil H. and Ida Green Center for Reproductive Biology Sciences at the UT Health Science Center at Dallas.

In announcing the appointment, Southwestern Dean Frederick J. Bonte praised Dr. Gant as a leading clinician and researcher.

"Our search committee had many names of qualified potential chairmen from experts around the country," Bonte said. "The committee found that the leading candidate for a chairmanship of obstetrics and gynecology--ours or anybody else's--was Norman Gant, who has already established his leadership in research in his field."

"Dr. Gant promises to continue the superb tradition of his distinguished predecessors, Drs. MacDonald and Pritchard," Dr. Bonte continued.

--more--

first add gant appointment

Dr. Jack Pritchard, who chaired the department from 1955 to 1970, when he was succeeded by Dr. MacDonald, is Gillette professor of obstetrics & gynecology at Southwestern.

As chairman, Dr. Gant heads one of Southwestern's largest and busiest clinical departments and also is chief of obstetrics and gynecology services at Parkland Memorial Hospital, Southwestern's primary teaching facility.

The department counts a faculty of 34 fulltime members and a total staff of more than 300. In addition to far-ranging research and teaching programs, the faculty last year was responsible for delivery of nearly 8,000 babies at Parkland as well as some 270,000 clinic visits to facilities under its supervision. These include a nationally-recognized system of nine maternal health and family planning clinics, and an advanced high-risk pregnancy unit at Parkland, where complicating disorders in expectant mothers are managed.

The detection of one such complication is a specialty of Dr. Gant, author of more than 40 scientific papers with emphasis on studies of pregnancy-related hypertension. The new chairman is developer of a simple diagnostic test for toxemia, a potentially lethal condition characterized by high blood pressure, fluid retention and eventual kidney damage--a state that causes death or injury to many developing infants and imperils the life and health of the mother as well.

Dr. Gant's "roll-over" test, developed with Dr. Richard Worley, now a Southwestern assistant professor, is proving highly accurate and is being widely adopted by clinicians. It involves blood-pressure comparisons of the expectant mother lying first on her left side and then on her back. Studies have demonstrated that if she is either developing or likely to develop toxemia, her blood pressure shows a special sensitivity--quickly rising 20 millimeters or more. With early diagnosis, restriction of patients' activity minimizes this risk and allows normal development of the fetus.

--more--

second add gant appointment

Without such early detection, symptoms of toxemia generally do not appear until late stages of pregnancy when the fetus may be already endangered, often requiring premature delivery.

A 1964 graduate of Southwestern, Dr. Gant completed residency at Parkland and a post-doctoral fellowship in reproductive physiology at the school before being named to the faculty in 1968. He rose through departmental ranks to become professor and associate chairman of obstetrics and gynecology in 1976.

The 38-year-old Wichita Falls, Tex., native received his B.A. degree from North Texas State University in 1962. A consultant to Presbyterian and St. Paul hospitals in Dallas, Dr. Gant is a diplomate of the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology and a fellow in the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

##

DISTRIBUTION: A,B.