SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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CALIFORNIA FOUNDATION GIVES $1 MILLION TO FUND GENE LABORATORY AT UT SOUTHWESTERN

DALLAS — August 19, 1993 — Two Nobel laureates at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas soon will have a new lab designed and equipped for their basic genetic research because of a $1 million gift from the W.M. Keck Foundation, one of the nation's largest charitable organizations.

Dr. Michael S. Brown and Dr. Joseph L. Goldstein will head the W.M. Keck Foundation Gene Manipulation Laboratory at UT Southwestern.

"This gift will enable us to purchase the equipment we need to develop experimental animal model systems to change the genes of an animal and see how it affects the animal's metabolism," said Brown.

What researchers learn from studying genetically altered animal models may one day lead to viable forms of gene therapy for human disease.

This is the first major gift for UT Southwestern's $150 million Fund for Molecular Research campaign to come from a foundation outside Texas.

"We are honored by the support of one of the premier foundations in the nation. It affirms the outstanding quality of research at UT Southwestern," said Dr. Kern Wildenthal, UT Southwestern president.

The gift, which will be matched, has been directed to the Southwestern Medical Foundation for the benefit of UT Southwestern. "We are pleased that the Keck Foundation chose Southwestern Medical Foundation to administer their support of UT Southwestern," said Dr. Charles C. Sprague, chairman of Southwestern Medical Foundation. "This is indeed an endorsement of UT Southwestern's outstanding research abilities."

The new lab will enable Brown, Goldstein and their research group to conduct experiments like the one they reported in this month's *Journal of Clinical Investigation*. Using mice genetically altered to produce offspring with no low-density lipoprotein (LDL) receptors and resulting high cholesterol levels,

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the UT Southwestern researchers were able to reverse the mice's high cholesterol by injecting them with a virus that served as a delivery mechanism for human LDL-receptor genes. Authors in addition to Brown and Goldstein were Drs. Robert E. Hammer, associate professor of biochemistry and a senior associate of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute at UT Southwestern; Joachim Herz, assistant professor of molecular genetics; Robert D. Gerard, assistant professor of biochemistry; and Shun Ishibashi, instructor of molecular genetics.

"It's very impressive that the Keck Foundation is farsighted enough to support the kind of basic research that has to go on before we can even think about human gene therapy," Brown said.

Brown, director of the Erik Jonsson Center for Research in Molecular Genetics and Human Disease, and Goldstein, chairman of molecular genetics at UT Southwestern, shared the 1985 Nobel prize in physiology or medicine for their discovery of the basic mechanism of cholesterol metabolism.

Goldstein holds the Distinguished Chair in Biomedical Science and the Paul J. Thomas Chair in Medicine at UT Southwestern. Brown holds the W.A. (Monty) Moncrief Distinguished Chair in Cholesterol and Arteriosclerosis Research and the Paul J. Thomas Chair in Medicine.

The W.M. Keck Foundation was established in 1954 by the late William Myron Keck, founder of The Superior Oil Co., one of the nation's largest and most successful independent oil companies. Originally created to support accredited colleges and universities, its primary interests remain education, science, engineering and medical research.

In the past eight years, the W.M. Keck Foundation has distributed more than $190 million in grants, in addition to funding its major initiative, construction of the W.M. Keck Telescopes and Observatory on the island of Hawaii.

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