

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

Contact: Emily Martinez
(214) 648-3404
or e-mail: emart2@mednet.swmed.edu

RHEA GIFT HELPS ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH

DALLAS — July 14, 1997 — After spending his career searching for oil, John W. Rhea Jr. hopes his recent gift to UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas will help researchers search for better treatments for Alzheimer's disease.

Rhea and his wife, Rosemary, have donated \$100,000 to Southwestern Medical Foundation to create the Rosemary and John W. Rhea Jr. Fund in Alzheimer's Disease Research and Treatment at UT Southwestern. Rhea said he had been considering making a donation to the medical center for several years. His wife's mother suffered from Alzheimer's, so he has personally witnessed the damage done by the disease.

"What triggered me into action was a recent gift that my friend Jack Harbin made to the medical center for Alzheimer's research," Rhea said. "I wanted to do what I could to help." John P. Harbin recently donated \$1 million to Southwestern Medical Foundation to establish the Dorothy L. and John P. Harbin Chair for Alzheimer's Disease Research and the Dorothy L. and John P. Harbin Center for Alzheimer's Disease Research at UT Southwestern.

Rhea is a retired executive with SEDCO and now manages his family's investments. An Arkansas native, he earned a degree in petroleum engineering from Louisiana State University. He and his wife moved to Dallas in 1951, and he became SEDCO's first engineer, Rhea said.

John and Rosemary Rhea have been married for 54 years. They met while he was working for an oil company in Colombia and she was visiting her parents, who were also living in the South American country at the time. The couple has four children: Bill, a state district court judge in Dallas; Tanyss, a playwright in Massachusetts; Elena, a homemaker in Arkansas; and Roberta, a lawyer in Florida. The Rheas, who are avid skiers and tennis players, divide their time between Dallas and Aspen, Colo.

Through the years, the Rheas have been active supporters of many civic and cultural organizations, including Goodwill Industries of Dallas, Boy Scouts of America, Dallas Lighthouse

(MORE)

RHEA GIFT — 2

for the Blind, American Heart Association and Creative Arts Center. They are members of Highland Park United Methodist Church.

Dr. Kern Wildenthal, president of UT Southwestern, said the Rheas' contribution will move Alzheimer's research forward at UT Southwestern. "The Rheas recognize that we have learned a great deal about Alzheimer's disease in recent years, but that much more research is still needed," he said. "This generous donation by the Rheas is a wonderful example of how Dallas citizens support medical education and research in our community."

W. Plack Carr Jr., president of Southwestern Medical Foundation, said, "We still have a long way to go toward overcoming Alzheimer's disease, but this donation will help move our research efforts along."

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