

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PEROT FOUNDATION PLEDGES \$23.3 MILLION FOR MEDICAL TRAINING AND BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH AT UT SOUTHWESTERN

DALLAS -- The Perot Foundation has renewed and extended its support for UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas with a \$23.3 million pledge, one of the largest ever made to a public university or medical school.

The Perot Foundation's new gift, like its earlier \$20 million commitment to UT Southwestern in 1988, will strengthen training for medical scientists and enhance biomedical research in the laboratories of Nobel laureates and their colleagues.

"This grant reflects my confidence in UT Southwestern," Dallas businessman Ross Perot said. "It has become clear that an investment in UT Southwestern produces major progress."

In 1988 the Perot Foundation pledged \$20 million over 10 years to UT Southwestern with the goal of accelerating the research progress of its leading faculty, recruiting new faculty of the top caliber and creating a world-class training program for young physician-scientists.

"The Perot gift set out specific performance targets to be achieved over the projected 10-year period of the award, with the understanding that the funds would not be renewed if the goals were not met," UT Southwestern President Dr. Kern Wildenthal said. "We accepted that challenge, and in just eight years all the original goals were achieved."

"The immediate result is this exceptional vote-of-confidence from the Perot Foundation in committing new support at a higher level two years ahead of schedule. The ultimate result will be the discovery of new and improved medical treatments for countless people."

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In each of the next eight years, the Perot Foundation will make contributions of almost \$3 million per year to UT Southwestern.

The Medical Scientist Training Program will receive funding for full scholarships to 40 aspiring physician-scientists. The rigorous program takes six years or more and culminates in the award of both M.D. and Ph.D. degrees. Fifteen students are accepted into the program each year.

"Thanks to the original Perot Foundation grant in 1988, UT Southwestern's Medical Scientist Training Program has achieved its optimum size ahead of schedule, and it has done so while attracting and enrolling the very best applicants to the nation's most competitive dual-degree programs," said Dr. William Neaves, Southwestern Medical School dean. "The Perot Foundation's generous renewal of this grant will enable more of the country's most promising medical scientist candidates to enter careers in biomedical science under the guidance of UT Southwestern's superb faculty."

The Perot Foundation also will support an innovative postdoctoral training program for outstanding fellows who already have completed their medical training.

"Medical science is more exciting than ever, exploding with advances and opportunities," said UT Southwestern Nobel laureate Dr. Michael Brown, who will serve as director of the Medical Scientist Training Program. "By its gift, the Perot Foundation acknowledges that, in order to attract the most promising scientists of the future, we must offer them the chance to pursue the mysteries of science debt-free. They will pay us all back by being better doctors, scientists and teachers."

The Perot Foundation also will continue to support the research of a group of more than 50 scientists, including 12 senior investigators, in the Erik Jonsson Center for Research in Molecular Genetics and Human Disease, led by Brown and Dr. Joseph Goldstein, winners of the 1985 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. The center's research targets heart and vascular disease, brain function and cancer.

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