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Petie and Art Hewett support ALS research at UT Southwestern, honor Dr. Albert Roberts with \$72,000 gift

DALLAS – Nov. 6, 2008 – Real estate developer Art Hewett and his wife, Petie, have given \$72,000 to Southwestern Medical Foundation to foster research at UT Southwestern Medical Center in amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease. The gift was given in honor of the couple’s physician and treasured friend, Dr. Albert Roberts, professor of internal medicine and one of the country’s foremost advocates of patient care at academic centers.

The gift establishes the Helen B. and Arthur E. Hewett Fund to Support Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) Research in Honor of Dr. Albert D. Roberts, M.D. In 2004 Mrs. Hewett was diagnosed with ALS, a rare neurological disorder that attacks the motor cells in the spinal cord and brain.

“Petie and I have enormous respect for Dr. Roberts, who has been our internist for 40 years,” Mr. Hewett said. “Al truly has been our medical quarterback in referring us, whenever a need arises, to the appropriate specialist.

“Petie and I know firsthand the challenges of living with ALS, and we are very aware of how much work there is to be done to find a cure. We felt this was a golden opportunity to do what we can to support the unique and substantial ALS research being done at UT Southwestern, while honoring our dear friend.”

Mr. Hewett earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Southern Methodist University in 1957 and, after serving three-and-a-half years as an officer in the U.S. Navy, a law degree from SMU in 1965. In 1970 the Dallas native became a founding partner of Hewett, Johnson, Swanson and Barbee, which 10 years later had become the largest law firm in Dallas.

Mr. Hewett left his law practice in 1980 to become a commercial real estate developer. He has served on the boards of numerous banks, corporations, and educational and civic organizations, including the Board of Visitors of UT Southwestern University Hospitals and Clinics.

Mrs. Hewett, also a native of Dallas, attended Loretto Heights College in Denver and UT Austin. She is a homemaker and continues to support other charities with her time and gifts. The Hewetts have been married for 49 years.

“The spirit behind this generous gift is particularly wonderful because it honors one of the

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medical center's finest physicians and supports one of medical science's greatest challenges – finding a cure for ALS,” said Dr. Daniel K. Podolsky, president of UT Southwestern. “The Hewetts have shown continued loyalty to the Dallas community, and their commitment to helping others who are battling this devastating disease is to be commended.”

Dr. Kern Wildenthal, president of Southwestern Medical Foundation, added: “We are very honored that Petie and Art have chosen to support such a meaningful cause. They are exceptionally kind people who are committed to improving the lives of others.”

Dr. Roberts earned a bachelor's degree from Southern Methodist University before graduating from UT Southwestern Medical School in 1954. He received his residency training in internal medicine and completed a fellowship in nephrology at Parkland Memorial Hospital in 1960 after a two-year stint as a U.S. Army ward physician at Fort Dix, N.J.

He maintained a private practice in Dallas for 15 years before joining the UT Southwestern faculty in 1975 as associate dean for clinical affairs and professor of internal medicine. Dr. Roberts returned to private practice for a time before rejoining the medical center's faculty in 1991 as a professor of internal medicine and associate dean for practice development. After a brief retirement in 2004 Dr. Roberts returned to maintain a part-time consulting practice in internal medicine. He is a Master of the American College of Physicians, as well as a laureate of the American College of Physicians' Texas Academy Chapter.

“I am extremely honored and pleased that Art and Petie are not only supporting such important research, but that they are doing so in my honor,” Dr. Roberts said. “They are great friends and truly wonderful people, and I'm thrilled that they've decided to aid such a critical and promising area of research.”

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