

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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FORMER FACULTY MEMBER, FRIENDS ENDOW FIRST PROFESSORSHIP AT SOUTHWESTERN ALLIED HEALTH SCIENCES SCHOOL

DALLAS – March 22, 2000 – Women had limited options when Doris Porter was contemplating a career during World War II. But an overheard conversation raised her curiosity about physical therapy and eventually led her to found the Department of Physical Therapy at UT Southwestern Allied Health Sciences School in 1970.

Today Porter is making sure people have unlimited opportunities to realize their potential by giving \$25,000 to help establish the first endowed professorship at the allied health school. Friends and professional colleagues donated an additional \$75,000 to create the Doris E. Porter Professorship, which will provide support for research and instructional activities at the allied health school.

“I want to express my appreciation to all the individuals who contributed to this endowment because this would not have been possible without their support and commitment,” said Porter.

Porter recalls the first time she heard the term physical therapy – known as physiotherapy then. She was in a local meat market and overheard a clerk talking about sending his daughter to physical therapy school. At that moment, Porter said, “I just knew that I wanted to be a physical therapist, too. I made it a project to find out as much as I could about this profession.”

Dr. Gordon Green, dean of the allied health school, said it is wonderful to have the allied health school recognized in this way. “The allied health school will certainly bask in the reflected glory of both Doris Porter and the outstanding physical therapy program that she nurtured during its inception.

“We are grateful to Ms. Porter, and to her many colleagues, for creating this professorship, which recognizes the achievements of the past while supporting the work of the future.”

Dr. Patricia Winchester, current chairwoman of physical therapy, will hold the professorship.

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“The endowment will serve as a testament to Doris’ forethought and commitment to her profession,” Winchester said. “It will also keep the Department of Physical Therapy in the forefront by stimulating additional research in the field.”

Winchester’s research interests involve training disabled people on a weight-suspended ambulation system, which uses a special treadmill and a harness that partially suspends body weight. This therapy is helping some individuals gain mobility and independence.

Winchester received her doctorate in anatomy and cell biology from UT Southwestern in 1991 and has led the department since 1994.

Porter, who has served on numerous offices and committees for the American Physical Therapy Association, understands the impact research can have in attracting students and additional faculty.

“Research is necessary to keep up with medical advancements, and it is also vital to the enhancement of an academic program,” she said. “I have had a very rewarding career, and I hope that the Department of Physical Therapy will benefit from this endowment.”

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