

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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RESEARCH TO PREVENT BLINDNESS FOUNDATION AWARDS MORE THAN \$285,000 TO UT SOUTHWESTERN EYE RESEARCHERS

DALLAS — February 27, 1995 — Research to Prevent Blindness has awarded \$285,000 in grants to three UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas ophthalmologists to further their scientific and clinical investigations.

A \$100,000 grant was awarded to Dr. James McCulley, chairman of ophthalmology. McCulley, director of the Theodore and Mary Beasley Laboratory for Ocular Surface Research and holder of the David Bruton Jr. Chair in Ophthalmology, has received an annual grant for the past 13 years. Last year's grant was for \$80,000.

"This is equivalent to getting the *Good Housekeeping* Seal of Approval," McCulley said. "Only about half of the ophthalmology departments in U.S. medical schools have qualified for this award — approximately 60."

McCulley's gift will offset administrative costs associated with federal research projects. "This grant offers supplemental support for federal funds, which traditionally are cut by 8 percent for administrative costs," he said. "The Research to Prevent Blindness grant also allows us to conduct the first phases of research, the results of which we use to demonstrate the need for additional federal or philanthropic support."

Another grant was awarded to Dr. Susanna Soon-Chun Park, assistant professor of ophthalmology. She received the group's Career Development Award, which is accompanied by annual funding of \$40,000 for the next four years. Park is studying the role of

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transforming growth factor-beta (TGF-B) in the development of intraocular melanomas. TGF-B appears to enhance the growth of highly malignant melanoma cells in the eye while inhibiting the growth of less-malignant cells. Park's research has implications in the treatment of uveal melanoma, a cancer of the eye common in adults.

Dr. Steven E. Wilson, assistant professor of ophthalmology, was awarded the \$25,000 Research Manpower Award for 1994-95. He is a past recipient of Research to Prevent Blindness' William and Mary Greve International Research Scholar Award. Wilson's lab is studying the role of growth factors and their receptors in the maintenance and healing of wounds on the eye's surface. Through genetic manipulation of the eye's cells, Wilson aims to develop new methods to facilitate wound healing after eye surgery and to treat disabling and potentially blinding conditions, such as dry eye.

Research to Prevent Blindness, one of the world's foremost organizations supporting eye research, was founded in 1960 and has provided more than \$125 million to medical institutions throughout the United States for research into eye diseases that result in blindness.

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