

news THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER AT DALLAS

southwestern medical school - graduate school of biomedical sciences - school of allied health sciences

January 14, 1977

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******Dr. Phala Helm appointed chairman of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at UT Southwestern Medical School.*

DALLAS--Dr. Phala A. Helm, leader in the development of nationally-recognized cancer and burns rehabilitation programs here, has been named permanent chairman of the Department of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical School.

The appointment, effective Jan. 1, was announced by Southwestern Dean Dr. Frederick Bonte, who said:

"In Dr. Helm, the department has acquired as its permanent leader an enterprising physician who has developed the cancer rehabilitation and burns rehabilitation programs which have received nationwide acclaim."

A Southwestern faculty member since 1970, Dr. Helm had been acting chairman since 1972.

Under her leadership, a broader concept of physical medicine has evolved at the school, noted Dr. Charles C. Sprague, president of the UT Health Science Center at Dallas, Southwestern's parent institution.

"Dr. Helm has been instrumental in creating a broad-gauged program in rehabilitation embracing a variety of therapies, to meet not only physical needs but emotional problems, occupational adjustments and other essential aspects of the recovery process," he said.

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first add helm appointment

This "team" approach has particularly benefited patients recovering in Parkland Memorial Hospital's famed burns center, and area cancer patients who are being helped in an innovative demonstration program to recover from physical and psychological consequences of their disease.

The latter program, which has assisted some 400 cancer patients during the past two and a half years, has been cited as a model effort by its sponsoring agency, the National Cancer Institute.

Based at the medical school and Parkland, the rehabilitation program utilizes a team of specialists ranging from physicians and nurses to speech and occupational therapists, psychologists and rehabilitation counselors to deal in concert with the spectrum of problems encountered by the cancer patient.

During her acting chairmanship Dr. Helm also expanded and upgraded existing therapies for burns patients, establishing a clinic and putting together a similar "team" for helping victims achieve maximum recovery with minimum disability in the crucial period following injury.

This work, in cooperation with the Parkland burns unit director, Southwestern surgeon Dr. Charles Baxter, has also been given wide recognition.

In addition to the medical school chairmanship, Dr. Helm is chief of physical medicine and rehabilitation services at Parkland. She also is assistant professor of physical therapy in the UT center's School of Allied Health Sciences.

Dr. Helm studied at North Texas State and Texas Christian Universities, receiving a B.S. degree from TCU in 1957. She graduated from the Grady Vaughn School of physical therapy at Dallas' Baylor University Medical Center in 1958, and worked as a therapist for a time before entering medical school. She received her M.D. degree from Southwestern in 1966. After completing internship and residency at Baylor in 1970, she joined Southwestern's faculty as an instructor. She now holds the rank of associate professor.

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second add helm appointment

Specializing in therapeutic techniques for treatment of burns, Dr. Helm has published and lectured by invitation in this field, including a presentation last June at an international symposium in Limburg, Germany.

Her many memberships include the American Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine, American Burn Association, American Congress of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and the Dallas Area Rehabilitation Association. She is a consultant at Presbyterian Hospital of Dallas.

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