

News

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****UT Southwestern Medical School
appoints Dr. Rody Cox dean

DALLAS -- Rody Cox, a well-known geneticist, researcher and clinician, has been selected as the new dean of UT Southwestern Medical School.

In making the announcement, Dr. Kern Wildenthal, president of The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas, said: "Dr. Cox is a superb scientist and an able administrator. He is an excellent choice as the leader who will bring Southwestern Medical School to the next pinnacle of achievement."

Cox is professor and vice chairman of the Department of Medicine at Case Western Reserve University and chief of medical services at the Cleveland Veterans Administration Medical Center. He will assume duties at Southwestern on May 1.

"I have a tremendous enthusiasm for Southwestern, and I want to be there to make my contribution to its further development," declared Cox.

"Southwestern is one of the pre-eminent institutions nationally," observed Cox. "I think my input will be to create a balance between the continuing growth of the basic sciences and research areas and the further development of clinical activities. It is important that these developments be viewed as complementary elements."

The new dean said that, with completion of University Hospital, there will be a need to develop "clinical activities that extend into the referral practice of tertiary care." (University Hospital, a 160-bed research and teaching facility scheduled for completion in 1990, will be staffed by the faculty of UT Southwestern.)

"We need to recruit a type of physician--an academic physician--who is interested in referral practice, spending 75 percent of his time practicing medicine and 25 percent teaching and doing clinical research. This is a new development, and these individuals are extremely important for the success of the school as it develops and expands. They will make a very significant contribution," Cox concluded.

Southwestern Medical School, one of three components of the UT Southwestern Medical Center, was founded in 1943 and today has an enrollment of around 800 medical students. With two faculty members winning the 1985 Nobel Prize in Medicine, it is considered among the top schools in the nation.

Cox was director of the Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP) at New York University from 1967 to 1979 and since 1980 has been co-director of the MSTP at Case Western Reserve. (Philanthropist Ross Perot recently singled out the MSTP at

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UT Southwestern to receive a large part of his \$20 million gift to the school.)

After receiving his M.D. degree from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in 1952, Cox did an internship and residencies at the University of Michigan and University of Pennsylvania. He then did graduate study in microbiology at Pennsylvania and was a research associate in genetics at the University of Glasgow. Cox held academic appointments at the University of Michigan, University of Pennsylvania and was director of the Division of Genetics at NYU. He was a career scientist with the Health Research Council of the City of New York.

Cox was a member of the Metabolism Study Section and later served as chairman of the Genetics Study Section and the Mammalian Genetics Study section of the National Institutes of Health. He was a member of the Panel on Clinical Sciences of the National Research Council.

Cox replaces Dr. William Neaves, who has served as interim dean of the medical school since former dean Wildenthal was named president of the UT Southwestern Medical Center.

When he comes to the Dallas medical center, Cox intends to continue research in the area of inborn errors of amino acid metabolism. At Case Western Reserve, Cox collaborated with David Chaung, Ph.D., Department of Biochemistry, to study the molecular mechanisms leading to dysfunctions of a multienzyme complex in maple syrup urine disease (MSUD) and of a novel bifunctional enzyme in familial hyperlysinemias.

"In a sense, we have a unique field as there are not many studies done with deficiencies of these complex mitochondrial enzyme systems," he said.

"MSUD is the second most prominent disorder of amino acid metabolism (next to phenylketonuria), resulting in neurological damage and mental retardation in children. Chuang's group has recently cloned genes for various subunits of the enzyme complex affected in MSUD. We are currently trying to restore the function of the mutant enzyme complex in MSUD cells by replacing the affected gene with a normal one and seeing if the expressed and imported protein will assemble with other normal protein components to form an active complex inside the mitochondrion," Cox continued.

Cox and his wife, Jane, have three children and two grandchildren. The elder daughter, Shelley, is a pediatric nurse-clinician in Denver. The son, Rody, is a geologist and works in the Amazon helping develop a major mining operation for a Canadian company. Younger daughter Sue Ellen is a junior medical student at Case Western Reserve.

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NOTE: The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas comprises Southwestern Medical School, Southwestern Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and Southwestern Allied Health Sciences School.