

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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Wikert Group creates fellowship at UT Southwestern for physicians from developing countries

DALLAS – May 4, 2004 – A \$250,000 gift from the Wikert Group, a Dallas investment firm, will fund fellowships at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas to train physicians from developing countries in the latest research and treatments of infectious liver diseases.

The Wikert Fellowship, directed by Dr. William Lee, professor of internal medicine at UT Southwestern, aims to help doctors from Third World countries combat significant threats to global public health, such as AIDS and viral hepatitis.

“Developing countries have very few resources to tackle diseases like hepatitis B and hepatitis C,” Dr. Lee said. “Great strides have been made in finding new diagnostic tests and new therapies in the developed world, but the treatments we now have are typically very expensive. We hope to find new methods of providing cutting-edge diagnostic tools and treatment for the developing world that are affordable as well.

“This wonderful gift from the Wikerts provides an incredibly valuable cross-cultural experience for everyone involved. Not only does the fellowship help us share the best of Western medicine with developing countries, it gives us an opportunity to learn about patient care from an entirely different perspective.”

The Wikert gift will make possible five yearlong fellowships. Dr. Opio Christopher Kenneth of the Mulago International Hospital in Kampala, Uganda, has been named the first Wikert Fellow.

“It’s exciting to imagine the possibilities of what this sharing of information might accomplish,” said James Wikert, founder and chief executive officer of the Wikert Group. “After talking with Dr. Lee, I realized what a critical need there is for qualified physicians in these developing countries – clinicians who are prepared to battle these diseases with very few resources. We’re pleased to help UT Southwestern bring these doctors – all dedicated, intelligent people at the top of their profession – here to Texas to share their knowledge and take new skills

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back to their countries.”

Mr. Wikert owns and manages more than a dozen aviation and real estate-related companies in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. He holds a master of business administration from Southern Methodist University, is on the board of directors of RKO Pictures and is involved in a variety of professional and civic organizations.

He lives in Dallas with his wife, Alinda Hill, who has served on the boards of directors of Zale Lipshy University Hospital and the Friends of the Center for Human Nutrition at UT Southwestern. She also is past president of the board of Planned Parenthood of North Texas.

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