Celebrating the past and creating the future

From its humble start as a small wartime medical college, UT Southwestern has evolved into a premier academic medical center and one of the world’s largest. In celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2018, the Medical Center recognized significant milestones leading to its success, initiatives keeping it at the forefront of innovation, and new growth opportunities on the horizon.

UT Southwestern celebrates 75 years of excellence

It was a birthday bash 75 years in the making. In January 2018, UT Southwestern began a yearlong anniversary celebration that honored the foundational growth of the past, looked ahead to the future, and recognized the many UT Southwestern contributions that have changed the course of science and medicine.

Throughout the year, the campus was emblazoned with signage commemorating UT Southwestern's 75th anniversary. The Medical District was decorated with anniversary banners, while faculty, employees, and students donned T-shirts and badge reels with the University's signature anniversary logo. Billboards in the Southwestern Medical District commended UT Southwestern for “A Legacy of Excellence,” while a website dedicated to anniversary stories, videos, and photos appeared at 75.utsouthwestern.edu, chronicling events of a historic and inspiring year.

“This marked an exciting moment and significant milestone in UT Southwestern's illustrious history,” said Dr. Daniel K. Podolsky, President of UT Southwestern, who holds the Philip O'Bryan Montgomery, Jr., M.D. Distinguished Presidential Chair in Academic Administration, and the Doris and Bryan Wildenthal Distinguished Chair in Medical Science. “Throughout the year, we celebrated the foundational moments that have made it possible for us to transform medicine in today’s environment, when scientific knowledge and medical innovation are expanding exponentially.”

Indeed, UT Southwestern has come a very long way since its founding in May 1943 as Southwestern Medical College, a small wartime medical school. Today’s UT Southwestern is an expansive and renowned academic medical center that reaches beyond Dallas and includes hospital- and clinic-based patient care, biomedical research, and two additional degree-granting schools: the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and the School of Health Professions.

The many accomplishments of UT Southwestern since its establishment in the 1940s – and the promise of the next 75 years – were celebrated in 2018 with events big and small.

In May, an official campus celebration took place on Seldin Plaza. The heart of the campus was electric with the energy of thousands of staff, faculty, students, and friends – many clad in cheery, bright blue T-shirts commemorating UT Southwestern's 75th anniversary. Attendees enjoyed music from the Transactivators, a band whose members include faculty and staff.

The anniversary year concluded with a two-day signature event Nov. 2-3: The first day, UT Southwestern friends, faculty, and staff attended a future-focused evening program, followed by a lively reception on McDermott Plaza. The next day, Science Saturday, families
and children of all ages experienced a UT Southwestern version of the future of academic medicine.

So what’s next? Stay tuned for the next chapter of the UT Southwestern story, which is expected to bring even greater accomplishments in promoting health and a healthy society to enable achievement of full human potential.

A montage of early UTSW imagery

1945 Southwestern Medical College initially was housed in prefabricated plywood buildings on Oak Lawn Avenue, behind the old Parkland Hospital.

1950 Medical students study in the converted Army barracks located on Oak Lawn Avenue.

1969 A surgical team is led by Dr. Watts R. Webb, then-Chairman of Southwestern’s Division of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery and a leader in heart transplantation at the time.

1976 Bruce McCarty, an electron microscope technician in Pathology, at one of the Medical Center’s “scanning scopes.”

1986 Dr. Jeffrey Weinreb reviews MRI images.
75th anniversary signature event celebrates accomplishments, explores frontiers of medical research

Key supporters and North Texas leaders gathered to celebrate UT Southwestern’s 75-year history and look toward its future at a signature event held Nov. 2 in the Tom and Lula Gooch Auditorium. The event featured a keynote speech from Dr. Richard Lifton, President of Rockefeller University, and a panel discussion among UT Southwestern faculty moderated by Dr. Lifton.

The event’s primary goal was to highlight UT Southwestern’s mission of the past and the future – reaching the previously unreachable through education, research, and patient care. Three videos, “Illuminating the Next Era,” “The Future of Medicine,” and “Possibilities,” juxtaposed UT Southwestern’s past and present.

UT Southwestern President Dr. Daniel K. Podolsky greeted attendees by reviewing the institution’s evolution from small shacks to the present: “Since its founding, UT Southwestern’s mission has been to improve the health of individuals and the health of our community. In this anniversary year, we have taken some time to reconsider how we articulate that – it is not that our mission has changed, it is that we now see it in a broader context,” said Dr. Podolsky, who holds the Philip O’Bryan Montgomery, Jr., M.D. Distinguished Presidential Chair in Academic Administration, and the Doris and Bryan Wildenthal Distinguished Chair in Medical Science.

In his keynote remarks, Dr. Lifton praised UT Southwestern for its relationship with the community: “UT Southwestern is one of my favorite institutions to visit, both because of the extraordinary colleagues I get to interact with, but also because I think it has one of the most special and amazing relationships between a community and an academic medical institution that exists anywhere on the planet.”

The “Game Changers in Medicine” panel featured UT Southwestern faculty Dr. Robert Collins, Professor of Internal Medicine and Director of the Hematologic Malignancies/ Blood and Marrow Transplant Program and the Combined Adult/Pediatric Stem Cell Transplant Program and holder of the Sydney and J.L. Huffines Distinguished Chair in Cancer Research in Honor of Eugene Frenkel, M.D., and The H. Lloyd and Willye V. Skaggs Professorship in Medical Research; Dr. Gaudenz Danuser, Chair of the Lyda Hill Department of Bioinformatics and holder of the Patrick E. Haggerty Distinguished Chair in Basic Biomedical Science; Dr. Lora Hooper, Chair of the Department of Immunology and holder of the Jonathan W. Uhr, M.D. Distinguished Chair in Immunology, and a Nancy Cain and Jeffrey A. Marcus
West Campus building brings clinics and academic spaces together

When West Campus Building 3 opened in August, its significance far exceeded the fact that it was the 18th campus building to rise in order to keep pace with UT Southwestern’s growth over 75 years.

For the first time, clinics and their corresponding academic offices were brought together in a move designed to expedite the translation of clinical science to the best medical care available. Also inside, a state-of-the-art Simulation Center enables medical students, residents, fellows, and UT Southwestern Scholar in Medical Research, in Honor of Dr. Bill S. Vowell; Dr. Eric Olson, Chair of the Department of Molecular Biology and holder of the Pogue Distinguished Chair in Research on Cardiac Birth Defects; The Robert A. Welch Distinguished Chair in Science, and the Annie and Willie Nelson Professorship in Stem Cell Research; and Dr. Sandra Schmid, Chair of the Department of Cell Biology and holder of the Cecil H. Green Distinguished Chair in Cellular and Molecular Biology. The panel highlighted the advances UT Southwestern is making in the use of technology to pursue research breakthroughs.

Dr. Olson shared one such advance: “I feel that we are in a truly unique moment in human history, because we know not only the sequence of the human genome, but we can do something about it. This is through a revolutionary technology called CRISPR, which makes it possible to identify even a single letter in the 3 billion letters of the human genome and to correct it – and to do it with high efficiency and high accuracy,” he said. “Through this technology, we’ve cured Duchenne muscular dystrophy in mice, and then dogs. This, I believe, is just the beginning of an entire revolution in which we can correct the many mutations for the devastating diseases of mankind.”

Following the panel discussion, attendees enjoyed a reception with displays and interactive stations that included a Simulation Center manikin, an inflatable domed theater that played a film from the Peter O’Donnell Jr. Brain Institute, and virtual reality goggles that placed viewers in an operating room during a heart transplant.
Dr. John Warner, Executive Vice President for Health System Affairs, said he was proud of the building's core representation of three UT Southwestern missions – patient care, research, and education.

Dr. Warner said he's been reflecting on the new structures that have risen in the last several years – the William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital; the UT Southwestern Monty and Tex Moncrief Medical Center at Fort Worth; the William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital Radiation Oncology Building; and now the new West Campus Building 3.

Occupants of the new space include Urology, the Clinical Heart Center, Vascular Surgery, Otolaryngology, and Internal Medicine Subspecialties.

On levels four through eight, clinicians' academic offices are on one side of the floor and their clinics and staffs on the other, enabling them to move easily between the two. Other unique aspects of the nine-story building include two rooftop gardens and exterior walls of glass to draw in natural light – all designed to make the building a welcoming space for patients, staff, and learners.

“We asked patients to help us think through how the building is organized, how and where we could give it those special touches, and how we can make sure that the care they're receiving is the care that they want and need,” said Dr. Warner, who holds the Jim and Norma Smith Distinguished Chair for Interventional Cardiology, and the Nancy and Jeremy Halbreich, Susan and Theodore Strauss Professorship in Cardiology.

“The voice of the patient has been very prominent in all of our projects.”

At the dedication ceremony, UT Southwestern President Dr. Daniel K. Podolsky emphasized the landmark event.

“We are experiencing great momentum. This building is necessary because more and more patients have come to trust us with their care,” said Dr. Podolsky, who holds the Philip O’Bryan Montgomery, Jr., M.D. Distinguished Presidential Chair in Academic Administration, and the Doris and Bryan Wildenthal Distinguished Chair in Medical Science.

“This is the first phase of the continual revitalization that will go on over the next 15 to 20 years, making this a hub for outpatient care and continuing education at UT Southwestern.”

The opening of the 305,000-square-foot clinical and academic building, called WCB3 for short, is part of a longer-range plan to add more than 1 million square feet for outpatient clinical care, medical education and training, and academic offices. The goal is to create an integrated campus at UT Southwestern that connects seamlessly with the broader Southwestern Medical District. The $875 million West Campus Facilities Master Plan will unfold in five phases over 20 years.

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In its 75-year history, UT Southwestern has grown from a small wartime medical college into a premier academic medical center that is one of the world’s largest. Today, UT Southwestern’s clinical footprint spreads across multiple buildings on the main Dallas campus and beyond, including new clinical centers in North Texas. Highlighted here are two major capital projects currently underway.

William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital expansion

- Years ahead of original projections – and less than three years after opening – patient volume levels led UT Southwestern to initiate construction of a third tower. The expansion project began in September 2017 and is expected to be completed in 2020.

- The 30-month construction project will add 290 beds to house services that are now delivered at Zale Lipshy University Hospital, making Clements University Hospital the clinical site of neuroscience programs associated with the Peter O’Donnell Jr. Brain Institute.

- When completed in 2020, the new tower will consolidate all UT Southwestern inpatient services in one facility, improving the quality of hospital care and services.

- Other benefits will include eliminating redundancies in infrastructure, staffing, and inventory; positioning Clements University Hospital as a destination, high-acuity hospital for the region; and preparing UTSW for referrals from growth of the Southwestern Health Resources network.

UT Southwestern Medical Center at Frisco

- This 120,000-square-foot medical office building, part of a new medical complex that includes Texas Health Hospital Frisco, is scheduled to open by the end of 2019.

- An extension of the Peter O’Donnell Jr. Brain Institute will be part of a multispecialty clinic in the building. Besides various surgical specialties, clinical services will include physical medicine, rehabilitation, therapy, and dermatology, as well as pediatric specialty services in ophthalmology, otolaryngology, and gastroenterology.

- The overall $270 million project, which includes the hospital, is the latest collaboration between UT Southwestern and Texas Health Resources. Medical staff at the hospital will include UT Southwestern faculty, local independent physicians, and Texas Health Physicians Group providers.

- The Frisco project will mark the fifth UT Southwestern regional medical center, joining others in Las Colinas, Park Cities, Richardson/Plano, and Fort Worth.
State-of-the-art Simulation Center expands breadth and depth of caregiver skills

One of the most advanced medical training facilities in the country opened last year when UT Southwestern unveiled a $40 million state-of-the-art Simulation Center inside West Campus Building 3.

The Sim Center, occupying the building’s second and third floors, includes six inpatient simulation rooms, 20 standardized patient rooms, five high-fidelity suites, a multipurpose skills lab to accommodate 96 learners, virtual reality and robotic suites, and other high-tech environments. The facility’s simulators closely replicate diseases and conditions that providers encounter in the real world and are used to train medical students, residents, fellows, practicing physicians, and learners from the School of Health Professions, among others.

The facility enables UT Southwestern to significantly expand the number and types of simulation programs to give learners more opportunities to refine their skills.
The three-year expansion planning has been led by Dr. Charles Ginsburg, Vice Provost and Senior Associate Dean for Education, Professor of Pediatrics, and holder of the Marilyn R. Corrigan Distinguished Chair in Pediatric Research.

For third-year UTSW medical student Joo Lee, simulation training helps her prepare for real-world medical scenarios she will face after graduation.

"Sometimes simulations can seem silly, but they teach more than you would expect. On my orientation day for Ob/Gyn, in front of me was a plastic version of a woman's hips to practice the delivery of a baby. The baby was plastic. The mother was plastic, and someone else had to manually push the baby through the plastic mother's hips. I practiced proper rotation maneuvers needed to deliver the baby, pretended to cut the umbilical cord, and imagined a crying baby," Ms. Lee said.

The next day, on her second day of rotation, Ms. Lee helped deliver a real baby. This time, the mom was screaming, a screen kept beeping, and a doctor asked her to help deliver the child.

"I performed exactly what I had learned the day before in the Simulation Center. Only this time, I actually heard the cries of a healthy baby girl," she said. "As someone who is not a passive learner, simulations at UT Southwestern have been transformative for my education and the proper care of my patients."

UT Southwestern has long used simulators in its training, but space has been a constraint. At the facility, 49,000 square feet is now available for simulation training versus 3,000 square feet previously.

Simulation technology also got a significant upgrade to enhance learning. The Sim Center includes high-fidelity manikins that replicate real-life physiology of patients in a variety of situations, such as mothers giving birth, neonatal resuscitation, emergency care of trauma victims, and support for critically ill patients. New equipment also includes a surgical robot and high-end laparoscopic systems for minimally invasive surgery, as well as a host of virtual reality simulators for ophthalmology, orthopedic, vascular, urology, endoscopy, and ultrasound procedures.

Simulators enable learners to expand the breadth and depth of their skills by offering opportunities for practice and mastery of learning in a standardized fashion. For patients, simulation training enhances the quality and safety of care they receive as providers are better prepared and more proficient during their training years and as they enter practice.