

UT SOUTHWESTERN MEDICAL CENTER



LEADERS IN CLINICAL  
EXCELLENCE AWARDS



DECEMBER 1, 2021



## Leaders in Clinical Excellence Awards Presentation Program Agenda

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### **Introductory Remarks from Dr. Daniel K. Podolsky**

### **Presentation of Awards by Drs. Daniel K. Podolsky, W. P. Andrew Lee, and John Warner**

#### **Rising Star Award**

- Emily H. Adhikari, M.D.
- Reuben Arasaratnam, M.D.
- Dharam J. Kumbhani, M.D., S.M.
- Nina Niu Sanford, M.D.

#### **Mentoring Award**

- Lina Chalak, M.D.
- Sunati Sahoo, M.D.
- William W. Turner Jr., M.D.

#### **Patient and Family Recognition Award**

- Becky Ennis, M.D.
- Nisa Kubiliun, M.D.
- Padmaja Reddy, M.D.

#### **Program Development Award**

- UT Southwestern Breast Reconstruction Program – Sumeet S. Teotia, M.D.; Nicholas T. Haddock, M.D.
- COVID-19 ICU Response Teams
  - CUH COVID ICU Response Team – Kristina L. Goff, M.D.; Corey D. Kershaw, M.D.
  - Parkland COVID Tactical Care Unit – Matt Leveno, M.D.
  - COVID ICU Communications Team – Kala Bailey, M.D.
  - Parkland COVID ICU Family Outreach Program – Padmaja Reddy, M.D.

#### **Institutional Service Award**

- James D. Griffin, M.D.
- Robin Novakovic-White, M.D.

#### **The President's Award for Diversity and Humanism in Clinical Care**

- Cindy Darnell Bowens, M.D., M.S.C.S.

#### **Patricia and William L. Watson Jr., M.D. Award for Excellence in Clinical Medicine**

- Diane M. Twickler, M.D., FACR



## Rising Star Award

This award recognizes exceptional early-career clinical faculty whose actions and activities consistently exemplify enthusiasm, commitment, professionalism, and leadership.



**Emily H. Adhikari, M.D.**

*Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology  
Division of Maternal-Fetal Medicine*

As a perinatologist providing highly specialized care to women experiencing complicated pregnancies, Dr. Adhikari is accustomed to responding to medical emergencies with exigency, empathy, and efficiency.

Her continued response since the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic began has positioned her as a difference-maker – not only at UT Southwestern, where she’s been a faculty member since 2018 – but on the state and national levels for her unique expertise on management of COVID-19 in pregnancy and the importance of vaccines as prevention tools.

When there was no data on the effects of the virus in pregnant women, Dr. Adhikari, along with a UTSW colleague, stepped up and started generating that data, reporting outcomes of the infection and educating widely about the benefits of vaccination.

Among her other roles, Dr. Adhikari is the Medical Director of Perinatal Infectious Diseases for the Parkland Health & Hospital System, where she conducts her clinical practice. ■



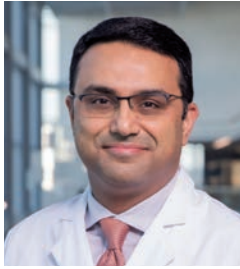
**Reuben Arasaratnam, M.D.**

*Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine  
Division of Infectious Diseases and Geographic Medicine*

An honors graduate of the University of Oxford Medical School in England with training at the University of North Carolina, Baylor College of Medicine, and Harvard University, Dr. Arasaratnam joined the Division of Infectious Diseases and Geographic Medicine as UTSW faculty in 2017, and in 2020 was appointed Assistant to the Medical Services Chief for Education at the VA North Texas Health Care System.

He is highly regarded for his clinical knowledge – particularly regarding infections in immunocompromised patients – and for his passion for teaching and education, expert presentations, capacity for scholarship, and above all, his commitment to patients. A nominator remarked: “In less than one year, he literally transformed the Dallas VA approach to the care of patients with nontuberculous mycobacterial infections.”

Dr. Arasaratnam serves on the American Board of Internal Medicine’s Infectious Diseases Item-Writing Task Force and the American College of Rheumatology’s Clinical Guidance Task Force on COVID-19 vaccinations. ■



**Dharam J. Kumbhani, M.D., S.M.**

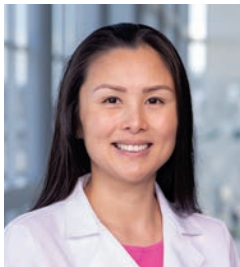
*Associate Professor of Internal Medicine  
Division of Cardiology*

Dr. Kumbhani joined UT Southwestern in 2012 after fellowships at Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital. He immediately started UTSW's transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) program and was instrumental in developing and expanding the percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) and structural heart programs on campus, all of which have since grown in stature and complexity.

An internationally recognized name in the field, Dr. Kumbhani became UT Southwestern's Section Chief of Interventional Cardiology in 2018. His clinical practice specializes in transradial coronary interventions, percutaneous valve technologies, and other adult structural heart disease interventions. He is also the Director of the Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory at UTSW's William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital.

Dr. Kumbhani has authored or co-authored more than 180 articles in peer-reviewed journals and serves as an Associate Editor for the journal *Circulation*.

In 2022, he will be the inaugural program director for UT Southwestern's new Structural Heart Disease Fellowship Program, which he helped envision. ■



**Nina Niu Sanford, M.D.**

*Assistant Professor of Radiation Oncology  
Chief of Gastrointestinal Radiation Oncology Service  
Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center*

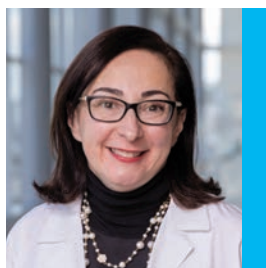
After completing her medical training at Harvard Medical School, Brigham and Women's Hospital, and Massachusetts General Hospital, Dr. Sanford joined the UTSW faculty in 2018. By the end of her first year, she was named a Dedman Family Scholar in Clinical Care and has since received additional research funding, both internally through the Simmons Cancer Center and externally through, among others, the prestigious Radiation Oncology Institute translational grant for her work on identifying biomarkers of response in anal cancer.

Committed to solving problems related to health inequities, Dr. Sanford joined the NRG Health Disparities Committee and chairs the NRG Pancreas Working Group for pancreatic cancer, a disease dramatically impacted by race and socioeconomic status. She is also currently serving a three-year term as an early career investigator for the National Cancer Institute Pancreatic Task Force.

She serves as an Associate Editor for the gastrointestinal section of the *International Journal of Radiation Oncology, Biology, Physics*, the premier journal in the radiation-oncology field. ■

## Mentoring Award

This award celebrates clinicians who demonstrate exceptional commitment and effectiveness as a mentor to health care providers.



**Lina Chalak, M.D.**

*Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry*

As the Associate Chief for Academic Affairs and Faculty Development in the Division of Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine, Director of the Fetal Neonatal Neurology Fellowship, and Founder and Medical Director of the Fetal Neurological Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (Neuro NICU) Program at UT Southwestern and Parkland, Dr. Chalak has ample opportunities for mentoring. And by all accounts, she makes the most of them.

Through the Neuro NICU program she developed, she encourages knowledge dissemination and allows trainees and junior faculty to be in the spotlight while presenting to an influential, multidisciplinary group. Her energy and enthusiasm flow into those around her.

When Dr. Chalak spends time editing manuscripts, reviewing presentations, or leading clinicians, it's not for recognition, according to one mentee, who added: "Her generosity of time and energy is an invaluable resource to our Division and the University." ■



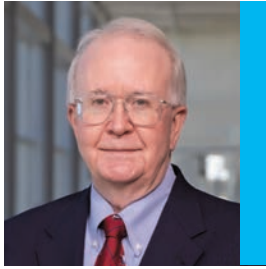
**Sunati Sahoo, M.D.**

*Professor of Pathology*

In her position as Director of Surgical Pathology at Clements University Hospital and Director of Breast Pathology Services at UT Southwestern and Parkland Memorial Hospital, Dr. Sahoo plays an important leadership role in the delivery of UTSW's pathology services and strives to provide the highest standards of care to her patients. She encourages those around her to do the same by serving as a trusted mentor and role model to many.

During her decade on the UT Southwestern faculty, Dr. Sahoo has built a reputation as someone with a strong desire to see others learn and succeed.

"I've witnessed Dr. Sahoo taking calls from former mentees who are now attending pathologists and helping them through difficult cases or diagnoses," says a mentee, who adds, "She is more than a faculty member and more than an educator – she is truly a mentor to trainees at all levels of experience." ■



**William W. Turner Jr., M.D.**

*Professor of Surgery*

*Division of Burn, Trauma, Acute, and Critical Care Surgery*

Over the course of his nearly 50-year career in medicine, Dr. Turner has been in the operating room thousands of times and mentored countless postgraduate trainees and students.

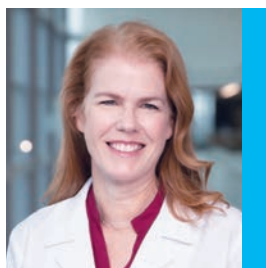
Dr. Turner was himself a surgical resident at UTSW, where he began his career in academic medicine. All told, with time away for military service and other positions, he has spent nearly 30 years on the UT Southwestern faculty, earning several awards for outstanding achievement in resident teaching and election to the Southwestern Academy of Teachers. During his many decades of service, he has cemented a reputation among generations of surgeons as a patient and skilled person who takes novice learners and helps turn them into knowledgeable, compassionate, and respected caregivers.

Dr. Turner holds the Alvin Baldwin, Jr. Chair in Surgery and the Carla and Paul Bass Professorship in Medical Education Honoring Charles C. Sprague, M.D. ■



## Patient and Family Recognition Award

This award honors clinical faculty whose dedication to the compassionate, respectful delivery of exceptional patient care has garnered the highest degree of patient trust and satisfaction.



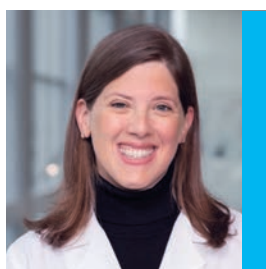
**Becky Ennis, M.D.**

*Associate Professor of Pediatrics*

As a neonatologist and the Medical Director of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Clements University Hospital, Dr. Ennis not only provides highly specialized care for infants who need medical attention after delivery, but also supports worried families who often are desperate for information and reassurance.

Colleagues say that whether she is staying late to spend more time updating parents or interacting with her multidisciplinary team to ensure everyone's voice is heard, Dr. Ennis always makes certain her patients receive the best care possible.

Dr. Ennis began her career as a registered nurse in the Division of Pediatric Hematology and Oncology at Children's Medical Center. Her service there inspired her to pursue a medical degree. She went back to school at UT Southwestern and obtained her M.D. in 2000 and continued subspecialty training in Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine. Dr. Ennis joined the UTSW Pediatrics faculty in 2007 and has made an indelible impact in the NICU with her dedication to the family-centered delivery of care. ■



**Nisa Kubiliun, M.D.**

*Associate Professor of Internal Medicine*

*Division of Digestive and Liver Diseases*

Dr. Kubiliun holds many significant, high-level positions at UT Southwestern – Clinical Chief of the Division of Digestive and Liver Diseases, Medical Director of Endoscopy Services, Director of the multidisciplinary Pancreatic Cancer Prevention Program, and co-Director of the Cancer Genetics Program, to name a few – and in all roles she is lauded by patients and colleagues alike for her warmth, empathy, and exceptional care.

"Dr. Kubiliun is an outstanding listener and exudes compassion," one nominator wrote. "She has the ability to accurately diagnose not just the patient's illness but what their illness means to them, what they are afraid of, and what questions they have. Her clinical communication is masterful. Her clinical knowledge and technical excellence are of paramount importance to her patients and their loved ones."

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Dr. Kubiliun has been recognized with the UT Southwestern Lyman E. Bilhartz, M.D., Teaching Award. She was also selected to the American Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy's Leadership, Education, and Development (LEAD) program, among other honors. ■

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**Padmaja Reddy, M.D.**

*Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine  
Palliative Medicine Section*

As a specialist in palliative medicine, Dr. Reddy is uncommonly skilled at caring for patients and their family members in what is often the darkest time of their lives.

Early in the pandemic, in conjunction with her critical care colleagues, other members of the palliative care team, and many physician volunteers, Dr. Reddy created the COVID ICU Family Outreach Program at Parkland Memorial Hospital to offer daily virtual updates to the families of every single COVID ICU patient.

"In addition, Dr. Reddy maintained her role as palliative care attending, providing advanced care planning and guidance for hundreds of families navigating the critical illness and, sometimes, the death of a family member," a nominator explained. "It is hard to overstate the cumulative good that Dr. Reddy has provided to the community when considering the families she touched directly and through every volunteer in her program."

Dr. Reddy is an alumna of UT Southwestern Medical School, where she also completed her internship, residency, and fellowship in Hospice and Palliative Medicine. ■

## Program Development Award

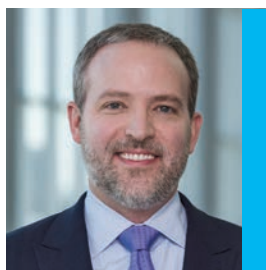
This award celebrates the innovation and collaboration that are foundational to the success of UT Southwestern Medical Center. It recognizes a group of clinical faculty and staff who have worked together as a team to create, develop, and sustain an innovative program that significantly advances our ability to improve the care received by our patients.



### Breast Reconstruction Program

**Sumeet S. Teotia, M.D.**

*Professor of Plastic Surgery*



**Nicholas T. Haddock, M.D.**

*Associate Professor of Plastic Surgery and Orthopaedic Surgery*

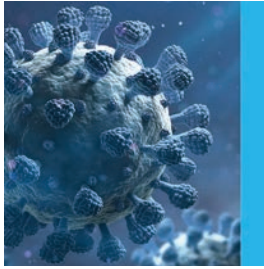
UT Southwestern's Breast Reconstruction Program is at the forefront of its field and is highly recognized for and committed to providing the highest quality of breast reconstruction care for patients who undergo mastectomy surgery.

Led by Drs. Teotia and Haddock, the program is distinguished not only by its sheer volume – with more than 2,100 microsurgical reconstructions over the past 10 years – but, just as importantly, by its quality with improved outcomes, lower length of stay following surgery, reduced dependency on opioids in recovery, and a 99% flap-based success rate.

"This program is at the forefront of reconstructive breast care," said one nominator. "Not only are the absolute number of reconstructions larger than other similar programs, but the innovative types of procedures distinguish them from all others."

The numbers certainly support the success of their efforts. Complications after breast microvascular reconstruction surgery have decreased by 73%. The standard length of stay after surgery has been reduced by 30%, and postoperative opioid use has fallen by 58%. In addition, Drs. Teotia and Haddock are co-pioneers of the "efficient DIEP flap" surgery that has reduced the average operative time for the procedure to just under four hours, versus nearly nine hours nationwide. The program has also achieved numerous other "firsts" in Texas and the world in various other flap-based reconstructive techniques.

The Breast Reconstruction Program advances and accelerates the science, technique, and art of this creative and difficult discipline, and the extensive experience and clinical innovations impact not only UTSW patients but patients worldwide. ■



## COVID-19 ICU Response Teams

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck in 2020, it was an unprecedented event that demanded immediate response from faculty and staff at both William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital and Parkland Memorial Hospital.

New teams and processes were forged in record time, and the critical work began.

To see the massive effort come together was to witness the personification of UTSW's core values – excellence, innovation, teamwork, and compassion – writ large.

UTSW is honored to bestow a Program Development Award to the COVID-19 ICU Response Teams – an amalgam of four different ICU programs and teams that were fundamental to our patient care response throughout the pandemic. They are:

### ■ **CUH COVID-19 ICU Team, led by**

**Kristina L. Goff, M.D.**

*Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology & Pain Management*

**and Corey D. Kershaw, M.D.**

*Associate Professor of Internal Medicine*

*Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine*

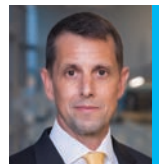


### ■ **Parkland COVID Tactical Care Unit, led by**

**Matt Leveno, M.D.**

*Associate Professor of Internal Medicine*

*Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine*



### ■ **Parkland COVID ICU Family Outreach Program, led by**

**Padmaja Reddy, M.D.**

*Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine*

*Palliative Medicine Section*



### ■ **COVID ICU Communications Team, led by**

**Kala Bailey, M.D.**

*Assistant Professor of Psychiatry*



These winners are representative of dozens of dedicated team members who continue to face the many challenges of COVID-19 with urgency and resolute commitment – both on the front lines and behind the scenes in vital supporting roles. They work tirelessly to save lives, and when lives are lost, they ease the burden for families with empathy and grace, supporting our community in profound ways in its time of need.

The COVID-19 ICU teams epitomize the word “multidisciplinary.” From the onset of the pandemic, the teams have created synergies to focus on the extraordinary and unexpected health care challenges. Unique from each other and from other programs across the state, the COVID-19 ICU at Clements University Hospital and the Tactical Care Unit at Parkland were created to address the health crisis in real time as it was still unfolding.

“The extremely high level of functioning for both of these ICUs, caring for our system’s most desperately ill patients, stems directly from these collaborative structures built into the framework of the ICU teams,” their nominator noted.

Of course, what makes structures truly effective are the people operating them. “All members of the COVID-19 ICUs place our patients above themselves, above their own families, and above most of their individual academic aspirations,” wrote their nominator. “The work has been physically and emotionally draining, and at this point, is still far from over.”

Early in the pandemic, UT Southwestern medical teams caring for critically ill COVID-19 patients quickly discovered that the patients and their family members had different and more specialized needs than most other hospitalized patients – notably, families could not see their loved ones or receive daily updates at the bedside as physicians rounded.

As the ICU teams became busier and less able to make daily calls to a growing number of COVID-19 families, the need for a streamlined communications plan for all COVID-19 ICU patients became clear. Thus, the idea for the COVID ICU Communications Team was born.

“Psychiatry and palliative care were a natural fit for the team, given the strong emphasis on communication in both specialties,” the group’s nominator wrote. “Both departments reworked schedules to provide one faculty member each at any given time for the Communications Team.

“The COVID ICU Communications Team provides innovative, high-quality – indeed, invaluable – support to patients, family, and staff,” the nominator continued. “ICU leadership is clear that it would not be able to provide the level of care required for COVID patients without the support of the Communications Team.”

When a similar need arose at Parkland, the COVID ICU Family Outreach Program was created.

“As part of this program, the families of every single critically ill patient affected by the pandemic at Parkland received daily updates on their critically ill loved one,” reported a Program Development Award nominator. “In addition, every single intubated COVID-positive patient benefited from palliative care expertise on interdisciplinary rounds every single day for over a year.”

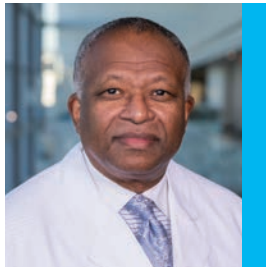
By using volunteers – including residents, fellows, and faculty – the program helped liberate the primary ICU team from both the time needed to communicate with families and the emotional burden associated with it.

“I am convinced it allowed our teams to continue working hard for months and to avoid a massive burnout,” one nominator wrote. “Resident volunteers learned to distill incredibly complex clinical scenarios into digestible and compassionate daily briefings. Overall, this program is innovative both in terms of clinical care and teaching,” said another nominator.

Every single member of these incredibly valuable teams is owed infinite gratitude. We salute both those honored today and all those who stepped up to play a vital part in UT Southwestern’s tremendous response to the most challenging health care crisis of our time. ■

## Institutional Service Award

This award honors clinical faculty who consistently share time and expertise in service to internal committees, task forces, and other institutional activities that make a significant impact on the care delivered to UT Southwestern patients.



**James D. Griffin, M.D.**

*Professor of Anesthesiology & Pain Management*

Dr. Griffin has built a record of institutional service at UTSW that is both expansive and distinguished. Over the course of three decades, first as a medical student and resident, and now as a faculty member, Dr. Griffin has served on nearly 50 committees and task forces at UTSW, including the Medical School Admissions Committee for 22 years, the Southwestern Academy of Teachers, and numerous hospital-based committees at Zale Lipshy Pavilion and Parkland Health & Hospital System. Most recently, he also served on the search committee for the new Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

In addition, Dr. Griffin has been a preeminent leader in addressing the global opioid crisis, becoming an early adopter and advocate of non-opioid analgesics in the practice of anesthesiology and pain management.

The Department of Anesthesiology & Pain Management has named its annual Medical Student Teaching Award in Dr. Griffin's honor. ■



**Robin Novakovic-White, M.D.**

*Associate Professor of Radiology and Neurology*

In her role as a neurointerventional radiologist, Dr. Novakovic-White exemplifies institutional service at all levels and has demonstrated a singular focus on improving the acute stroke care provided to patients at UT Southwestern and Parkland Health & Hospital System.

A former UTSW fellow and a faculty member since 2008, she is the current Quality Officer for the Peter O'Donnell Jr. Brain Institute and serves on several stroke-related committees on campus.

At UT Southwestern, Dr. Novakovic-White has participated in several quality improvement efforts, including the impending addition of automated stroke analysis software to facilitate triage. In addition, she has been involved in the creation of an electronic database of key metrics and in the writing and establishment of protocols for endovascular stroke treatment at the institutional and national levels. She has also led a task force to revise the North Central Texas regional stroke plan. ■

## The President's Award for Diversity and Humanism in Clinical Care

This award honors clinical faculty who exemplify the humanistic spirit of patient-centered medicine, both through clinical excellence and in outstanding compassion in the delivery of care.



**Cindy Darnell Bowens, M.D., M.S.C.S.**

*Associate Professor of Pediatrics*

As Medical Director of the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) at Children's Medical Center Dallas, Dr. Bowens is aware of the challenges underrepresented minorities can face in the health care environment and is a passionate advocate for every child and family in the PICU.

"Dr. Bowens respects the varied backgrounds of our many patients, and she seeks to understand each individual family's needs," says Jessica Moreland, M.D., Chief of the UTSW Division of Pediatric Critical Care. "In addition to being an exceptional clinician ... [she demonstrates] compassion for her patients, their families, and all of our colleagues and staff."

In advocating for families and enabling them to have a voice in team discussions, she is also alert to those for whom English is a secondary language and optimizes their experience by promoting consistent translation services and the presence of a translator on rounds.

Dr. Bowens also serves on a remarkable number of committees, including the Medical Admissions Committee, the Humanities Track Advisory Committee, the Pediatric Department Faculty Engagement Committee, and the Pediatric Faculty Advocacy Committee. ■







### Patricia and William L. Watson Jr., M.D. Award for Excellence in Clinical Medicine

This award recognizes a UT Southwestern clinician who exemplifies excellence in patient care and is a leader in advancing clinical innovation. It honors a faculty member who has had a profound impact on patients, students, trainees, and colleagues through the quality of his or her clinical work.



**Diane M. Twickler, M.D., FACR**

*Professor of Radiology and Obstetrics and Gynecology*

In her more than 30 years on the UT Southwestern faculty, Dr. Twickler has earned a reputation for outstanding patient care in two departments – Radiology and Obstetrics and Gynecology – while continuously advancing clinical innovations and improving the education of students, residents, fellows, and colleagues through hands-on clinical work.

In fact, one of her nominators for this year's Watson Award called Dr. Twickler both a "clinical rock star" and a "true triple threat" in both departments she serves: "Her clinical expertise, scientific output, and teaching skills are beyond comparison," the nominator wrote. "Furthermore, she is entrenched in the fabric of both departments and is looked to for her leadership, mentoring, and teaching."

A pioneer in fetal and gynecologic imaging, Dr. Twickler is known for bringing the concept of fetal MRI to North Texas. She serves not only as the Vice Chair at Large for the Department of Radiology and as the Medical Director of Obstetric and Gynecologic Ultrasound for the Parkland Health & Hospital System, but also as the point person for a consultation service relied upon throughout North Texas and adjacent states.

"Dr. Twickler provides patients and their families with the perfect blend of honesty and empathy to empower them to make the important, life-changing, and time-sensitive decisions frequently associated with the often-troublesome diagnoses," one nominator wrote.

A Distinguished Teaching Professor and holder of the Dr. Fred Bonte Professorship in Radiology, Dr. Twickler completed her medical degree and all of her subsequent postgraduate medical education at UT Southwestern.

Dr. Twickler is a Fellow of the American College of Radiology and a founding member of the Texas Radiological Society Foundation. ■

