Knapp Foundation Underwrites Construction of Research Laboratories

The Knapp Foundation, a Memphis-base philanthropic organization, had pledged one million dollars towards the constructions of basic research laboratories in the planned Institute of Ophthalmology. Mrs. Marcia Brasel, Mrs. Sandra Taylor, Ms. Ellen Douglas, Mrs. June Deutsch, and Ms. Lori Condo (in absentia), Board members of the Foundation presented their gift to Dr. Henry Herrod, Dean of the College of Medicine, and Dr. Ralph S. Hamilton, Professor of Ophthalmology on May 3, 2000.

The Knapp Foundation was established in 1990 by the late Anne and William Knapp, and has supported a wide variety of charitable causes. Mrs. Brasel and Mr. P. K. Seidman were co-trustees of the Foundation until Mr. Seidman's recent death. Mr. Seidman's personal ophthalmologist was Dr. Ralph Hamilton, whose compassion for patients and dedication to the profession of ophthalmology impressed Mr. Seidman. Dr. Hamilton's enthusiasm and his unwavering support of the Department inspired the Knapp Foundation to consider The University of Tennessee worthy of support. "The Board was impressed with the dedication, quality of research efforts and service contributions exhibited by UT ophthalmologists. We hope this gift will help consolidate eye research on campus and improve the quality of life for people with visual afflictions," said Mrs. Brasel.
Approximately 20 vision scientists at UT have joined efforts to successfully compete for a Core Grant from the National Eye Institute. The grant provides funds for shared equipment and technical support in the areas, called "modules," of molecular biology and digital imaging. The total grant award is $1,085,000 over five years. Participants are also eligible for additional supplements that can be requested in the amount of $500,000 over the next two years. Plans are underway for supplemental applications to support bioinformatics and cell biology equipment.

*This grant signals recognition of the vision group in Memphis as one of the emerging national leaders in the field of vision research.*

Impetus for the grant proposal emerged from faculty interactions within the UT Center for Vision Research, with major support garnered from the Department of Ophthalmology, the Department of Anatomy and Neurobiology and the Medical School administration, in particular, the Associate Dean from Research, Dr. Dianna Johnson (Ophthalmology) serves as Principal Investigator of the Core Grant and Director of the Imaging Module. Dr. Rob Williams (Anatomy and Neurobiology) serves as co-Principal Investigator of the grant and will serve as Director for the proposed Bioinformatics Module. Dr. Eldon Geisert (Anatomy and Neurobiology) serves as Director for the Molecular Biology Module, and Dr. Monica Jablonski (Ophthalmology) will serve as Director for the proposed Cell Biology Module.

As the only type of programmatic grant awarded by NEI, the Core Grant is one of the most competitive in the Institute. It signals recognition of the vision group in Memphis as one of the emerging national leaders in the field of vision research.
The Tennessee Medical Association (TMA) honored James C. Fleming, MD, FACS for his tenure as President at a reception in Knoxville on April 29, 2000.

In an address to 300 members and guests of the TMA, Dr. Fleming, Associate Professor of Ophthalmology and Director of the Orbital Service at UT Memphis, described what he felt to be the major accomplishments of his term: positive interaction with the legislature on health care issues, including passage of five legislative actions (three in 1999 and two in 2000) with direct impact on health care delivery; redefinition of consultation services in Medicare nomenclature, to more accurately reflect the care given to patients and the true role of the consulting physician; and creation of a task force to analyze the directions medicine will take in the new century and to position the TMA proactively.

"The most rewarding part was meeting and working with physicians from all specialties across the state... I was consistently impressed by their clinical excellence and their commitment to their patients."

Dr. Fleming provided energetic leadership to the TMA's membership of 6,800 physicians statewide. His monthly editorials in the Association's publication, Tennessee Medicine, supported and advanced the organization's goal of "providing quality health care to the residents of the state of Tennessee". Fulfilling his responsibilities as TMA President required significant amounts of Dr. Fleming's time, which he contributed while maintaining his busy clinical practice in Memphis and his academic and teaching commitments at UT. But, stated Dr. Fleming, the experience was well worth the effort: "Serving as President of the TMA was a wonderful personal experience. I enjoyed the work, and felt that I made a difference, but the most rewarding part was meeting and
working physicians from all specialties across the state. In addition to their relentless support and cooperation, I was consistently impressed by their clinical excellence and their commitment to their patients."

### Twenty Scientific Presentations from UT Ophthalmology at Annual Meeting

The research activities of the Department of Ophthalmology were well represented at the annual meeting of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology in Fort Lauderdale, Florida the first week of May, 2000.

Faculty members were senior authors on eight posters or papers, and collaborators on an additional twelve, for a total of twenty scientific presentations from UT Ophthalmology. Studies were conducted with co-investigations within the University (the Departments of Physiology, the Retinal Degeneration and Research Center), locally (St. Jude Children's Hospital, Christian Brothers University) and nationally (Scheie Eye Institute, the University of Illinois, the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, and Harvard Medical School, among others). The senior authors were:

**Howard M. Jernigan, PhD:**
Increased phospholipid synthesis in the cataractous lenses of strain 13/N guinea pigs.

**Monica M. Jablonski, PhD:**
PDF protects photoreceptors from degeneration and induces opsin expression after RPE detachment.

**Peter A. Netland, MD, PhD:**
An evaluation of the efficacy and quality of life of switching from latanoprost/betablocker dual therapy to  

**Barrett G. Haik, MD:**
Combination chemotherapy with Carboplatin and Vincristin for treatment of intraocular retinoblastoma.

**Darius M. Moshfeghi, MD:**
Retinal reattachment following combination chemotherapy with Carboplatin and Vincristin for treatment of intracocular retinoblastoma.

**Dianna A. Johnson, PhD:**
Attachment of telomerase immortalized RPE cells to photoreceptor outer
brimonidine monotherapy: a pharmacoeconomic analysis.

Matthew W. Wilson, MD:
Supplemental local therapy used in combination with Carboplatin and Vincristin for treatment of intraocular retinoblastoma.

Allessandro Iannaccone, MD:
Autosomal dominant cone-rod dystrophy with cystoid macular edema.

Claes H. Dohlman, MD, Professor of Ophthalmology at Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary was the 10th Kambara Distinguished Visiting Professor. Dr. Dohlman is a world-renowned authority in corneal disease and physiology and presented "Corneal edema- mechanisms, clinical etiologies and treatment" as his Kambara Lecture.

Dr. Dohlman's career at Harvard Medical School spans four decades. He served as Chairman of the Director of the Howe Laboratory of Ophthalmology at Harvard
Medical School from 1976 to 1989. He has served as a committee or board member of influential and prestigious ophthalmic organizations, including the National Eye Institute, the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology, and the Heed Foundation. Dr. Dohlman has been the recipient of many major awards and honors, most notably the Castroviejo Medal, the Behrens Medal, and Townley Patron Award. His contributions to ophthalmology have also been recognized by presentation of the Bjerrum Award and the Rendahl Award from Sweden and Denmark respectively.

Dr. Dohlman is the author of over 225 original articles, book chapters and monographs. His investigations into the mechanisms of corneal disease have had a direct impact on clinical management and his expertise as a teacher has inspired many ophthalmologists in their careers. The Kambara Professorship is the most recent of a 30 year history of invited lecturerships that Dr. Dohlman has presented, and the Department of Ophthalmology was honored to have Dr. Dohlman as this year's Kambara Professor.

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**UT Memphis Endowed Professorship**

**Dr. Johnson Named as Roger L. Hiatt, MD Professor**

The Department is delighted to announce Dianna A. Johnson, PhD as the first recipient of the Roger L. Hiatt, MD Professorship of Ophthalmology. The Hiatt Professorship is the second endowed Professorship of the Department of Ophthalmology. Numerous individual alumni have contributed to the endowment campaign, and now, with matching grants from the Plough Foundation, and from Ralph and Barbara Hamilton, we are pleased to announce that the Professorship is complete.

This Professorship honors Dr. Hiatt's 25 year tenure as Chair of the Department from 1969 to 1994, and his achievements as a leader, teacher and physician. Dr. Hiatt
Dr. Johnson, Professor of Ophthalmology and Anatomy and Neurobiology, joined the Department in 1996. She is internationally recognized for her research in retinal biochemistry, specifically the role of neurotransmitters in retinal development and disease. Her research has already shown great promise for translation into clinical treatment of macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy. Dr. Johnson acknowledged the announcement: "The Hiatt Professorship honors the past leadership of Dr. Roger Hiatt as a great teacher and humanitarian; it recognizes the present leadership of Dr. Barrett Haik, our Chair, as a visionary and builder; it provides for a permanent endowment committed to research as a basis for furthering our understanding of vision and for treating retinal diseases. It is a singular honor to be the first recipient of the Hiatt Professorship."

The Department honored both Dr. Hiatt and Dr. Johnson at a presentation during the annual Alumni Resident's Day on June 9, 2000, and Dr. Johnson delivered her Hiatt Lecture: "Life among the retinal ruins: Common Pathways in the retina that can lead to neuronal birth, death, and beyond."
Eye Bank jointly sponsored C. Wing Chu, MD as Visiting Professor on March 31, 2000.

Dr. Chu is a Surgeon Director of the Ophthalmology Department at the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary, Attending Surgeon in Ophthalmology at Manhattan Eye, Ear, and Throat Hospital and Director of the Corneal Clinic, Associate Director of Ophthalmology Department and Senior Attending at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center, all in New York City. He has been active in the Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA) for nearly twenty years, serving in all areas of training and accreditation of eye bank personnel and facilities supervised by the Association.

Dr. Stephen Scoper, Director of Cornea and Refractive Surgery for UT Ophthalmology, and current co-Chair of the EBAA's Accreditation Committee, commented on Dr. Chu's tenure as EEBA Chair: "Dr. Chu's leadership has led to higher standards and greater efficiency in American eye banking. Patients and ophthalmologists have both benefited immeasurably from his efforts." Dr. Chu's lecture, "How Safe is the American Corneal Donor Supply?" was an informative presentation of the challenges faced by the Eye Bank Association to assure quality tissue for corneal transplants.

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**H ow To Help UT Ophthalmology Achieve Our Goals**

Without the continuing generosity of the alumni and friends of the Department, it would be impossible for us to complete our current educational and research objectives or undertake additional projects. You can help by contributing to existing drives, specifically the completion of endowed professorships honoring Dr. Roger L. Hiatt and Dr. Philip M. Lewis, or by underwriting a project of particular interest to you or your family.

For additional information on charitable donations to the Department of Ophthalmology at UT Memphis, please contact Ms. Glenda O'Connor or Ms. Bettye Speake at the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs, UT College of Medicine, 901-448-5516 or 1-800-733-0482 or our Department offices at 901-448-5883.