

Editor: Henny van Dijk

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UTHealth Impact Report



UTHRO Endowment for Healthy Aging

Carmel B. Dyer, MD

On behalf of the faculty, staff, and members of UTHealth Consortium on Aging at UTHealth, I want to thank the UT Houston Retiree Organization (UTHRO) for their generosity in establishing the UTHRO Endowment for Healthy Aging. This endowment supports interprofessional education, clinical care, and research to enhance the health of older adults, and we are deeply grateful for UTHRO's commitment to our mission.

Endowment Impact

Over the past year, this endowment has been instrumental in supporting the Consortium on Aging. Notably, we used funds to produce a handbook on dementia that clinicians can provide to families who have a loved one diagnosed with the disease.

Additionally, the endowment provided seed funding for research, education, and community projects to enhance the physical and emotional health and social engagement of older adults in the Houston community. UTHRO members and leaders are active participants in the Consortium on Aging, and they attend educational events and advocate for projects that enhance the lives of older adults.

Finally, I want to recognize the UTHRO members who supported our crowdfunding campaign to provide iPads to socially-isolated older adults to enable them to communicate with health care providers and family members during the COVID-19 pandemic. Volunteers from the organization also assisted with a Healthy Aging Luncheon in support of the Consortium on Aging. In particular, Barbara Kelly, a member of UTHRO, sits on the Consortium on Aging Executive Committee and participates in monthly planning meetings.

Looking Forward

In Fiscal Year 2021, the UTHRO Endowment for Healthy Aging will fund two awards for junior faculty members who are conducting studies to address aging-related issues. These grants will provide funding for pilot projects that will help our researchers obtain the data they need to earn larger extramural grants. The funded projects will be interdisciplinary, collaborative, and representative of Houston's ethnically diverse community.

Update on our Endowment

Another year has come and gone, and despite the pandemic and the hardships that it has brought, our UTHRO Endowment for Healthy Aging has fared well. Following our October, 2020 annual appeal, the fund received donations of \$7,290, bringing the current total value to almost \$85,000. Our money yielded 8.72% interest. It is the interest generated every year that we can spend for our projects directed toward education, research and patient care in geriatrics through the UTHealth Consortium on Aging. The first award from the Endowment was presented in 2019 as a seed grant of \$2,000 for research. In 2020, since we could not meet in person to present an award, we spent only \$1,000 for a small project from Harris Health. We had available around \$3,700 in spendable funds and expect to have about that same amount available in 2020. Our hope is that we can award a grant of \$5,000 for research and another smaller amount for some other improvement project, again, through the UTHealth Consortium on Aging. We appreciate everyone who donated to the Endowment, no matter the amount, which by the way, is known only to the UTHealth Office of Development. Thank you!

You see in this issue a statement from Dr. Carmel Dyer who is the designated UTHealth sponsor and administrator of our Endowment. She has been very supportive of UTHRO and very appreciative of our efforts, as you can see from her statement. You can also see how the Consortium has put our funds to use and also how UTHRO members have supported the Consortium in various volunteer ways.

For our newer members and as a refresher for our long-time members, a little history of the origins of the Endowment may be in order. From its inception in 1993 until about 2000, UTHRO functioned primarily as a means for social interaction among retirees, a way to stay connected, to participate in fun and educational activities, and a means to stay in touch with activities of UTHealth. Around 1999, the organization decided to present an Excellence Award and conducted fund raising every year, giving the money to the UTHealth Consortium on Aging to help fund some of their projects in geriatrics. In 2016, the Executive Committee presented a proposal to the membership to establish the UTHRO Endowment for Healthy Aging administered through UTHealth instead of giving the Excellence Award each year. This was approved by the membership. It was felt that by establishing an endowment, monies could be accumulated and earn interest to be used to support patient care, education and clinical research related to aging. It started with a group of Founders, both UTHRO members and friends, who contributed the \$25,000 required to initiate the Endowment. Through annual fundraising, it has grown to what it is today. We hope that the fund will continue to grow so that we can make significant contributions in support of our motto of Seniors Helping Seniors.



Reggy O'Neill

Consortium on Aging Report

At the January 25th Consortium on Aging Executive Committee, I asked the Committee for their thoughts on the size and types of awards UTHRO should consider this year from the Endowment income. The Committee discussed the size and types of awards. They suggested we might consider a research grant in a larger amount which makes the dollars awarded more significant, and then possibly two smaller awards, one for Quality Improvement and one for Educational Materials. The projected income for distribution this year will be approximately \$8,000. Peggy O'Neill and I have discussed the amount to fund and feel we should not distribute the full \$8,000 but retain at least \$1,000 for carry over into 2022. We suggest that we follow the COA Executive Committee's recommendations.

UTHRO could issue a call for research protocols with budgets, as we have done in the past, for a \$5,000 research grant. Once reviewed and ranked by UTHRO, the top three protocols could be presented at a meeting to the membership for voting. We could also issue a call for half page proposals for awards of \$1,000 each, one for Quality Improvement and one for Educational Materials. These two awards could be reviewed and ranked by the UTHRO reviewers. The top 2 in each category could be submitted in print to the UTHRO membership for vote at the meeting.

COA UPCOMING EVENTS: The COA is in the process of setting its calendar for 2021 events. Two event dates have been finalized. World Alzheimer's Day is scheduled for September 21st and will be held virtually. Hot Topics In Aging is scheduled for November 9th and also will be virtual. UTHRO Members are invited to participate in COA events, so mark your calendars !

Barbara Kelly, UTHRO representative on COA board



Any Member Suggestions ...!

Now that a good number of us have been vaccinated and after a year of not being able to get together, we would like to know how the membership feels about scheduling an event, of course socially distanced with masks, maybe outdoors in April at the new Botanic Gardens or the zoo? This would be an event you would need to drive to in your own vehicle and pay your own entrance fee but may give us a chance to see our friends in person once more. We'd like your input to know if it is too early to plan events or if you have any suggestions for a safe way to meet.

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Our Members—at—Large...



Barry and Gill Rittman worked at UT School of Dentistry for 23 years retiring in 2013. They are co-chairs of the Events Committee and although we have not been able to go on trips or hold events this past year due to COVID restrictions we are looking forward to finding some new and exciting places to visit as soon as we can safely get together again. We both enjoy bird watching, gardening, cooking and being servants to our 4 cats.



Deedee Chamberlain started working for the Nursing School in 1988 as an AA to Dr. Nancy McNeil and worked there until she retired in 2016, 28 good years. At that time the school was located in the old Prudential Building. Now, of course, they have a beautiful building and I was very fortunate to have an office on one of the atriums. What I remember most about my job was to assist with the school's Annual Report and the Operating Budget every year.

Thankfully, the deadlines were months apart. When Dr. McNeil transferred to the Medical School, both of these became my responsibility until another Associate Dean was hired. When I retired I wanted to stay involved with UTH and UTHRO was a perfect group to provide that connection. I like the "field trips" the most because you get to meet all of the other retirees and put a face to many you knew from working and to visit interesting sites as well.

I keep busy with my house, my gardens, and my husband (I remarried in 2014). Both of us like to hike and we invite others to join us when we hike close to Houston ~ we call it "Hike & Dine" ~ as my husband loves to cook and share conversation over a good meal.



Marilyn Schlager moved from North Dakota after graduating from college to take a job at UT Health. I worked in the Payroll Department for a year and a half and then transferred to the Facilities Department where I retired from. That is when I first met Efren, he is still my buddy today. I went to work for the best boss I have ever had, Arden Taylor and I worked with

Efren. He was sharp, he taught me the ropes.

I loved our Chili Fests we use to hold at UT Health, they were so much fun. I met many new people while the humidity in Texas was the hardest to get used to. I like the sunshine and wished I knew now what I know when I was 40 years old. I would have done so many things differently but life is as we live it and we do our best.

I am focusing most of my time on improving my health. I decided I knew some of the UTHRO members and keeping in contact with them outside of the office would be a great way to improve relationships.

Unusual Easter Traditions



Whip-cracking in the Czech Republic and Slovakia

If you're a woman and you find yourself in the Czech Republic or Slovakia on Easter Monday, it is perhaps best to stay indoors. All the local men and boys will be roaming the streets with gaily decorated willow switches, usually adorned with ribbons, looking for girls to 'lightly' whip. The whipping is not intended to be painful, but instead is meant to encourage good health and beauty. You may feel otherwise.



The Easter Bilby from Australia

In an attempt to raise awareness about the dwindling Bilby population, confectioners in Australia have taken to making chocolate likenesses of this small

rabbit-size marsupial.



The witches of Easter-wick in Finland

Halloween comes early to Finland as children dress up as witches and wander the streets with broomsticks in the hunt for treats. The tradition is said to

have come from the belief that witches would fly to Germany and cavort with Satan. Bonfires are meant to scare them away.



The Easter Bunny sees red in Greece

Easter is known around the world for multi-colored, decorated eggs. But in Greece you will find only red eggs. Red

is the color of life, you see, as well as a representation of the blood of Christ. From ancient times, the egg has been a symbol of the renewal of life, and the message of the red eggs is victory over death. Got it? And finally...



An unusual English tradition

With a cross on top symbolizing the crucifixion of Jesus, hot cross buns are traditional fare for the perfect Easter in the UK. With dried fruits and spices, they

deliver meaning and tastiness with one bite. Today, they mean just as much as the chocolate

Wisdom Comes with Age...

*I asked a friend who has crossed 70 and is heading towards 80 what sort of changes she is feeling in herself?
She sent me the following:*

After loving my parents, my siblings, my spouse, my children and my friends, I have now started loving my self.

I have realized that I am not "Atlas". The world does not rest on my shoulders.

I have stopped bargaining with vegetable & fruit vendors. A few pennies more is not going to break me, but it might help the poor fellow save for his daughter's school fees.

I leave my waitress a big tip. The extra money might bring a smile to her face. She is toiling much harder for a living than I am

I stopped telling the elderly that they've already narrated that story many times. The story makes them walk down memory lane & relive their past

I have learned not to correct people even when I know they are wrong. The onus of making everyone perfect is not on me. Peace is more precious than perfection.

I give compliments freely & generously. Compliments are a mood enhancer not only for the recipient, but also for me. And a small tip for the recipient of a compliment, never, NEVER turn it down, just say "Thank You."

I have learned not to bother about a crease or a spot on my shirt. Personality speaks louder than appearances.

I walk away from people who don't value me. They might not know my worth, but I do.

I remain cool when someone plays dirty to outrun me in the rat race. I am not a rat & neither am I in any race.

I am learning not to be embarrassed by my emotions. It's my emotions that make me human.

I have learned that it's better to drop the ego than to break a relationship. My ego will keep me aloof, whereas with relationships, I will never be alone.

I have learned to live each day as if it's the last. After all, it might be the last.

I am doing what makes me happy. I am responsible for my happiness, and I owe it to myself. Happiness is a choice. You can be happy at any time, just choose to be!



UTHRO

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*To update your address or phone number
please contact us at 281-655-1983*

And Now For Something Completely Different...

2020 - This Was the Year that Was...

IF YOU WANT TO
IMPRESS ME WITH
YOUR CAR IT BETTER
BE A FOOD TRUCK

GIVE ME COFFEE 2 CHANGE
THE THINGS I CAN,
AND TEQUILA TO ACCEPT
THE THINGS I CAN'T

IF U SEE ME TALKING
TO MYSELF THIS WEEK,
I'M HAVING A PARENT-
TEACHER CONFERENCE

AT LEAST WE DON'T
HAVE TO HUNT FOR
OUR FOOD, I DON'T EVEN
KNOW WHERE TACOS LIVE

El Arroyo is a pretty well-known Tex-Mex restaurant in Austin. According to their website, they're the "last queso stop before a bunch of yoga studios," but they aren't just famous for their food. Oh no. What really puts El Arroyo on the map is their brilliantly funny signage. This time on Covid-19.

HAS EVERYONE
PICKED OUT THEIR
OUTFITS TO WEAR TO
THE LIVINGROOM?

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