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Opinion

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Mike Rawlings, William T. Solomon, Robert B. Rowling: The power of giving has shaped UT-Southwestern



/UT-Southwestern Medical Foundation

By MIKE RAWLINGS, WILLIAM T. SOLOMON AND ROBERT B. ROWLING

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As Dallas grows, the need for individual giving is greater than it has been in recent memory. And we're happy to say our community is embracing that simple idea in a big way.

The Chronicle of Philanthropy recently ranked Dallas-Fort Worth as the eighth most generous metro area in the U.S. when it comes to charitable giving as a percentage of income, putting us ahead of Houston, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Boston.

Our charitable giving is up 4.6 percent since the last *Chronicle* report. But as our population and needs continue to increase, the need for support and giving goes up, not down.

Long before Dallas Mayor Erik Jonsson said “Dream no small dreams,” we were already dreaming big. Dallas couldn’t and didn’t become a world-class city until generous citizens decided to step up for the greater good of the community.

Seventy five years ago, before Dallas had even hit a population of 300,000, local leaders clearly saw the need for philanthropic help to fund the growing demands for medical care. Enter Dr. Edward Cary and Karl Hoblitzelle, two visionary philanthropists who rallied our citizens in support of the highest quality health care and formed Southwestern Medical Foundation in 1939.

As often is the case, success didn’t happen overnight. Even after the foundation managed to launch Southwestern Medical College, financial difficulties in the midst of war challenged its existence. The school had to be housed for the first 12 years in flimsy plywood barracks, and every time a noisy freight train passed the shacks, teachers had to stop the class.

In 1943, the Dallas Chamber of Commerce and Citizens Council stepped up to the challenge, supporting the foundation with more than \$1 million over a period of 10 years. And by 1949, donors in Dallas had invested so heavily in the foundation that the state of Texas authorized support for what would eventually become UT Southwestern Medical Center. The center is now home to six Nobel laureates, 21 members of the prestigious National Academy of Sciences and 19 members of the Institute of Medicine.

To this day, that support hasn’t wavered. In the 1990s and 2000s, the community gave more than \$900 million to support the foundation’s campaigns. And in 2009, Dallasite and former Gov. Bill Clements donated \$100 million to build the newly opened William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital, a leading-edge facility that represents the future of medicine.

With the help of donors, Southwestern Medical Foundation is also investing heavily in the future of patients in the community with scholarships that support doctors who take care of our families.

As longtime members of the civic and business communities, we congratulate Southwestern Medical Foundation on its 75th anniversary of supporting patient care, medical education, and research — including its recent \$7.5 million gift to strengthen UT Southwestern Medical Center’s standing as a worldwide leader in neuroscience.

In the future, the foundation hopes to further the mission of academic medicine and life-changing research. It wants to fuel the boldest discoveries and attract the next generation of scientific leaders. It dreams the same dream we all have of a healthier world for everyone.

We urge citizens from all walks of life to follow the foundation’s example and its vision. It’s a vision that is remarkably relevant, and it’s inspiring us forward.

The power of giving has shaped Dallas’ past and present in so many ways. It’s up to all of us to keep that spirit going to build a bright future as an internationally renowned city that dreams big, cares deeply, and gives freely.

Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings is an honorary chair and William T. Solomon is chairman of Southwestern Medical Foundation’s 75th Anniversary Steering Committee. Robert B. Rowling is chairman of the institution’s board of trustees. Reach them through swmedical.org/contact-us.