

With the UAMS News Bureau

Office of Communications & Marketing
4301 West Markham # 890
Little Rock, AR 72205-7199

uamshealth.com/news



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Media Contacts:

Leslie W. Taylor, 501-686-8998
Wireless phone: 501-951-7260
leslie@uams.edu

Liz Caldwell, 501-686-8995
Wireless phone: 501-350-4364
liz@uams.edu

**Army Ferrando, Ph.D., Invested
in Wes Smith Distinguished Chair in Geriatrics
for Longevity, Health Promotion and Frailty Prevention**

LITTLE ROCK — Army A. Ferrando, Ph.D., a leading authority on skeletal muscle protein metabolism and its relation to muscle function and performance with the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), was invested in July in the Wes Smith Distinguished Chair in Geriatrics for Longevity, Health Promotion and Frailty Prevention.

There was no formal investiture event held due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I look forward to representing the Wes Smith Distinguished Chair with the highest quality of science befitting of this gift,” Ferrando said. “I want to thank the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation for endowing this chair. Your gift is more than generous, and I can guarantee that our laboratory will continue its renowned research on your behalf.”

Ferrando, who joined UAMS in 2006, co-directs the Center for Translational Research in Aging and Longevity at the Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging, where he is also a professor in the Department of Geriatrics in the UAMS College of Medicine. His career has highlighted nutritional, exercise and pharmacological interventions directed toward the prevention and recovery of muscle loss and function.

An endowed chair is among the highest academic honors a university can bestow on a faculty member. A distinguished chair is established with gifts of at least \$1.5 million, which are invested and the interest proceeds used to support the educational, research and clinical activities of the chair holder. Those named to a chair are among the most highly regarded scientists, physicians and professors in their fields.

“This generous gift from the Reynolds Foundation ensures that the Reynolds Institute at UAMS will maintain a strong leadership position in improving care of Arkansas’ older adults through innovative translational research that brings new treatments to patients,” said UAMS Chancellor Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA.

Over the years, the Reynolds Foundation gave more than \$99 million to UAMS, making it the single largest donor in its history. Much of the foundation's visionary and transformative philanthropy benefited the eponymous Reynolds Institute on Aging. In 2016, the foundation made another lasting commitment to UAMS in establishing the Wes Smith Distinguished Chair in Geriatrics for Longevity, Health Promotion and Frailty Prevention. In 2017, the foundation ceased operation, marking the end of decades of visionary and transformative philanthropy to UAMS, other institutions and projects of benefit to the public.

The chair honors Wes Smith, who served as a foundation trustee for 20 years and for several years as its vice chairman. Smith's personal commitment to a healthy lifestyle and longevity, resulting from wise lifestyle choices, aligns with the foundation's mission of improving the quality of life for America's growing elderly population.

In addition to the honor of being named chair holder, Ferrando received a commemorative medallion and an inscribed wooden chair.

Ferrando thanked his family, as well as Jeanne Wei, M.D., Ph.D., director of the Reynolds Institute, for their support. He also thanked members of his team, particularly Robert Wolfe, Ph.D., director of the Center for Translational Research in Aging and Longevity at the Reynolds Institute, with whom he began a lifelong association and collaboration nearly 30 years ago.

"I was fortunate to collaborate with his laboratory almost 30 years ago as a post-doc at NASA," Ferrando said. "I was even more fortunate when he offered me a faculty position after my fellowship. Dr. Wolfe has been primarily responsible for the scientist I am today. For this, I want to thank you Dr. Wolfe, for your career-long mentorship, training, support, scientific acumen, and most importantly, your friendship.

"Dr. Ferrando is a superb scientist who shares the vision of the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation and Mr. Smith for improving the health of older Arkansans," said Christopher T. Westfall, M.D., executive vice chancellor for UAMS and dean of the College of Medicine. "His extensive expertise and passion for research-driven advances in patient care make him ideally suited to hold this endowed chair."

After graduating from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, Ferrando served the majority of his career as a pilot. He retired from the Army in 2003 with the rank of lieutenant colonel. He continues to help identify West Point candidates and participates in congressional nomination boards for selection.

Upon graduation from Florida State University with a doctorate in nutrition and physiology, Ferrando was selected for a National Research Council postdoctoral fellowship at NASA Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas. During this fellowship, he began a collaboration with Wolfe, to discern nutritional interventions to prevent muscle loss during space flight.

After his NASA fellowship, Ferrando worked as an assistant professor of surgery in Wolfe's laboratory, where he was an integral part of studies investigating nutritional and pharmacological interventions to spare muscle mass in severe burn injury. These studies provided the foundation of his experience related to stressed physiology and muscle loss.

Throughout his career, Ferrando has studied muscle loss in a wide range of physiological and clinical circumstances, to include inactivity, aging, space flight, joint arthroplasty, renal failure, heart failure, liver failure, cancer and burn injury.

Ferrando's in-depth experience in stressed physiology has led to his current studies investigating nutritional and pharmacological means of optimizing soldier performance. These studies focus on enhancing performance in special operations warfighters given the harsh environment in which they must function. An important goal of these studies is the development of an effective nutritional product for soldiers' use in the field.

Ferrando has consistently received funding from federal, military and industry sources. He has a robust publication record in human clinical studies and speaks regularly at international conferences. His area of expertise has earned him a Fellowship of the International Society for Sports Nutrition and membership on the International Protein Board. He is the co-inventor of two UAMS nutritional patents and was recently selected as an Arkansan of the Year by Arkansas Life Magazine.

UAMS is the state's only health sciences university, with colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions and Public Health; a graduate school; hospital; a main campus in Little Rock; a Northwest Arkansas regional campus in Fayetteville; a statewide network of regional campuses; and seven institutes: the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, Jackson T. Stephens Spine & Neurosciences Institute, Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute, Psychiatric Research Institute, Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging, Translational Research Institute and Institute for Digital Health & Innovation. UAMS includes UAMS Health, a statewide health system that encompasses all of UAMS' clinical enterprise including its hospital, regional clinics and clinics it operates or staffs in cooperation with other providers. UAMS is the only adult Level 1 trauma center in the state. *U.S. News & World Report* named UAMS Medical Center the state's Best Hospital; ranked its ear, nose and throat program among the top 50 nationwide; and named six areas as high performing — cancer, colon cancer surgery, heart failure, hip replacement, knee replacement and lung cancer surgery. UAMS has 2,727 students, 870 medical residents and five dental residents. It is the state's largest public employer with more than 10,000 employees, including 1,200 physicians who provide care to patients at UAMS, its regional campuses, Arkansas Children's Hospital, the VA Medical Center and Baptist Health. Visit www.uams.edu or www.uamshealth.com. Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

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