

UAMS News Bureau

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**News Release
May 20, 2021**

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**Riney Foundation Gives \$1.8 Million to UAMS Myeloma Center
in the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute**

LITTLE ROCK — The Paula and Rodger Riney Foundation announced a gift of \$1.8 million to the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Myeloma Center in the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute to fund multiple myeloma research.

“Paula and I are pleased to invest in the UAMS Myeloma Center, which has made great strides in advancing multiple myeloma research and increasing survival rates,” Rodger Riney said. “As a multiple myeloma patient, I understand the critical need to pursue new research and treatments, in hopes of ultimately finding a cure.”

Rodger Riney is the former founder and CEO of the discount brokerage firm Scottrade. He was diagnosed with multiple myeloma in 2015 and has since become an advocate for research and treatment of the disease, including serving on the board of directors for the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation.

The UAMS Myeloma Center is the most comprehensive center in the world for research and clinical care related to multiple myeloma and related diseases. The Rineys’ gift will help further multiple myeloma research at UAMS and advance the search for cures and prevention. Multiple myeloma is a cancer of plasma cells in the blood. It develops in the bone marrow where most blood cells are produced and is the second-most common blood-related cancer.

“We are extremely grateful to the Rineys for their generosity and support,” said Frits van Rhee, M.D., Ph.D., clinical director of the Myeloma Center. “This gift will fund emerging research crucial to innovation of treatment. Since our founding more than 30 years ago, we have made great strides and impacted thousands of lives through world-class care and research. As we continue to build on the progress we have already achieved, cure will become a reality for many more patients.”

“Every day, I am proud to witness the amazing work accomplished by our Myeloma Center faculty and staff,” said Michael Birrer, M.D., Ph.D., UAMS vice chancellor and director of the Cancer Institute. “As we push towards our goal of achieving National Cancer Institute Designation, the Rineys’ generous philanthropic support will allow our

researchers to continue their essential front-line work that will advance care for our patients now and for years to come.”

Myeloma expert Fenghuang “Frank” Zhan, M.D., Ph.D., the center’s research director, will manage the Riney Family Multiple Myeloma Research Program Fund. The Cancer Institute will install a plaque outside Zhan’s laboratory recognizing the gift.

Zhan, a professor of medicine in the College of Medicine, holds the Morrison Family Endowed Chair in Myeloma Research and returned to UAMS last year. He was previously with the Myeloma Center from 2002 to 2008. His projects focus on genes and drug resistance, molecular genetics and the biology of myeloma, classification of the disease, and identifying and targeting myeloma stem cells. He has received two grants from the U.S. Department of Defense and the National Institutes of Health, totaling almost \$3.14 million to study the molecular genetics and drug resistance of myeloma.

“I am grateful to Paula and Rodger for their confidence in my research,” Zhan said. “By better understanding the biology of drug resistance in myeloma, we can develop novel therapies that can reach not only myeloma patients, but those with other solid tumor and blood-related cancers.”

The UAMS Myeloma Center’s team of scientists and clinicians have pioneered many advances that have become standards of care, leading to improved survival rates. Since its founding in 1989, the center has seen more than 11,000 patients from every state and more than 50 foreign countries. The center performs more stem cell transplants for myeloma than any other center in the world.

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 — COPD, colon cancer surgery, heart failure, hip replacement, knee replacement and lung cancer surgery. UAMS has 2,876 students, 898 medical residents and four 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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