

UAMS News Bureau

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

uamshealth.com/news



News Release
April 25, 2023

Media Contacts:

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

Yavonda Chase, 501-686-8994
Wireless phone: 501-416-0354
yavonda@uams.edu

**UAMS Invests Laura B. Dunn, M.D., in Marie Wilson Howells
Chair in Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences**

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) College of Medicine invested Laura B. Dunn, M.D., in the Marie Wilson Howells Chair in Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences during an April 20 ceremony.

Dunn, who joined UAMS in February 2022 as chair of the UAMS Department of Psychiatry and director of the UAMS Psychiatric Research Institute, was recruited from the Stanford University School of Medicine in California.

“My parents modeled a fascination with psychology, human development and interpersonal interactions. My growing up was characterized by many discussions at our dinner table about these topics and countless others — nothing was off limits for discussion in our house, and curiosity as well as a spirit of skeptical inquiry were sparked and encouraged,” said Dunn. “As an academic psychiatrist, and now being given the honor of serving at UAMS, I hope to embody these values that my parents instilled in me, while guiding the Department of Psychiatry on its ongoing mission to serve the people of Arkansas.”

An endowed chair is among the highest academic honors a university can bestow on a faculty member. An endowed chair is established with gifts of at least \$1 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 at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences are among the most highly regarded scientists, practitioners and professors in their academic fields,” said Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA, UAMS chancellor and CEO of UAMS Health. “I’d like to extend my congratulations to Dr. Laura Dunn for her accomplishments, which have merited this great honor.”

The Marie Wilson Howells Chair in Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences was established in 1979 through a \$3 million bequest from the estate of Marie Wilson Howells, who passed away the previous year. The gift led to the creation of the Marie Wilson Howells Professor endowment, which was initially awarded May 4, 1982, to William G. Reese, M.D., then-chairman of the Department of Psychiatry.

“We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the late Marie Wilson Howells,” said G. Richard Smith, M.D., a distinguished professor of psychiatry, and the interim dean of the College of Medicine and UAMS executive vice chancellor. “It really is an honor today to celebrate the generosity and philanthropic spirit that made the Marie Wilson Howells Chair possible — as well as the outstanding faculty leader who will hold this chair.”

Smith is a previous holder of the endowed chair during two terms as chair of the Department of Psychiatry.

At Stanford, Dunn served from 2015 to 2022 as professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences, director of the Geriatric Psychiatry Fellowship Training Program and section chief for geriatric psychiatry in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. While at Stanford, she led numerous departmental initiatives in quality improvement and professional development.

From 2007 to 2015, Dunn was on the faculty at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), where she served as professor in the Department of Psychiatry and director of Psycho-Oncology in the UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center. While at UCSF, she was invested in the Gloria Hubner Endowed Chair in Psycho-Oncology in 2013.

Dunn graduated magna cum laude from Harvard College with a Bachelor of Arts in linguistics before earning a medical degree at UCSF. She completed her psychiatry residency, as well as a fellowship in geriatric psychiatry, at the University of California at San Diego, where she went on to serve as an assistant professor from 2002 to 2007.

Dunn has served as principal investigator and in other roles on numerous National Institutes of Health- and foundation-funded studies in geriatric psychiatry, psycho-oncology and empirical ethics. She has served as secretary and treasurer as well as a board member of the American Association of Geriatric Psychiatry (AAGP) and is a member of the American College of Psychiatrists. She is board certified in psychiatry and geriatric psychiatry.

“Laura’s passion for educating and mentoring is something that I have witnessed firsthand in her role as chair of the Laughlin Fellowship Program at the American College of Psychiatrists — she is authentic, transparent and builds genuine relationships with each fellow, offering them hope for a bright future,” said Christopher Colenda, M.D., MPH, president emeritus of the West Virginia University Health System, dean emeritus of the College of Medicine at Texas A&M University Health Sciences, and adjunct professor for the Section of Geriatrics and Gerontology in the Department of Internal Medicine at the Wake Forest University School of Medicine. “She builds a human legacy for the profession that will serve the needs of many people and will better society. She is incredibly deserving of the Marie Wilson Howells Chair.”

UAMS is the state's only health sciences university, with colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions and Public Health; a graduate school; a 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. UAMS is the only adult Level 1 trauma center in the state. UAMS has 3,240 students, 913 medical residents and fellows, and five dental residents. It is the state's largest public employer with more than 11,000 employees, including 1,200 physicians who provide care to patients at UAMS, its regional campuses, Arkansas Children's, the VA Medical Center and Baptist Health. Visit www.uams.edu or www.uamshealth.com. Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

Like us, we're social: 