

UAMS News Bureau

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

uamshealth.com/news



**News Release
March 5, 2026**

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

**Tommy and Kathryn May Gift \$200,000 to UAMS
to Elevate Chair in Support of ALS Treatment, Research**

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) received a \$200,000 gift from J. Thomas “Tommy” May and Kathryn May to elevate the J. Thomas May Endowed Chair in Department of Neurology in the UAMS College of Medicine to a distinguished chair.

J. Thomas May Endowed Distinguished Chair supports research and clinical care for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) at the J. Thomas May Center for ALS Research at the UAMS main campus and the UAMS Health ALS Clinic at the Northwest Regional Campus in Fayetteville. The fund will support ALS care to patients statewide and help train, recruit and retain ALS physician-researchers. Additionally, the fund will accelerate research and clinical trial participation and enhance the overall quality of clinical care for individuals living with ALS.

“With expanded efforts to treat ALS in Arkansas, including the recent opening of the ALS Clinic in Northwest Arkansas, UAMS is showing its commitment to providing the care that the citizens of Arkansas need to have fulfilling lives,” said C. Lowry Barnes, M.D., UAMS chancellor and professor and chair of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Rehabilitation. “I am grateful to have known Tommy and Kathryn May for many years, and they have always exemplified what it means to be Arkansans — leading by example to uplift one’s community and giving helpful hands to those in need. UAMS is deeply thankful for their continued leadership and philanthropy.”

The distinguished chair was named in honor of Tommy May of Pine Bluff, former CEO of Simmons First National Corp., whose extensive history of civic and community service reflects his dedication to education, health care and community development in Arkansas. May, a longtime supporter of UAMS, was diagnosed with ALS in 2005. In 2008, UAMS established the J. Thomas May Center for ALS Research in honor of May.

“The UAMS Department of Neurology is committed helping those who struggle with ALS in Arkansas, which we are doing through a coordinated effort through research and

clinical care,” said Rohit Dhall, M.D., chair of the Department of Neurology in the College of Medicine. “An important aspect to these efforts is philanthropy from dedicated advocates like Tommy and Kathryn May; we are humbled and thankful for their continued support.”

“Since my ALS diagnosis, I have been blessed to receive extraordinary, world-class care at UAMS. It gives me tremendous pride to know that so many Arkansans have access to this same level of compassionate, leading-edge treatment,” said Tommy May. “This endowed chair will hopefully enhance vital research and help find improved treatments for Arkansans and beyond. I am encouraged by the breakthroughs that lie ahead and the lives that will be touched through continued innovation in ALS research and clinical excellence. God has blessed Kathryn and I in so many ways and hopefully this gift will in some way make a difference in the lives of others.”

“Through its mission, UAMS does amazing things for Arkansas, and we are determined to be active participants in the advancement of the people of our state,” added Kathryn May.

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 eight 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, Institute for Digital Health & Innovation and the Institute for Community 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 3,553 students and 1,015 medical residents and fellows. It is the state’s largest public employer with about 12,000 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](#), [X](#) (formerly Twitter), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

Like us, we’re social:    