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UAMS Invests Gresham Richter, M.D., in James Y. Suen Chair in Otolaryngology

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) College of Medicine invested Gresham Richter, M.D., FACS, FAAP, an endowed professor and chair of the Department of Otolaryngology — Head and Neck Surgery, in the James Y. Suen, M.D., Chair in Otolaryngology — Head & Neck Surgery during a Nov. 16 ceremony.

"I would like to extend my appreciation to UAMS, my colleagues that have supported me through my journey, and the many donors who have made this chair possible," said Richter. "I am beyond thankful to Dr. Suen, his legacy, and the path he created for our department and doctors such as myself."

Richter also serves as the director of the Vascular Anomalies Center of Excellence at UAMS and Arkansas Children's. He has received numerous grants and published broadly in otolaryngology, vascular anomalies, and head and neck surgery.

"I'd like to extend my congratulations to Dr. Gresham Richter for this great honor, but I also would like to commend him on the leadership he has displayed in pushing his department forward," said UAMS Chancellor C. Lowry Barnes, M.D. "It is an exciting time for Arkansas and UAMS — much of this is because of the talented physician leaders such as Dr. Richter who are elevating healthcare in this state."

An endowed chair is among the highest academic honors a university can bestow on a faculty member. A 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 are among the most highly regarded scientists, physicians, and professors in their fields.

"As a prestigious honor, endowed chairs help us recruit and retain world-class educators, scientists, and clinicians, and they support the vital work and vision of the faculty who hold them," said Ron D. Robertson, M.D., dean of the College of Medicine.

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The chair was established in 1996 with $1.2 million from friends, colleagues, and patients of James Yee Suen, M.D. Suen, who passed away Nov. 4, was honored as the namesake and first holder of the chair of which the principal donor was John A. Phillips with other notable donors being the Heflin Family and Murphy Oil Corporation. Suen was a distinguished professor and former chairman of the Department of Otolaryngology — Head and Neck Surgery, a position he held for 43 years, making him the longest-serving chair in his field in the country. He treated patients with head and neck cancer for more than five decades. He and Kent Westbrook, M.D., a distinguished professor of surgery, co-founded the Arkansas Cancer Research Center, now the UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute. Suen also served as executive director of the Cancer Institute for seven years.

“As a surgeon, educator, researcher, and mentor, Dr. James Suen influenced generations of physicians and advanced the field through his clinical innovations, scholarly contributions, and internationally recognized medical textbooks,” said Robertson. “His legacy is reflected not only in the department he helped build, but also in the physicians he trained, the patients whose lives he touched, the research he helped advance, and the institution that continues to benefit from his vision and leadership.”

Born in Colorado, Richter received his undergraduate degree from the University of Colorado in Boulder and medical degree from the University of Colorado Anschutz in Aurora. Richter completed his residency in Otolaryngology — Head and Neck Surgery at UAMS and a fellowship in pediatric otolaryngology at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center in Ohio.

Returning to Arkansas, Richter joined UAMS and Arkansas Children’s, where he founded the Arkansas Vascular Biology Program, a robust clinic and laboratory dedicated to understanding and discovering new therapies for complex vascular lesions. He went on to serve as the chief of Pediatric Otolaryngology and as vice chair, and subsequently chair, of the Department of Otolaryngology — Head and Neck Surgery.

Richter has authored and edited five books and more than 50 book chapters, and 145 peer-reviewed manuscripts. He is a senior editor of “Bailey’s Head and Neck Surgery—Otolaryngology,” a leading textbook in the field. He has received numerous clinical and research awards including many years of recognition for Best Doctors in America. Further, he is a proud recipient of the Benjamin and Milton Waner Endowed Chair in Pediatric Facial Plastics and Reconstructive Surgery and the Hamlen and Siebert Endowed Chair in Pediatric Otolaryngology.

Richter maintains a busy clinical practice in pediatric otolaryngology and vascular anomalies. He is married with three children.

UAMS is the state’s only health sciences university, with colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions and Public Health; a graduate school; hospitals in Little Rock and Bryant; an orthopaedic 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

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& Neurosciences Institute, Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute, Psychiatric Research Institute, Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging, Translational Research Institute, and the Institute for Community Health Innovation. UAMS includes UAMS Health, a statewide health system that encompasses all of UAMS' clinical enterprise, including affiliated hospitals in Pine Bluff, Helena-West Helena, Mena, and Warren. UAMS is the only adult Level 1 trauma center in the state. UAMS has 3,813 students and 1,030 medical residents and fellows, and two dental residents. 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 uamshealth.com. Find us on Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube or Instagram.

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