Gentry Invested in Inaugural Carmelita S. Pablo, M.D. Endowed Chair in Anesthesiology

LITTLE ROCK – W. Brooks Gentry, M.D., chair of the Department of Anesthesiology in the College of Medicine at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), was invested Dec. 6 as the inaugural holder of the Carmelita S. Pablo, M.D., Endowed Chair in Anesthesiology.

Gentry has been at UAMS for two decades as a professor in the Department of Anesthesiology and the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology. He succeeded Pablo as department chair upon her retirement in 2014.

“Through his commitment to the highest quality education and patient care, Brooks Gentry has continued Carmelita Pablo’s legacy of strong leadership for the Department of Anesthesiology,” said UAMS Chancellor Dan Rahn, M.D. “It is a fitting tribute to Dr. Pablo’s legacy, and I know Dr. Gentry is dedicated to building further upon that mission.”

An endowed chair is the among the highest academic honors a university can bestow on a faculty member and is established with gifts of $1 million, which are invested and the 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 of expertise.

The Carmelita S. Pablo, M.D. Endowed Chair in Anesthesiology recognizes Pablo’s 33-year career and commitment to providing education and training for residents, as well as consistent, steady service to UAMS and its patients. Beginning in fall 2011, over a period of 10 months, UAMS anesthesiologists raised $634,000 toward the creation of the chair. The remaining funds were contributed by multiple donors in honor of Pablo.

Pablo joined UAMS in 1981, serving as chair of the Department of Anesthesiology from 2002 until her retirement. She served as interim chair of the department in 2001, and was an associate professor in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery in the College of Medicine. She taught more than 1,000 residents during her 31 years at UAMS.
“We as a department certainly wouldn’t be where we are without her leadership,” said Danny Wilkerson, M.D., professor in the Department of Anesthesiology and Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology in the UAMS College of Medicine. “She insisted on patient-centered care long before it was a buzzword.”

Pablo received her medical degree in 1968 from the University of Santo Tomas. At Temple University Hospital in Philadelphia, she completed her residency, followed by an anesthesiology fellowship at UAMS.

She credited Dola S. Thompson, M.D., former chair of the Department of Anesthesiology, who was in attendance at the ceremony, with recruiting her to UAMS. “I got a phone call from Dr. Dola Thompson, in a Southern accent, asking me to come and visit Little Rock,” Pablo said. “So I really want to thank Dr. Thompson for the seed that she planted in my mind. I was following in her footsteps.”

At UAMS, Pablo was chosen by students to receive the Red Sash Award three times for excellence in teaching as well as the Golden Apple Award as outstanding faculty of the year. She was nominated by colleagues for the Outstanding Woman Faculty Award multiple times and received the honor in 2014. She has been included in the list of Arkansas’ Best Doctors as named by Best Doctors Inc.

“Many of our residents went into anesthesia because of Brooks,” Pablo said. “When he goes into the OR, they are thrilled to see him. He is so deserving of this endowed chair.”

Other speakers at the ceremony included Pope Moseley, UAMS executive vice chancellor and dean of the College of Medicine; Michael J. Avram, Ph.D., associate professor of anesthesiology at the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine; and S. Michael Owens, Ph.D., professor in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology in the UAMS College of Medicine.

Rahn and Moseley presented Gentry with a commemorative medallion.

Gentry thanked those in the Department of Anesthesiology for their support, citing an atmosphere that allows for both personal and professional growth.

“I am certainly grateful to have this honor, but it is an even greater honor for our department,” Gentry said. “This is an amazing and great group of folks who are dedicated to excellent patient care. This award is mostly about you, and about the attention to patient care you’ve exhibited. You should enjoy this day, and this award, because you have earned it.”

Gentry joined the UAMS faculty in 1994. He received his bachelor’s degree in biology from Hendrix College in 1984. He came to UAMS for his medical degree, graduating in 1988, and then trained in anesthesiology at Northwestern University in Chicago. There he served as chief resident and completed a fellowship in clinical pharmacology and pharmacokinetics under Dr. Michael Avram’s guidance, along with Drs. Thomas Henthorn and Tom Krejcie. He has clinical interests in ambulatory and trauma anesthesiology.
“It was a good day for the Department of Anesthesiology at Northwestern when Brooks chose to pursue his training in anesthesiology,” Avram said. “We have watched with pride and admiration as Brooks’ career flourished after his return to UAMS.”

Since 1996, Gentry has partnered with Owens on research into the development of therapies for drug addiction. Their collaboration and work led to the formation of Intervexion Therapeutics LLC, a UAMS BioVentures company that works to develop antibody and vaccine medications, with Gentry serving as chief medical officer. He headed the first clinical trial of antibody medication to treat methamphetamine addiction.

Owens taught medical students at UAMS when Gentry was a medical student, but didn’t meet him until Gentry approached him at a national conference, asking to work together. “I came back and looked at his qualifications and thought, oh my goodness, this is really somebody special,” Owens said.

Before his appointment as chair of the Department of Anesthesiology in 2014, Gentry chaired the UAMS Committee on Clinical Research from 2009 to 2013, and has served on numerous university and institutional committees, including the Dean’s Senior Advisory Council.

Gentry has authored or co-authored more than 50 scientific papers and two book chapters. He serves as an oral examiner and previously as an oral exam editor for the American Board of Anesthesiology. He’s also been a reviewer for several publications, including the Journal of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics.

Gentry is a lifelong Arkansan. He and his wife of nearly 31 years, Shelley, have two children, Clayton and Sterling.

UAMS is the state’s only comprehensive academic health center, with colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions and Public Health; a graduate school; a hospital; a northwest Arkansas regional campus; a statewide network of regional centers; and seven institutes: the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, the Jackson T. Stephens Spine & Neurosciences Institute, the Myeloma Institute, the Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute, the Psychiatric Research Institute, the Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging and the Translational Research Institute. It is the only adult Level 1 trauma center in the state. UAMS has 3,021 students, 789 medical residents and five dental residents. It is the state’s largest public employer with more than 10,000 employees, including about 1,000 physicians and other professionals who provide care to patients at UAMS, Arkansas Children’s Hospital, the VA Medical Center and UAMS regional centers throughout the state. Visit www.uams.edu or www.uamshealth.com. Find us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or Instagram.

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