

\$1M donation largest in UT Dental Branch history

BY KAREN FOX

Houston—Orthodontist R.G. “Wick” Alexander of Arlington, Texas, donated \$1 million to the University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston Aug. 27—the school’s largest philanthropic gift in its 102-year history.

“With five orthodontists in the Alexander family, it is appropriate to give thanks to this wonderful specialty for the influence it has had in our lives and consequently thousands of our patients,” said Dr. Alexander, who dedicated the donation to the memory of Dr. A.P. Westfall, the founder of the Orthodontics program at the UT Dental Branch.

“Since it all started with Dr. Westfall, . . . we humbly dedicate this clinic to his memory. May his inspiration permeate through

these walls to all future generations,” he added.

The gift will go toward the construction of a new dental school building on the Texas Medical Center’s South Campus.

Dr. Catherine M. Flaitz, dean of the UT Dental Branch, said the school is “deeply grateful for this magnanimous expression of support for the future of dental education” at UT.

“Dr. Alexander shares our vision to have a strong clinical program that is both contemporary and patient-centered, while at the same time expanding our research efforts for the improvement of the overall health of the individual,” she said.

A 1962 graduate of UT Dental Branch who also completed his orthodontic training there in 1964, Dr. Alexander is known as the designer of the Alexander Discipline, a philosophy of orthodontic treatment.

The new dental school building—which is part of the construction of the new UT Research Park Complex—is expected to cost approximately \$90 million. A combined commitment of \$60 million from state Tuition Revenue Bonds and \$18 million in UT System Permanent University Funds is already in hand. The remainder is being solicited from foundations and individu-



Dr. R.G. “Wick” Alexander



Getting started: From left, Dr. Catherine Flaitz, dean of the University of Texas Dental Branch-Houston, Dr. James Willerson, president of the University of Texas Health Science Center, and Dr. Stephen F. Schwartz, ADA first vice president and chair of the University of Texas’ “Open To Health” fundraising initiative, break ground Aug. 30 on the new dental school building. The dental school construction is part of the new University of Texas Research Park Complex.

als in the “Open To Health” fundraising initiative.

The University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston is one of the 94 partners of Dental Education: Our Legacy—Our Future, so Dr. Alexander’s gift will be counted toward the partners’ objective of raising more than \$500 million by the end of 2014. (For information, go to www.ourlegacyourfuture.org.) ■