FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 5, 2014

Darrell K Royal Research Fund for Alzheimer's Disease
Awards $825,000 in Research Grants at
Ben-Willie-Darrell “Links & Lyrics” 2014 Gala

AUSTIN, TX – The Darrell K Royal Research Fund for Alzheimer’s Disease today awards $825,000 in grant funding for cutting-edge Alzheimer's research in Texas. Comprised of fundraising efforts from the DKR Fund's Ben-Willie-Darrell “4th & Goal” Gala in 2013, the grant money will go directly to advance scientific research in Texas.

"Alzheimer's disease is one of the most important public health challenges facing our society. The economic and social costs of caring for our afflicted parents and grandparents are much too high, and will continue escalating unless we come up with effective ways to stop and prevent Alzheimer's. The DKR Fund is an important new investment that will promote the ideas and efforts of young and innovative scientists in Texas and bring us closer to a world without Alzheimer's," said Ronald C. Petersen, M.D., Ph.D., DKR Fund Scientific Advisor.

DKR Fund Advisory Board Members will present Dr. Maya Henry (The University of Texas at Austin), Dr. Chandramallika Basak (The University of Texas at Dallas), Dr. Steven Patrie (University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center), Dr. Marie Monfils (The University of Texas at Austin), Dr. Florian Plattner (University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center) and Dr. Murat Durakoglugil (University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center) with grant funds totaling $825,000 to contribute novel, innovative and effective approaches to fight against Alzheimer's disease and related disorders.

These scientific researchers were selected by a review team of world-class scientists including, internationally distinguished clinician Dr. Peterson. Full bios and photos of grant recipients are included below.

The DKR Fund’s grant initiative is designed to support early-to-mid career Texas-based scientists within 12 years of completion of their terminal degree, and seeks to support collaborative research endeavors across the state of Texas as well as throughout the United States. The DKR Fund will provide support for up to three years of research, with potential for future follow-up funding to be considered. Proceeds from this year’s event will continue the Fund’s grant initiative.

In addition to the DKR Fund’s grant awards, the organization will announce the establishment of a $25,000 permanent endowment to the Austin chapter of the Texas Council on Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Disorders. The Edith Royal Caregiver Support Fund will provide the vital education and support for those caring for a loved one afflicted with this terrible disease.
“I am humbled by the great work of the DKR Fund in its efforts to find a cure for Alzheimer’s disease, which has impacted so many of our lives. I hope that through the continued efforts of this great team, we will find a cure,” said Edith Royal, wife of the late University of Texas legendary and beloved Coach Darrell K Royal.

The Ben-Willy-Darrell “Links & Lyrics” 2014 Gala will also feature a special performance by two-time CMA Entertainer of the Year and multi-Grammy award-winning country artist Vince Gill & Friends, held at the spectacular ACL Live at the Moody Theater. Prior to the concert, the Links event includes a golf tournament at Barton Creek Country Club’s Crenshaw Course, hosted by Honorary Golf Chairman Ben Crenshaw. Benefiting the DKR Fund, Links & Lyrics is an integral part of the DKR Fund’s ongoing fundraising efforts for AD research.

For more information about the DKR Fund visit www.dkrfund.org.

About the DKR Research Fund for Alzheimer’s Disease

The Darrell K Royal Research Fund for Alzheimer’s Disease represents the pinnacle of commitment to excellence in Research and Care for Texans to attempt to cure Alzheimer’s Disease (AD) in our lifetimes, to expand research into Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI), and expand the paradigms of care and access for Texans, enabling exposure to preventative care and treatment strategies aimed at combatting the epidemic of AD.

Darrell K Royal was an American football legend both as a player and a coach. At The University of Texas at Austin, Royal won more games than any other coach in Texas Longhorns football history. Royal was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease late in life; as a result, his family and friends have taken on the mission of funding cutting edge collaborative research and raising awareness for this debilitating disease.

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Dr. Maya Henry

Maya Henry, Ph.D., is a speech-language pathologist and faculty member in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at the University of Texas at Austin. She completed her Ph.D. at the University of Arizona and postdoctoral work at the University of California, San Francisco. Her research interests include the cognitive and neural bases of communication as well as rehabilitation of language and memory disorders resulting from stroke and neurodegenerative disease.

Dr. Chandramallika Basak

Dr. Chandramallika Basak, Ph.D., an Assistant Professor at the University of Texas at Dallas and a member of UTD’s Center for Vital Longevity, earned her dual MS (Statistics, Experimental Psychology) and Ph.D. (Experimental Psychology) from Syracuse University. Her honors include an Early Career Research Award from Cognitive Ageing Conference, Beckman Institute Post-doctoral Fellowship (2005-2008), Outstanding Dissertation Award and SU Graduate Fellowship (1999-2003).
Dr. Steven Patrie

Dr. Steven Patrie is the John L. Roach Scholar in Biomedical Research and Assistant Professor of Pathology (UT Southwestern Med Center) and Bioengineering (UT at Dallas). He received his Ph.D. at the University of Illinois, Department of Chemistry, in 2004; followed by post-doctorate work at the University of Chicago, Departments of Pathology and Chemistry, 2004-2008. Dr. Patrie’s research is innovating high-resolution proteomics technologies in order to characterize proteome alterations associated with neuroinflammation and neurodegeneration, key contributors to AD pathobiology.

Dr. Marie Monfils

Dr. Marie Monfils is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Texas at Austin. She received her Ph.D. in behavioral neuroscience from the Canadian Centre for Behavioral Neuroscience, under the supervision of Bryan Kolb and Jeffrey Kleim. She conducted a postdoctoral fellowship at New York University in Joseph LeDoux’s lab. Dr. Monfils is currently pursuing 3 research streams: (1) investigating post-consolidation manipulations that can persistently modify memories, (2) isolating the mechanisms that underlie social transmission of fear, and (3) examining the interactions between early experience, and fear learning in adulthood.
Dr. Murat Durakoglugil and Dr. Florian Plattner

Dr. Murat Durakoglugil received his M.D. and Ph.D. in Neuropharmacology from Hacettepe University Medical School, Ankara-Turkey. He completed part of his Ph.D. program and then his postdoctoral studies as a British Council Scholar at The Neurosciences Institute, Dundee, Scotland. In 2006 he joined the Department of Molecular Genetics at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, Texas where he currently works as a Research Assistant Professor in the Center for Alzheimer’s and Neurodegenerative Diseases.

Dr. Florian Plattner received a bachelor’s degree from the University of Basel, Basel, Switzerland, and a master’s degree from the European School of Biotechnology, Strasbourg, France. He graduated with a Ph.D. in Neurosciences from the University College of London, London, UK. For his post-doctorate, he joined the UCL Queen Square Brain Bank, London, UK, on a Young Investigator Fellowship from the Alzheimer’s Research Trust. He currently works as an Instructor at UT Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, TX, where he investigates molecular mechanism underlying learning & memory and their dysfunction in neurodegenerative disorders, such as Alzheimer’s disease.