The School of Nursing has named Rodney Hicks, R.N., Ph.D., (SON ’87, ’93) as the first UMC Health System Endowed Chair for Patient Safety. University Medical Center established the chair in July, giving the School of Nursing its first endowed chair in Lubbock. As chair and professor, Hicks will be involved in patient safety research and practices throughout West Texas. Previously, he was manager for patient safety research and practice for the United States Pharmacopeia Healthcare Quality and Information Department in Rockville, Md. In this role, he performed numerous studies aimed at improving safety throughout the medication-use process.

L. Frederick “Rick” and Ginger G. Francis pledged in August to fund the Frederick and Ginger Francis Endowed Dean’s Chair. The gift will subsidize expenses of the dean at the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine in El Paso. J. Manual de la Rosa, M.D., (SOM ’84) is the dean. Francis is a member of the Texas Tech System Board of Regents.

The Department of Pediatrics at the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine in El Paso has named Gilbert A. Handal, M.D., to the Endowed Chair in Pediatrics. Handal is regional chairman, professor and residency program director for the Department of Pediatrics. Martha Cuellar Acuña established the chair in July.

Peter and Anne Mounsey and the Mounsey Family Foundation created the Meier/Mounsey Endowed Chair in Pediatric Surgery at the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine in El Paso. The chair was established to honor Donald E. Meier, M.D., for his outstanding contributions to pediatric surgery. Meier, professor of clinical surgery and director of pediatric surgery, joined the TTUHSC faculty in 2003. Meier’s interest is in surgical education on a national and international level.

The Department of Dermatology in Lubbock has established its first endowed chair, naming it in honor of Chairman Emeritus Kenneth H. Neldner, M.D. Cloyce Stetson, M.D., department chairman, was named in September as chair holder. Neldner came to TTUHSC in 1983 as professor and chair of the dermatology department. He is credited with advancing the research and treatment of PXE, or pseudoxanthoma elasticum, an inherited disorder that causes calcification of the elastic tissues in the body. Among his contributions, Neldner and colleagues have identified the gene that causes PXE. He serves on numerous society-related associations and holds the distinction of writing the only book on PXE.

The ASCO Endowed Chair for Excellence in Women’s Health was established in August for the Laura W. Bush Institute for Women’s Health at Amarillo. The endowed chair will support a clinical research position in women’s health. The physician selected to fill this position will perform nationally recognized research, expand clinical programs, and educate future physicians in women’s health. The gift marks the second endowed chair given to TTUHSC by ASCO Inc., owned by the Wright family. Bill Wright and his family, Paula Wright Key and Charles E. Key, Brax and Beth Wright, and Steve and Lea Wright, established the Corinne Payne Wright Regents Endowed Chair in Alzheimer’s disease in August 2005.