



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER™

News Release

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Board of Regents Approves Appointment of Grover E. Murray Professors *TTUHSC Professors Receive Highest Faculty Honor*

The Texas Tech University System (TTU System) Board of Regents last week (Aug. 10) approved the appointment of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) F. Marie Hall Institute for Rural and Community Health Executive Vice President and Director Billy U. Philips, Ph.D., MPH, and Thomas J. Abbruscato, Ph.D., TTUHSC Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences senior associate dean, as Grover E. Murray Professors.

The Grover E. Murray Professorship is intended for faculty members who have attained national and international distinction in their fields for outstanding research, excellence in scholarship and creative achievement.

TTUHSC President Lori Rice-Spearman, Ph.D., said both exemplify all of these criteria.

“Dr. Philips and Dr. Abbruscato are both nationally and internationally recognized for their work, and we thank them for committing their careers to our great university,” Rice-Spearman said at the TTU System Board of Regents meeting last week.

Philips holds the endowed F. Marie Hall Chair in Rural Health and is a full professor in the School of Medicine Department of Family and Community Medicine. He also is recognized nationally for his expertise in cancer control education.

Philips joined TTUHSC in 2009 and is a proven innovator who has developed multiple proofs of concept programs since then, including the Telemedicine Wellness Intervention Triage and Referral Project and the Campus Alliance for Telehealth Resource (CATR) program, which led to TTUHSC receiving more than \$30 million for Texas Child Health Access Through Telemedicine (TCHATT). He started Next Gen 911 and has secured continued state funding for the project. Philips also created the Frontiers in Telemedicine (FIT) Lab, the first hands-on telehealth simulation learning lab in the U.S.

Philips also is an accomplished researcher with more than \$40 million in external funding from federal and state organizations, including the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, Health Resources and Services Administration, Texas State Office of Rural Health and Texas Commission on State Emergency Communications.

In 2017, Philips received the TTU System [Chancellor’s Council Distinguished Research Award](#) in recognition of his research contributions at TTUHSC.

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He is an ardent supporter of students and has held multiple academic roles across the university, including serving as acting dean for the newly formed TTUHSC Julia Jones Matthews School of Population and Public Health.

Abbruscato, associate dean for GSBS on the Amarillo campus since 2008, has been a member of the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the Jerry H. Hodge School of Pharmacy. He was hired as an assistant professor in January 2000, promoted to associate professor with tenure in 2006, became a full professor in 2012 and was named a TTUHSC University Distinguished Professor in 2015.

His teaching, clinical and research interests lie in blood-brain barrier and transport, neurovascular protection in brain ischemia/stroke and neurovascular effects of nicotine and tobacco chemicals. Among the more than 30 awards bestowed on Abbruscato are the TTUHSC President's Young Investigator Award in 2003 and the TTU System Chancellor's Council Distinguished Research Award in [2013](#) and [2020](#).

Currently the principal investigator in four active National Institute of Health (NIH) funded Research Project Grant (R01) grants, Abbruscato has had more than 10 past extramurally funded NIH grants as well as from other federal agencies, foundations and industries.

The quality of Abbruscato's publications, his reputation as an expert in his field and as a sought-after conference speaker worldwide have brought TTUHSC national and international recognition.

The Grover E. Murray Professorship is named in honor of Grover E. Murray, the first president of TTUHSC.