

Zook Endowed Chair in Plastic Surgery named

Michael W. Neumeister, M.D., professor and chair of the SIU Division of Plastic Surgery, was named the Elvin G. Zook, M.D. Endowed Chair in Plastic Surgery at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine.

The title recognizes the \$1 million raised through the Memorial Medical Center Foundation for an endowment created by SIU and the MMC Foundation, honoring Dr. Zook's 34-year career. Interest earned from the endowment will be used for SIU plastic surgery resident education and research.

"An endowed chair is the highest honor that a university can bestow on a faculty member who has had a distinguished career in a particular field of study," said Dr. Gary Dunnington, professor and chair of SIU's surgery department. "Dr. Zook has meant so much to our medical students, residents and faculty as well as to his patients and this community. He has raised the bar in plastic surgery both nationally and internationally."

For 32 years, Dr. Zook was chair of the plastic surgery division and plastic surgery residency program, both of which he founded at the School. He joined the SIU faculty in 1973 as the first plastic surgeon in central Illinois and stepped down from the chairmanship in June 2006.

Dr. Neumeister used words such as "passion," "integrity," "professionalism," and "dedication to his mission" to describe Dr. Zook and related a few "Zook stories" during the presentation in February. The endowment, Dr. Neumeister said, is the "frame around Dr. Zook's footprint."

Anyone who has trained with Dr. Zook knows he has been a mentor and father figure, a role Dr. Zook has taken seriously, telling his departing students and residents, "I trained you, so I am responsible for you the rest of your life."

Noted as "constantly teaching," Dr. Zook continues as a faculty member at SIU and regularly sees patients. He helped train more than 50 plastic surgery residents, 20 microsurgery/hand fellows, 10 burn fellows and countless medical students.

Dr. Neumeister was named chair of



Dr. Neumeister and Dr. Zook pose in the Pearson Museum following the presentation of Dr. Neumeister as the Elvin G. Zook, M.D. Endowed Chair in Plastic Surgery.

SIU's plastic surgery division in July 2006. He has continued as director of the plastic surgery residency program and the microsurgery research laboratory at SIU and of the wound care center at Memorial Medical Center. He first joined the SIU faculty in 1997, specializing in hand surgery and microsurgery.

Prior to joining SIU, Dr. Neumeister completed a fellowship in hand and microsurgery at SIU's Plastic Surgery Institute (1997). He served at Harvard University's Brigham & Women's Hospital in Boston as a microsurgery fellow (1996). He completed his residency in plastic surgery at Manitoba University in Winnipeg, Manitoba (1996) and his general surgery residency at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia (1993). Dr. Neumeister earned his medical degree at the University of Toronto (1988) and bachelor's in physiology/pharmacology at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario (1984).

Dr. Neumeister is board certified in plastic surgery by both the Royal College of Surgeons of Canada and the American Board of Plastic Surgeons. His research interests include tissue engineering,

the role of stem cells in reconstruction, ischemia reperfusion, peripheral nerve, and burn modulation.

His memberships include the Plastic Surgery Research Council, American Association for Hand Surgery, American Burn Association, American Society of Reconstructive Microsurgery, American Society for Surgery of the Hand, Association of Academic Chairmen of Plastic Surgery and American Association of Plastic Surgeons.

He has been elected to several national committees including the American Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery, the American Association for Surgery of the Hand, and the American Society of Plastic Surgery. Dr. Neumeister is currently the vice-president of the Midwest Plastic Surgery Society and the chair of the Plastic Surgery Research Council. ●●●