

PKD PIONEER GRANTHAM RETIRES FROM KUMC

Capping a remarkable career spanning five decades, renowned nephrologist Jared Grantham, MD, is retiring from the University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC) with the knowledge that his body of research has led to improved understanding of polycystic kidney disease (PKD), a disorder that afflicted a childhood friend from his hometown of Johnson, Kansas.

PKD is one of the most common of all life-threatening genetic diseases, affecting 600,000 Americans and 12.5 million people worldwide. There is still no known cure, although thanks to the efforts of Grantham and his collaborators, a potential treatment is now undergoing drug trials.

Kansas-born and raised, Grantham majored in biology at Baker University and finished medical school and his residency at KUMC. He went on to the National Institutes of Health for a research fellowship in the Laboratory of Kidney and Electrolyte Metabolism, where he studied the mechanism by which kidney tubules reabsorb solutes and water.

In 1970, he became director of KUMC's Nephrology Division, building it into a world-class program. "There was no better place to do training," said Darren Wallace, PhD, one of many researchers Grantham recruited to collaborate on PKD research.

In 1972, Grantham discovered that the renal tubules of kidneys secreted as well as reabsorbed solutes and water. This finding formed the basis of a series of experiments demonstrating that in patients with polycystic kidney

disease, cysts were in fact distended renal tubules that secreted fluid into an expanding cavity.

In 1982, Grantham teamed with Joseph Bruening to create the Polycystic Kidney Research Foundation (now called the PKD Foundation), headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri. The PKD Foundation has been responsible for directly funding more than \$31 million in national and international grants and in influencing federal support for PKD research to the extent of an additional \$35 million per year.

Grantham cofounded the Kidney Institute (KI) on the KUMC campus, and was founding editor of the *Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*.

"Dr. Grantham is the model of the successful physician scientist," said Wallace, noting **the rarity of finding an individual who thrives in clinical practice and in the laboratory.**

This sentiment was echoed by Alan Yu, MD, director of the Kidney Institute and Division of Nephrology and Hypertension. "Dr. Grantham has been an intellectual giant and thought leader in the field of nephrology," said Yu. "His work has had tremendous impact in kidney research and brought international recognition to KUMC. His presence on campus will be sorely missed, but he leaves a lasting legacy of scientific excellence and clinical dedication that will continue in the division and the KI."



Jared Grantham, MD