

Leaving a legacy

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Ross Klingsberg, MD, is the Dean Baker Ellithorpe, MD, Professor in the Tulane School of Medicine and director of the Tulane Adult Cystic Fibrosis Program. (Photo by Sally Asher)

During his long career at Tulane University School of Medicine, Dean Baker Ellithorpe, MD (M '62, I '63, R '68, F '71), became known for his passion for helping patients with cystic fibrosis. He included Tulane School of Medicine in his estate plans by creating a professorship to ensure his mission lives on.

Ross Klingsberg, MD (A&S '88, M '02, F '08), an associate professor at the School of Medicine, is the inaugural Dean Baker Ellithorpe, MD, Professor. Dr. Ellithorpe's gift has allowed Dr. Klingsberg to amplify the impact of the work that Tulane is doing to

aid cystic fibrosis patients.

“The professorship has expanded our horizons tremendously,” said Dr. Klingsberg. “Because of Dr. Ellithorpe, the work that we do has been able to flourish and grow and generate more progress in cystic fibrosis care and research.”

Because of the momentum provided by the professorship, Tulane has been able to add a second doctor specializing in care of cystic fibrosis and has also been approved as a Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Therapeutic Development Center, Klingsberg said. Being a part of this prestigious nationwide network of cystic fibrosis care centers means that Tulane patients have the opportunity to become part of groundbreaking clinical trials, he added.

Cystic fibrosis is a complex disease, and patient care is very specialized. Being named to the Ellithorpe Professorship means Dr. Klingsberg has been able to dedicate more of his time to the care of cystic fibrosis patients. “The professorship has given me time to work on something that I’m passionate about that makes a difference in people’s lives.”

Dr. Ellithorpe was the School of Medicine’s first director of the Adult Cystic Fibrosis Program when it was established in 1993. After more than 51 years of service to Tulane, he passed away on Feb. 19, 2014. Before he died, he discussed plans to establish an endowed professorship in pulmonary medicine for a faculty member with an interest in cystic fibrosis.

Dr. Klingsberg was named to the professorship in 2014, and it is particularly meaningful to him because Dr. Ellithorpe was his mentor at Tulane. Dr. Klingsberg is now the director of the Adult Cystic Fibrosis Program, and he is proud to carry on the work that his advisor started.

“There’s no better way to keep the memory of someone alive than to give a gift in their name.”