

**University of Lethbridge Media Release -- Southern Alberta  
businessman Dr. Tom Droog Provides \$1 Million Gift to U of  
L for Emmy Droog Chair in Complementary and Alternative  
Health Care**

The University of Lethbridge Faculty of Health Sciences will broaden its research and teaching horizons in a unique research discipline with the establishment of a \$2 million endowment at the University – enabled by a gift of \$1 million from southern Alberta businessman Dr. Tom Droog (LLD '06).

Droog's gift will allow the U of L to establish the Emmy Droog Chair in Complementary and Alternative Health Care – the Faculty's first endowed Professorship.

The professorship will enable evidence-based research to explore the issues and care practices associated with complementary and alternative medicine.

“I believe in education and alternative healing and I'm happy to be able to support them both through this gift,” says Droog, who received an Honorary Degree from the U of L in 2006. “I believe that ideas come from ideas and I think this has awesome potential.”

Mark Pijl Zieber, a Faculty of Health Sciences nursing researcher, says that complementary and alternative health hasn't always been complementary or alternative – at one time it was the norm. Even today, statistics show that more than 75 per cent of Canadians access complementary and alternative health care.

“Humans have been delivering health care throughout history, and before western medicine, these were the therapies people used,” says Pijl Zieber. “It's only since the development of western medicine that traditional beliefs have been labeled alternative.

While we certainly do benefit from the advances made by western medicine, we've lost many of the other options."

Pijl Zieber says that providing effective health care is not always about a cure, especially when considering chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease and even cancer.

"Sometimes these diseases can't be beaten, but they can, and need to be, managed – it's about maximizing a person's quality of life. This is at the heart of the Droog gift. It's not about abandoning the institution of western medicine, it's about facilitating a broader approach to health care."

The award is named for Droog's late wife, Emmy, who lost a long battle with cancer in 2010. Both originally from Holland, the couple met in Ontario and headed west in 1972 to take advantage of the opportunities offered in Alberta.

They settled near Bow Island, Alta., and farmed for several years before founding Alberta Sunflower Seeds, Ltd., which grew over a 30-year period to become Spitz Sunflower Seeds, a popular North American snack food.

Partners in everything, the Droogs worked together to build their business while raising two children: a daughter Christy (Droog) Strom (BN '03) is a U of L graduate in nursing who is a community care case manager at Lethbridge Community Care, and son Randy, who lives in Ontario. In 2008, the Droogs sold Spitz to PepsiCo.

Dr. Christopher Hosgood, the dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, is looking forward to the opportunities afforded by this significant gift, which will benefit all programs in the Faculty.

"Nursing, addictions counselling and public health at the U of L

are naturally inclined to understanding alternative therapies, although we've never had the chance to fully explore some of those options. Thanks to Dr. Droog's gift, we can now develop expertise in these areas."

Hosgood adds that as the largest individual donation to health sciences programming at the U of L, Droog's gift represents a vote of confidence in the Faculty and helps set the stage for future growth.

"It is very encouraging for our Faculty to know that we have such a strong, committed individual working alongside us. We are honoured to have been chosen as the recipient of this gift and are committed to using the resources we've been entrusted with wisely," says Hosgood.

University of Lethbridge President Dr. Mike Mahon says the gift will be a unique complement to existing health sciences programming and will help the U of L to better serve its students and the community.

"We are proud to have the opportunity to work with Tom and his family in developing this professorship, which we expect will further connect our university to the community through the various individuals and organizations offering alternative and complementary health-care solutions," says Mahon.

"The Emmy Droog Professorship in Complementary and Alternative Health Care is a wonderful tribute and shows Tom's commitment to educating the next generation of health-care professionals."

For Droog and his family, education is key.

"When doctors mention the word cancer, people stop listening,"

says Droog, who was devastated when his wife was diagnosed with the disease in 2007. Over the next three years, the couple worked together investigating various health-care options that would help improve Emmy's quality of life as she battled her illness.

As a health-care practitioner, Droog's daughter Christy Strom sees the benefits that training in many different health-care disciplines can provide.

"It's important to get this information into the mainstream," says Strom. "Some of the alternative and complementary treatments are very simple, the problem is they're expensive and not everyone has access to them. We also need to educate health-care professionals about alternative therapies so that they can better serve their patients."

The U of L will develop a position description for the Emmy Droog Professor in Complementary and Alternative Health Care, and begin a recruiting process that could see a person placed in the Faculty of Health Sciences in time for the Fall 2012 semester.

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