

UPHOLDING MAYO TRADITIONS

“I want to uphold the Mayo tradition in this building, as if it were in Rochester,” William Welborn, M.D., says. While there are differences between Dr. Welborn’s practice and Mayo Clinic, he chooses to emphasize the similarities — shared values and a focused mission: putting the needs of the patient first.

Dr. Welborn, a dermatologist in northern Alabama, wants to ensure that his patients are comfortable in seeking medical help and visiting his office. To break down barriers that can exist between physician and patients, there are no white coats in his office.

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The office in which he practices also reinforces the human touch. In its architecture, his building doesn’t resemble facilities on any Mayo campus. It is residential in scale, set back from a quiet street and equipped with wood-burning stoves. But Dr. Welborn and his wife, Linda, designed and built the perfect setting to reflect the Mayo focus on the needs of the patient. The waiting area feels like a comfortable family room; the consultation and treatment rooms are welcoming.

And Mayo memorabilia cover the walls. There are historical photographs, cartoons, letters and certificates showing memberships in various Mayo organizations, including the O’Leary Society, The Doctors Mayo Society and The Mayo Legacy.

GIVING BACK

The Welborns have generously supported Mayo Clinic in recognition of the training he was provided, the medical care they have received and the way Mayo has influenced their lives. “I have always associated Mayo Clinic with the best,” Dr. Welborn says. “My grandfather told me it was the best place to become a doctor. He was right.”

Although they would like their gifts to support the Department of Dermatology, they have not specifically designated their use. “We trust Mayo to do what needs to be done,” Dr. Welborn says.

The Welborns have been making decisions together for decades. They were high school sweethearts in the same small town, where they now live and where he practices. Mrs. Welborn graduated from Peabody College of Education and later earned a master’s degree there. Dr. Welborn completed undergraduate studies and medical school at Vanderbilt University. The couple then ventured north to Mayo Clinic in Rochester for his residency.

The city provided the Welborns their first extended experience with snow and northern cold. Kate, the first

of their two children, was a just few months old when the family arrived. “Bill would be working all day, but I enjoyed getting out in town,” Linda Welborn says.

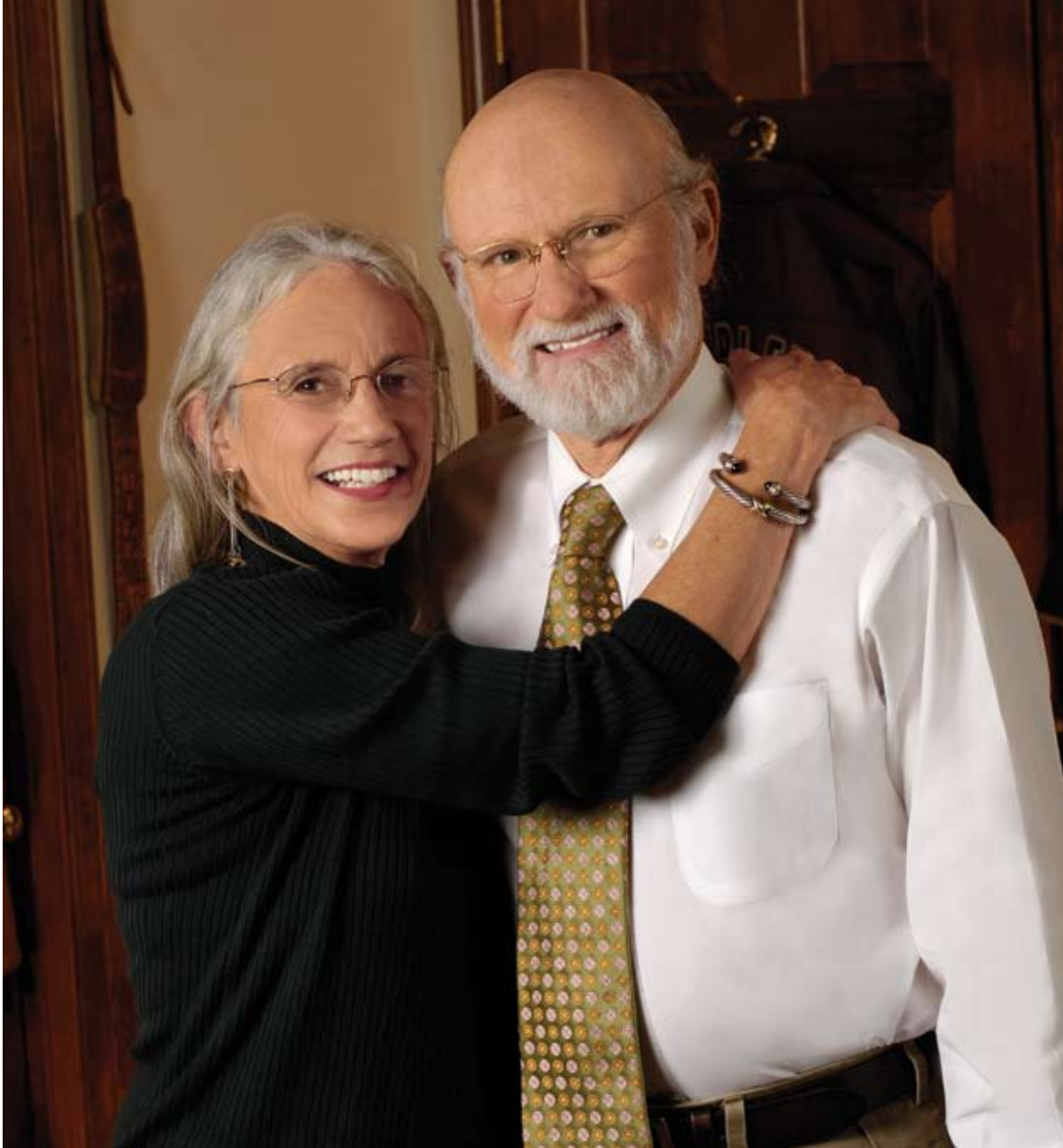
Dr. Welborn remembers initially being overwhelmed by the size of the clinic and the nature of the facilities. More importantly, he says, he was overwhelmed by the quality and kindness of the Mayo faculty.

After completing his Dermatology Residency in Rochester, Dr. Welborn served two years as a major in the Army. “I was the only dermatologist on the base in Louisiana,” he remembers. “It was great to be able to phone Mayo doctors for advice.”

Back home in northern Alabama, Dr. Welborn set up practice, and one month later, their son, Will, was born. Within a few years, the Welborns had the office building constructed, based on plans for a Connecticut ship captain’s home — with some changes — and influenced by Colonial Williamsburg, Va., and Mayo Clinic.

Today, Dr. Welborn is the only dermatologist serving residents of a county with a population of 55,000. “Being a sole practitioner is lonesome,” he says. “I wish more physicians were interested in practicing in small, rural areas. The need is so great, as are the rewards.”

Linda and William Welborn, M.D.



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