



NAMESAKES

Medical Center Honors Brothers

Burn and trauma services are named in recognition of longtime donors Dennis and Laurence Kessler.

By Michael Wentzel

FOR PATIENTS EXPERIENCING SUDDEN INJURIES, burn and trauma services at the Medical Center are literally lifesavers. Injury is the fifth leading cause of death in Americans under age 44, and the University is home to the only Level One trauma program in its region.

Now those services have been renamed to honor two local brothers—restaurateurs Dennis and Laurence Kessler—who have raised millions to support the services and who share a vision for developing regional burn and trauma care even further.

Founders and co-owners of the Kessler Group Inc. & Kessler Family LLC—which

▲ **TEAM SUPPORT:** Brothers Dennis (left), the Ackley Professor at the Simon School, and Laurence Kessler, a trustee, hope to help ensure future improvements in burn and trauma services at the Medical Center.

operates 21 Burger King and 48 Friendly's restaurants in the greater Rochester area—the Kesslers have given more than \$3 million to the Medical Center's burn and trauma services. With a new commitment of \$1 million more, they'll create an endowment intended to ensure future growth of the programs, as well as provide support to other University projects.

In recognition of the Kesslers' generosity, the Medical Center has renamed the entire program the Kessler Burn & Trauma Center. It encompasses all areas within the Medical Center that provide emergent, inpatient, and outpatient care for patients with traumatic injuries and burns.

"Rochester is our community, and we are thrilled to be able to support the families in our region," says Laurence Kessler, who was named to the University's Board of Trustees this spring. Dennis Kessler is the Edward J. and Agnes V. Ackley Executive Professor of Entrepreneurship at the

Simon School and is a member of the Medical Center's board of directors.

The center treats more than 3,000 people each year with severe blunt and penetrating injuries and features the area's only dedicated burn service.

"Year after year, the Kesslers have been the largest individual donors to Strong Memorial Hospital," says Bradford Berk '81M (MD/PhD), CEO of the Medical Center. "Kessler donations have given us the area's best facilities for treating patients with traumatic injuries or burns. Their ongoing commitment to the center's endowment will ensure that our program meets regional needs and sets the pace nationally among centers that treat burns and other traumatic injuries."

With the endowment funded by the Kesslers, the center hopes to attract more specialists who can offer a wider array of treatment options, as well as to expand clinical research and improve patient care and surgical training. [B](#)

Michael Wentzel is the editor of Rochester Medicine.