

**chron.com**

HOME NEWS SPORTS BUSINESS ENTERTAINMENT LIFE TRAVEL COMICS JOBS REAL ESTATE CARS SHOPPING

SEARCH  IN Chron.com  [subscribe now](#)

**Lower MyBills.com** **\$160,000 Mortgage for Under \$785/Month!** **Bad Credit OK**

[Click Your State](#)

AL AK AZ AR CA CO CT DE DC FL GA HI ID IL IN IA KS KY LA ME MD MA MI MN MS MO  
MT NE NV NH NJ NM NY NC ND OH OK OR PA RI SC SD TN TX UT VT VA WA WV WI WY

© 2005 LowerMyBills, Inc.

**MORE**

- A Texas appeals court keeps mom's conviction
- Fugitive missing a finger found
- Houston police officer shot during drug sting
- Police: Female duo may be on crime spree
- Sister says UT student partied before death
- \$10 billion suit against tobacco firm thrown out
- Time-telling gadgets spawn watchless youths
- Vouchers end amid fears they may be voided
- New Orleans still plans to celebrate Christmas
- Oscar winners turn success into mediocrity
- Goodrich star a small-town girl with big-time skills

**Front page**

June 11, 2005, 11:24PM

## Cloning pioneer hopes to collaborate with Medical Center

Baylor is receptive, but federal stem-cell limits are an obstacle

By **TODD ACKERMAN**  
Copyright 2005 Houston Chronicle

South Korean human-embryo cloning pioneer Woo Suk Hwang brought his vision of the future of medicine to Houston on Saturday, a science he hopes will one day provide "health and hope to the suffering."

In his first U.S. appearance since his breakthrough research was reported three weeks ago, Hwang also appealed for collaboration between his lab and the institutions of the Texas Medical Center, which he called the home of regenerative medicine.


"I remain greatly indebted to Texas for saving countless lives with organ donation and so want to help it remain at the world's forefront," said Hwang. "This is important for Texas, the United States and all of us around the world since we learn so much from the brilliant doctors and scientists here."

Hwang made the comments at a summit on embryonic stem cells at Baylor College of Medicine, where famed heart surgeon Dr. Michael DeBakey did pioneering research in the 1950s and '60s that revitalized patients' cardiovascular systems. The summit ends today.


Dr. William Brinkley, a Baylor scientist and administrator who said he "felt like he was seeing a historic moment in 21st-century medicine," told Hwang that Baylor would be honored to collaborate. But it remains to be seen whether the medical school will be able to work with the South Korean lab's cloned embryonic stem-cell lines. Although such cloning is legal

**YOU COULD WIN A NEW FORD EXPLORER!**

ENTER THE FORD ROAD TO KONA SWEEPSTAKES



**ROAD TO KONA**

**SPONSORED LINKS**

[Lower Mortgage Rates - FREE QUOTES](#)

\$150,000 Mortgage, as low as \$483 a month. Compare up to 4 FREE offers - All Credit Types OK!

[pickAmortgage.com](http://pickAmortgage.com)

### Find Your Graduating Class



### I Graduated in:

1995  
1985  
1975  
1965  
1955

 [classmates.com](#)

in Texas — a bill to ban it failed to pass in the just-concluded legislative session — it is still problematic because so much of Baylor's research is federally funded. Federal funds and federally funded resources can be used only on embryonic stem-cell lines created years ago.

Brinkley said he can see Baylor collaborating with Hwang's lab on its research with mice. On Saturday, Baylor announced the creation of a Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine Center. The University of Texas Health Science Center already has a similar center.

Hwang made headlines around the world last month when he reported making nearly a dozen cloned human embryos that are genetic twins of diseased patients. His team also isolated from them some stem cells, which can change into virtually every kind of tissue, providing a potentially endless source of replacement parts for diseased organs.

Hwang's achievement built on a 2004 breakthrough when he produced the first cloned human embryonic stem-cell line. The new research showed greater efficiency — he required only 17 eggs on average for each batch of stem cells, compared with the 250 he needed for the single embryo a year ago — and the ability to make customized tissue unlikely to be rejected by a patient's immune system.

But the procedure, known as therapeutic cloning, is controversial, even more so than research on embryos that are about to be discarded by fertility clinics. The day after Hwang's research was reported, President Bush said, "I worry about a world in which cloning would be acceptable."

The purpose of the summit involved strategizing to overcome such opposition and get money flowing. It brought together advocates from the fields of academia, politics, business, health care and medicine.

Among the first to speak was DeBakey, who said he has "tremendous esteem for researchers in the field" and wished them well. Citing examples from history, he said that the controversy will be resolved as soon as someone is cured by the science.

Neal Lane, a Rice University physics professor who was chief science adviser for President Clinton, said he "can't understand the ethical basis" for the U.S. policy that allows federal funding only for research on cell lines established before Aug. 9, 2001. He called the research "far too important to be wedged at the center of this political quagmire."

But the star of the summit was clearly Hwang. The day's biggest crowd turned out for his highly scientific talk, which included data about the many organ defects and other health problems in cloned animals, a disincentive to anyone trying human reproductive cloning.

Before his talk, Hwang talked about his research and newfound celebrity status in an interview with the Houston Chronicle. Acknowledging the stories about his long hours are true — he

works 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Saturday, then takes it easier Sunday by starting at 7 a.m. — he said, "My hobby is work; work is everything."

Told by a colleague he's going to become the next Elvis, Hwang said his dream was always to be "a pure scientist, not to become popular." He might not have sought it, but the youthful-looking 53-year-old finds journalists and others pursuing him to hear his story. His research is already the subject of a postage stamp in South Korea, and he regularly receives handwritten letters from children with diseases and their parents asking when breakthrough treatment is likely.

"The world owes a debt to Dr. Hwang and to South Korea," said Gerald Schatten, a reproductive scientist with the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and the only U.S. member of Hwang's team. "If not for them, it wouldn't happen on Earth."

[todd.ackerman@chron.com](mailto:todd.ackerman@chron.com)

**Subscribe for less than 30 cents a day!**



EMAIL THIS STORY



PRINTER FRIENDLY FORMAT



[Copyright Notice & Privacy Policy](#) | [Help](#) | [Report a Problem](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Place an ad](#)