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Dr. Mitchell Forman is the man credited with establishing Nevada's second—and Southern Nevada's first—medical school, Touro University-Nevada. "I think I was at the right place at the right time to provide a service that was very needed in this community," he said. "I happened to be lucky enough to be the founding dean of this institution."

In order for Forman to accept what he considered a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," he and his wife left their home in Fort Worth, Tex. And moved to one of the fastest-growing cities in the country.

In two short years, Forman has seen Touro grow from a small graduating class of 78 D.O students to a current class of 135. Touro now offers a doctorate in osteopathic medicine; master's degrees in nursing, school administration, special education, occupational therapy and physician assistant studies; a bachelor's degree in nursing; and endorsements in teaching English as a second language, autism and literacy. However, for Forman, the innovation does not stop there. "We're 2 years old and still have a lot of growing to do," he said.

Forman worked closely with Dr. Mark Harter, formerly of the University of Nevada School of Medicine, to develop Touro. He likened himself and Harter to pioneers because, with

the help of Forman's faculty, they created something that didn't exist. He considers himself lucky to have found a staff of extraordinary talented people. "This is not the Mitch Forman show," he said, "This is a collaboration."

Forman hopes to continue to foster Touro's Orthodox Jewish origins, especially since Southern Nevada houses one of the fastest-growing Jewish communities. Although Touro has students of all regions and backgrounds, it acknowledges its Orthodox Jewish roots by keeping a kosher campus and closing on Jewish holidays.

"It creates an environment where Orthodox Jewish students can be part of an education system and still practice religion," he said, adding that success requires a balance between religion, study and work. However, Touro not only accepts diversity, but also embraces it, he added.

Although Forman has his hands full acting as dean of Touro, he has new goals—such as keeping doctors and nurses in Nevada—to achieve. "There is no question that Nevada is in a crisis," he said. "The need for healthcare is a big problem." Forman hopes to assist in solving the crisis by continuing to expand programs Touro offers and by matching Touro students and graduates with

physicians and nurses in the community for work and internships. "If students have to go out-of-state for residency, they'll be lost," he said, adding that research shows medical graduates tend to practice within 50 miles from where they trained.

He also intends to establish programs with K-12 schools to show students of all ages that a medical career is an attainable goal. He frequently connects with high schools and colleges to try to recruit their very best for a medical career.

Additionally, he works to recruit and partner with local doctors to reach part-time at the university, so Touro students have the chance to learn from medical professionals with experience in the field.

When Forman first arrived in Nevada, he had to give up his practice because of a lack of time. As one of only 23 rheumatologists in Nevada, he has returned to seeing patients again, which he said adds a new perspective to his life because he can give back to the community and do what he has been trained to do. He hopes to serve as a role model for his students by continuing his practice and also teaching classes at Touro.