

# MEN *of* DISTINCTION



Don Jordan

*and*

The Men of Distinction Steering Committee

*welcome you to the*

# MEN *of* DISTINCTION

## ANNUAL AWARDS LUNCHEON

*honoring*

JAMES W. CROWNOVER

ROBERT C. MCNAIR

CHARLIE THOMAS

JAMES T. WILLERSON, M.D.

□ □ □

Presented by:



□ □ □

May 8, 2013  
River Oaks Country Club



**Don Jordan**

*2013 Men of Distinction  
Awards Luncheon Chair*

Dear Friends and Supporters of Men of Distinction,

Thank you for supporting the 2013 Men of Distinction. Houston is fortunate to have men of vision who have led this city to greatness, and our honorees this year have contributed their personal brand of leadership to our city, our state and our country.

Houston didn't just happen. It didn't grow into one of the most outstanding cities in the world because it had the best location, the best weather or a strong early history. Men of imagination, strength and honor built our city and our honorees today did not hesitate when their turn came. Houston continues to strengthen our reputation in energy, medicine, business and sports because of these men.

The Men of Distinction recognizes contributions of individuals, but also through your participation, supports the research and work of the Texas Medical Center serving people throughout the world. Future generations will benefit in part by what we are doing today.

The Men of Distinction Luncheon is in its seventh year and has raised over two million dollars  
in support of our great city. Houston will not stop growing because our leaders will not stop showing the way.

Thank you again for your help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don D. Jordan".

Don D. Jordan  
Chairman

## LUNCHEON CHAIR

Don Jordan



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## STEERING COMMITTEE

*Back row left to right: David Wuthrich, Ed McMahon, Steve Mach, Patrick Burk*

*Middle row left to right: Scott Basinger, Philip Bahr, Paul Somerville, Tony Gracely, Michael Mithoff*

*Front row left to right: Jack Kendall, Jesse Tutor, Lisa Kennedy, Scott Evans, Leslie Bowlin Bennett, John Eads and Harry Mach.*



## HOUSTON AREA LEXUS DEALERS

*left to right: Bret Aldridge, David Trice, Jerry Foyt, Joey Dupuis*

Lexus and the Houston Area Lexus Dealers proudly join together in support of the Men of Distinction. It is an honor to partner and support an organization whose values and philanthropy mirror those of our dealerships and Brand. We recognize with gratitude their tireless passion to improve and give back to our community.

In the Lexus world the phrases “we can, we will” and “continuously pursuing perfection” are a part of our mission daily. The Men of Distinction can and will continue to improve our community through their philanthropic endeavors.

The following pages honor this year’s Men of Distinction and their commitment to our community.

Your Houston Area Lexus Dealers

# ANNUAL AWARDS LUNCHEON PROGRAM

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## WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Tom Koch

## INVOCATION

The Rev. Charles P. St-Onge, M.Sc., M.Div.  
Memorial Lutheran Church

## PRESENTATION OF 2013 BENEFICIARIES

## LUNCH

## PRESENTATION OF 2013 HONOREES

## CLOSING REMARKS

Don Jordan

□ □ □

## MENU

### WEDGE SALAD

*CRISP ICEBERG, ROMA TOMATO, PICKLED RED ONION, BRIE CHEESE AND CHOICE OF DRESSING*

### PETITE FILET OF PRIME BEEF TENDERLOIN

*CARAMELIZED CIPOLLINI ONION, MUSHROOM MADEIRA SAUCE AND HORSERADISH WHIPPED POTATOES*

### CHOCOLATE PECAN BALL



GITTINGS



## JAMES W. CROWNOVER

Jim grew up in Norman, Oklahoma and came to Rice in 1961. After receiving his BA/BS degrees in Chemical Engineering cum laude, he attended the Stanford Graduate School of Business, earning his MBA in 1968. He then joined McKinsey & Company in San Francisco and after his partnership election, moved to Houston to open McKinsey's office in 1976. During his 30-year career with McKinsey, Jim built and led the Firm's practice in the southwest, he co-headed the Firm's energy practice for several years, and he served on McKinsey's Shareholders Committee (its 20-person elected board of directors) during his last 8 years with the Firm.

Jim was elected a Rice trustee in 1998. In 2003, he chaired the Presidential Search Committee that brought David and Ping to Houston and was elected chairman of Rice's board in 2005, a position from which he will step down in June of this year. In addition to Rice, Jim previously served on the board of Unocal and currently serves on the boards of four NYSE companies: Republic Services (where he is chairman of the board), Weingarten Realty, Chemtura, and FTI Consulting. Also, he is or has served on the boards of several not-for-profit organizations, including the Stanford Graduate School of Business, the United Way of Greater Houston, Houston Grand Opera, Houston Ballet, St. John's School, and Project Grad.

Over the last three decades, Jim has led several important community efforts. In the 1980's, he led projects aimed at revitalizing the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo, helping it achieve the unique prominence it has today. Over the last 30 years, he has led several efforts focused on building the United Way, including chairing the 2005 Houston area campaign. He is a two time recipient of the United Way's Volunteer of the Year award. Further, in the 1990's, he led an effort initiated by the Mayor and County Judge to pave the way for building new professional sports facilities with a focus on the downtown area, an initiative endorsed by taxpayers. Finally, for Jim's involvement at Stanford since his graduation, he recently was honored with the John Gardner Leadership Award.

Jim and his wife Molly have one daughter Corwin, who lives in San Francisco.



GITTINGS



## ROBERT C. McNAIR

Robert C. McNair, a leading businessman, sportsman and philanthropist in the city of Houston, is the founder, chairman and chief executive officer of the Houston Texans. McNair is perhaps best known in the business community as the founder of Cogen Technologies, which was sold in 1999. Cogen was the largest privately-owned cogeneration company in the world, with aggregate capacity of 1,400 megawatts.

McNair serves as chairman of The McNair Group, headquartered in Houston, where he oversees an investment portfolio that includes interests in two cogeneration plants in the eastern United States. McNair owns Palmetto Partners, Ltd., and RCM Financial Services, L.P., private investment entities that manage the McNairs' private and public equity investments, and is a member of the Texas Business Hall of Fame.

Committed to bringing a National Football League team to Houston, McNair formed Houston NFL Holdings in 1998. On Oct. 6, 1999, the NFL announced that the 32nd NFL franchise had been awarded to McNair, returning football to the city of Houston in 2002. McNair's efforts brought Super Bowl XXXVIII to Reliant Stadium in 2004 and in 2011, brought the first NFL playoff game to Houston in nearly 18 years, a 31-10 win against Cincinnati in the Wild Card round on Jan. 7, 2012.

The Texans claimed their second consecutive AFC South title in 2012 and finished the regular season 12-4, matching the most regular-season wins in the city of Houston's NFL history. The team once again defeated Cincinnati in the Wild Card round, marking the first time in the city's history that its NFL team won home playoff games in consecutive seasons.

McNair is actively involved in NFL affairs serving as chairman of the Finance Committee, and is a member of the Audit, Stadium and Expansion committees.

As Founder and Chairman Emeritus of the Meineke Car Care Bowl of Texas, McNair revived Houston's collegiate bowl game on Dec. 28, 2006. The game now features teams from the Big 12 and Big Ten conferences and has drawn over 50,000 fans in each of the last seven years. McNair was honored by the bowl as a Gridiron Legend in 2011 for his impact on football at all levels in Houston. McNair is also a member of the South Carolina Athletic Hall of Fame.

McNair is Chairman of The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation, The Robert and Janice McNair Educational Foundation in Forest City, N.C. and the Houston Texans Foundation.

Born in Tampa, Fla., McNair and his wife, Janice Suber McNair, have been residents of Houston since 1960. Mr. McNair graduated from the University of South Carolina in Columbia in 1958 with a bachelor of science degree as well as an honorary doctor of humane letters degree received in 1999. In 2010, he received an honorary doctor of humanities in Medicine from Baylor College of Medicine. Mrs. McNair is a 1959 graduate of Columbia College in Columbia, S.C.



GITTINGS

## CHARLIE THOMAS

When Charlie Thomas tells his life story, the automobile plays a leading role. Charlie grew up in a working class family in Knoxville, Tennessee. During the Great Depression, he recalls his father trading in the family's Model T Ford for a Model A. It became a lasting symbol of hardship for Charlie, who learned at an early age the value of hard work.

After Charlie eloped with Kittsie, the 16-year old "girl next door," he took a job at an Oldsmobile dealership to support his family. He worked his way up from parts delivery person to service writer to service manager, even aspiring to become service field manager one day. But opportunity came calling when another dealership offered to put Charlie on the sales floor. It was Charlie's first business risk, and he took it. According to Charlie, he "went to school" watching other car salesmen. He learned how to couch a deal in terms a customer could understand. How to build relationships with people. How to close a sale. Within six months, he was the dealership's top producer.

In 1967, Charlie bought his first dealership in Baytown, Texas, followed by another in Corpus Christi. Over the next thirty years, he amassed a vast network of 48 automobile franchises across Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Colorado. Charlie sold domestic brands and imports alike, eventually acquiring dealerships for Acura, BMW, Buick, Chrysler, Ford, General Motors, Hyundai, Isuzu, Mercedes, Plymouth, Subaru, Suzuki, and Toyota. Even today, Charlie can recount those transactions the way a professional golfer describes a round of golf—play by play, conversation by conversation. His recollections of deals are punctuated with the names of his mentors who taught him the business and gave him opportunities—people like auto legends Red McCombs and Austin Hemphill. Charlie has never forgotten that he stands on their shoulders.

At the same time, he also stands firmly on his own two feet. Charlie has a gift for keeping his eye on the ball, communicating effectively, and motivating others to excel. His son-in-law says, "The people who work for Charlie admire him as a manager. As a general rule, he lets people do their jobs. But if he ever gives you advice, he expects you to take it. If you don't, the next time you meet, he'll give you a pad and pencil. You don't want Charlie to remind you to bring your pad and pencil."

Just as others supported Charlie in becoming a dealer, Charlie has paid it forward and helped ambitious salesmen do the same. Perhaps the ultimate testament to Charlie's leadership is that he can count so many former colleagues as loyal friends who call him the catalyst for their own successful careers. In 1998, Charlie sold most of his holdings to the AutoNation chain. He retains ownership of one dealership in Galveston County, Texas.

The car business became the vehicle through which Charlie learned life lessons and imparted them to others: Always make an honest sale, because you need repeat customers. Consider the other person's perspective, and try to help him get what he wants, too. Be patient...to a point. And choose to work with great people. "Picking the right people is always the answer," says Charlie. These operating principles enabled Charlie Thomas dealerships to maintain a high percentage of repeat buyers—often spanning multiple generations within the same family—and paved the way for his success.

But for all his accomplishments in the auto business, Charlie was no one-trick pony. Using the drive and skills he honed in the car business, he built and invested in thriving enterprises in banking, oil and gas, hotels, movies, restaurants, real estate, and—somewhat incongruously—professional sports. One day his friend and partner Red McCombs, who then owned the Denver Nuggets, called Charlie to tell him the Houston Rockets were for sale. Charlie had never attended an NBA game, but Red was persuasive: he told Charlie that if this fledgling media outlet called "cable television" took off, buying a basketball franchise would be a good investment. During the first four years of Charlie's tenure, the Rockets went from last place to first place in the Western Conference. With characteristic humility, Charlie summed up his 11 years as managing partner by saying, "I didn't know much about basketball, but I did know what was right and wrong, and I didn't mind standing up for it."

In 1999, Charlie was awarded the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, which recognizes leaders of industry, the arts, science, sports, and government for making their nation and the world a better place. Charlie received the prestigious award alongside Hillary Clinton, Quincy Jones, and Phil Donahue, among others. Past recipients of the Medal of Honor include six U.S. presidents and luminaries such as Muhammad Ali, Renee Fleming, John Glenn, Bob Hope, General Norman Schwarzkopf, and Frank Sinatra.

Charlie's business career has taken interesting detours, but he has never forgotten his love for the automobile. After selling most of his dealerships, he began collecting vintage cars, which he likens to "great works of art." At its zenith, his collection numbered over 200 classic cars, including his favorite, a 1934 Ford Deluxe Roadster. He can describe every vehicle with encyclopedic detail—from the original sales price to each part that came as an accessory. As a point of pride, all of his cars were restored to factory condition and maintained in perfect working order.

Charlie is a man who is intensely aware that he's had a wonderful life, and he's going to make sure that those around him enjoy the fruits of it. A devoted family man, he lavishes attention on Kittsie, their three daughters and sons-in-law, and eight grandchildren—affectionately calling his seven grandsons and only granddaughter "an even match." He and Kittsie were fixtures at their schools and sporting events. As the grandchildren learned to drive, Charlie and Kittsie helped them obtain the car of their 16-year old dreams. Charlie would call each of them almost daily during their grade school and high school years. Now, as proof that we reap what we sow, they often call him first.

Charlie and Kittsie also believe in giving back to the communities that have given them so much, and education is a favorite cause. They support their children's and grandchildren's many alma maters, as well as schools in the cities where they owned businesses. As one small example, when Galveston College wanted to expand, Charlie sold the school a building for a nominal amount and donated the rest of the land. "Wealth may come and go," explains Charlie, "but no one can take your education from you."

Charlie Thomas has parlayed his business acumen and entrepreneurial spirit into a fulfilling life and an extraordinary career. "He loves to make deals," says Kittsie, his wife of 62 years. "His mind is always working, and he's always curious about finding ways to take something and make it more successful." Charlie attributes his success to doing what he truly loved—selling cars. Even today, that's the simple title he chooses for himself: car salesman. A car salesman who has lived the American dream.



GITTINGS

## JAMES T. WILLERSON

James T. Willerson, MD is the President and Medical Director, Director of Cardiology Research, and Co-Director of the Cullen Cardiovascular Research Laboratories at the Texas Heart Institute (THI) and is immediate past President of The University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston (UTHSCH). Dr. Willerson is the Edward Randall III Professor of Internal Medicine at The UT Medical School at Houston, the Dunn Chair in Cardiology Research at THI, the Willerson/O'Quinn Chair at THI, the "James T. Willerson, MD Distinguished Chair in Cardiovascular Diseases" at The UT Southwestern Medical School in Dallas, and has a swimming scholarship named for him at UT Austin.

Dr. Willerson is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of UT Austin, was a four-year swimming letterman, a member of the Texas Cowboys of UT Austin, an AOA graduate of the Baylor College of Medicine, and he received his post graduate training at Harvard Medical School (HMS) and the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) in Boston. Dr. Willerson is a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Science. As the longest-serving Editor-in-Chief of *Circulation*, journal of the AHA, his tenure lasted 11 years. In addition to having served on numerous editorial boards for professional publications, he has edited or co-edited twenty-four textbooks, including his signature textbook, the Third Edition of *Cardiovascular Medicine*, released in February of 2007, and he has published over 960 scientific articles in major journals.

Dr. Willerson has served as visiting professor and invited lecturer at more than 250 institutions worldwide. Included in his many awards are the "James B. Herrick Award" from the American Heart Association (AHA) in 1993; the American College of Cardiology's Distinguished Scientist Award in 2000; the Distinguished Achievement Award from the Scientific Councils of the AHA in 2002; and the AHA's Distinguished Scientist Award in 2003. He was the recipient of the Gold Heart Award, the AHA's highest award, in April 2005. He has been elected a Fellow in the Royal Society of Medicine of the United Kingdom and made an Honorary Member of ten foreign Societies of Cardiology, including societies in the following countries: Peru, Spain, Japan, Greece, Venezuela, and Chile. He is a member and past President of the Paul Dudley White Cardiology Society at HMS and MGH. In June of 2004, Dr. Willerson received the Medal of Merit for Distinguished Achievements in Cardiovascular Sciences by the International Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences. In 2005, he received the "Lifetime Achievement Award" presented at the 17th Annual Transcatheter Cardiovascular Therapeutics (TCT) Scientific Symposium on behalf of the Cardiovascular Research Foundation in Washington, DC. In 2006, Dr. Willerson received the Libin Award in Cardiovascular Research in Alberta, Canada; the "Living Legend Award" for achievement in cardiovascular research from the 16th World Congress of the World Society of Cardiothoracic Surgeons in Ottawa, Canada, and the "Most Outstanding Cardiologist, 2006" award from the Cardiovascular Society and Medical School of Shanghai, China. He received the Katz Research Prize from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York City, New York, 2007. Dr. Willerson was elected President of the International Society for Cardiovascular Sciences based in Winnipeg, Canada, and he will serve from 2011-2014. From 2009-2010, he served as President of the Board of the American Heart Association, Houston, Chapter. The James T. Willerson Distinguished Chair in Cardiology was named in his honor at the Institute of Molecular Medicine for the Prevention of Human Disease at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, 2009. In June of 2009, he was elected to The University of Texas Hall of Honor for accomplishments in varsity swimming from 1957-1961 and for ongoing professional contributions in the field of medicine. In September of 2009, he received the Ray C. Fish Award from Texas Heart Institute for "An individual whose endeavors have made significant contributions to cardiovascular medicine or surgery."

Dr. Willerson sees patients on a daily basis from a patient population of over 2000. Dr. Willerson's research concentrates on the detection and treatment of unstable atherosclerotic plaques, and the discovery of the genes and abnormal proteins responsible for cardiovascular disease. In addition, Dr. Willerson and colleagues, Dr. Emerson Perin and Ed T.H. Yeh, have been directly involved in seminal research in the use of stem cells for the repair of hearts and cardiovascular vessels injured by heart attacks, and they are responsible for major discoveries, landmark publications, and for Texas Heart Institute's being awarded the first FDA-approved clinical trial in the use of adult, human stem cells to treat ischemic cardiomyopathies and congestive heart failure in humans. As a result of discoveries in his research, Dr. Willerson has been awarded 14 patents.

□ □ □

## PAST HONOREES

D. Kent Anderson, 2007  
James A. Baker, III, 2012  
Thomas D. Barrow, Ph.D., 2010\*  
Fred C. Burns, 2011  
George H.W. Bush, 2012  
Denton A. Cooley, M.D., 2009  
O. Holcombe Crosswell, 2011  
Michael DeBakey, M.D., 2008\*  
James H. “Red” Duke, Jr., M.D., 2011  
Dan Duncan, 2007\*  
Ralph Feigin, M.D., 2008\*  
Walter Johnson, 2008  
Don D. Jordan, 2008  
John P. McGovern, M.D., 2007\*  
Drayton McLane, Jr., 2009  
John Mendelsohn, M.D., 2010  
George P. Mitchell, 2011  
Corbin J. Robertson, Jr., 2008  
Marc J. Shapiro, 2011  
Lester Smith, 2007  
Mike Stude, 2010  
J. Virgil Waggoner, 2009

*\*deceased*

□ □ □



## PAST BENEFICIARIES

2007

George D. Ferry, M.D.

Director of the Inflammatory Bowel Disease Center at Texas Children's Hospital

James Versalovic, M.D., Ph.D.

Director of the Microbiology Laboratories at Texas Children's Hospital

2008

C. Kent Osborne, M.D.

Director of the Dan L. Duncan Cancer Center and the Lester and Sue Smith Breast Center at Baylor College of Medicine

David G. Poplack, M.D.

Director of the Texas Children's Cancer Center and Deputy Director of the Dan L. Duncan Cancer Center at Baylor College of Medicine

2009

Huda Y. Zoghbi, M.D.

Director of the Jan and Dan Duncan Neurological Research Institute at Texas Children's Hospital

Judith Z. Feigin, Ed.D.

Executive Director, Bridges Program, and Chief at the Clinic for Attention Problems, Diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorders, and the Learning Support Center for Child Psychology at Texas Children's Hospital

2010

ZoAnn E. Dreyer, M.D.

Medical Director, Long-Term Survivors Program at Texas Children's Cancer Center

Cynthia E. Herzog, M.D.

Director of Clinical Research, Department of Pediatrics, at The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center

2011

Brendan Lee, M.D., PH.D.

Director, Bone Disease Program of Texas at Baylor College of Medicine

Donald L. Yee, M.D.

Director, Hemostasis and Thrombosis Program at Texas Children's Hospital

2012

Brendan Lee, M.D., PH.D.

Director, Bone Disease Program of Texas at Baylor College of Medicine

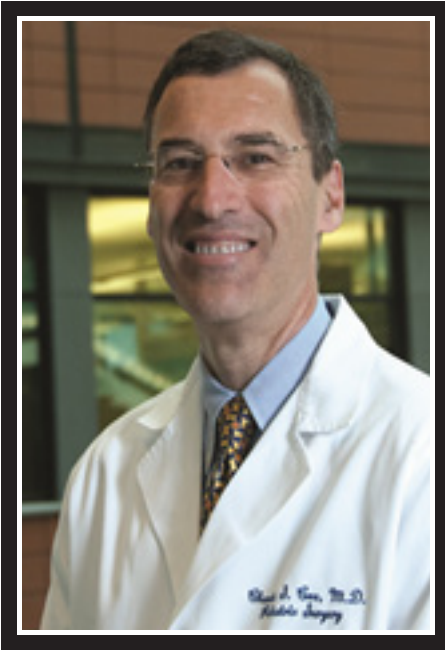
Laurence J.N. Cooper, MD., Ph.D.

Turning Immune Cells into Childhood Cancer Fighters



## 2013 MEN OF DISTINCTION PROGRAM BENEFICIARY

## CHARLES S. COX, JR., M.D.



Dr. Charles S. Cox, Jr., is the Children's Fund, Inc. Distinguished Professor of Pediatric Surgery and directs the Pediatric Surgical Translational Laboratories and Pediatric Program in Regenerative Medicine at the University of Texas Medical School at Houston. He directs the Pediatric Trauma Program at the University of Texas-Houston/Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital in the Texas Medical Center.

A Texas native, Dr. Cox received his undergraduate degree from the University of Texas at Austin in the Plan II Liberal Arts Honors Program. Upon graduating from the University of Texas Medical Branch, he completed his Surgery residency at the University of Texas Medical School at Houston. Further post-graduate fellowships were completed in Pediatric Surgery at the University of Michigan, an NIH T32 sponsored clinical and research fellowship in cardiopulmonary support/circulatory support devices/bio-hybrid organs at the Shriners' Burns Institute, and Surgical Critical Care/Trauma at the University of Texas Medical School at Houston. He is certified by the American Board of Surgery in Surgery, with added qualifications in Pediatric Surgery and Surgical Critical Care. He served in Afghanistan with the 82nd Airborne in the 909th Forward Surgical Team in 2002.

The Pediatric Translational Laboratories and Pediatric Program in Regenerative Medicine is a multi-disciplinary effort that addresses problems that originate with traumatic injury and the consequences of resuscitation and critical care. The Program focuses on progenitor cell based therapy (stem cells) for traumatic brain injury, and related neurological injuries (hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy, stroke, spinal cord injury), recently completing the first acute, autologous cell therapy treatment Phase I study for traumatic brain injury in children (Neurosurgery, 2011). Recently, the NIH funded the first Phase II clinical trial for cellular therapies in children with severe TBI. Three subsequent INDs have been approved for cell-based therapies for neurological injury. The program also develops novel bio-hybrid organs using cell-based and tissue engineering approaches to trauma and injury related problems. These efforts have recently resulted in two IND based cell therapeutic studies, and three patents in the past two years. The program is funded through the National Institutes of Health, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board/Emerging Technology Funds, Industry Collaboration, and philanthropic contributions. The Program is housed in state-of-the-art laboratory facilities (4500 sf), and includes two cGMP facilities for the production of clinical grade cell and tissue products: Hoffberger Cellular Therapeutics Laboratory and the Griffin Stem Cell Therapeutics Research Laboratory.

Dr. Cox has served on scientific study sections/review groups for the National Institutes of Health, California Institute for Regenerative Medicine, American Heart Association, Veterans Affairs MERIT Awards, Department of Defense, Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs, as well as National Research Programs in Canada, Singapore, and the Czech Republic. He is the author of over 100 scientific publications, 20 book chapters, and is the editor of a text entitled, *Progenitor Cell Therapy for Neurological Injury*.



Susan Distefano

Dear 2013 Men of Distinction:

On behalf of Memorial Hermann Health System, it is an honor to recognize the excellence and achievements of Jim Crownover, Bob McNair, Charlie Thomas, and Jim Willerson. Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital and our partner The University of Texas Health Science Center (UTHealth) Medical School, congratulate our leaders who have devoted themselves to shaping the future of Houston. We are proud to join Men of Distinction in applauding their contributions, service and commitment.

Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital has been serving the community for over 20 years and is the primary teaching hospital for the pediatrics and obstetrics/gynecology programs at UTHealth Medical School. Our team of doctors, nurses, therapists and other allied healthcare professionals are focused on the specialized needs of women and children with an emphasis on quality, customer service and leading-edge research.

We are very grateful for the selection of the pediatric traumatic brain injury research project of Dr. Charles S. Cox, Jr. as one of this year's program beneficiaries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Distefano".

Susan Distefano

CEO

Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital



Giuseppe N. Colasurdo, MD

Dear 2013 Men of Distinction:

On behalf of everyone at UTHealth, congratulations to all of the honorees: Jim Crownover, Bob McNair, Charlie Thomas, and Dr. Jim Willerson. Your vision, hard work and dedication have a profound impact on the Houston community and beyond. And thank you to the Men of Distinction organization for your recognition of these outstanding individuals and your support of groundbreaking research, including the work of Dr. Charles S. Cox, Jr.

Now celebrating its 40th anniversary as Houston's health university, UTHealth educates more health care professionals than any other institution in Texas. Our faculty members are working to address the most pressing health challenges of our time, and our physicians serve patients throughout this city and around the world. With our partners at Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital, we are proud to provide the latest treatments and highest quality of care for women and children.

We are truly grateful for the partnership with Men of Distinction, as we work together to discover new preventions and treatments for disease.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Giuseppe N. Colasurdo".

Giuseppe N. Colasurdo, MD

President & Alkek-Williams Distinguished Chair

UTHealth

## 2013 MEN OF DISTINCTION PROGRAM BENEFICIARY

## JOSEPH F. PETROSINO, PH.D.

*Director, Alkek Center for Metagenomics and Microbiome Research  
Baylor College of Medicine*



Dr. Petrosino is an assistant professor in the Department of Molecular Virology and Microbiology at Baylor College of Medicine and holds a secondary appointment with the Human Genome Sequencing Center.

In 2007, he was instrumental in securing BCM's participation in the NIH-funded Human Microbiome Project, which seeks to analyze the role of the body's microbes in human health and disease. BCM is the only site where all aspects of the HMP, from human sampling to sequencing to data analysis, were performed. The success of Dr. Petrosino's efforts led to BCM's founding of the Alkek Center for Metagenomics and Microbiome Research, where he currently serves as director. The CMMR is now collaborating with over 70 investigators from around the world on over 100 projects, ranging from the microbiome of the eye to the gastrointestinal microbiome of Renaissance Era mummies, and is impacting our understanding of diseases such as diabetes, cystic fibrosis, irritable bowel disease and cancer.

Dr. Petrosino is particularly interested in searching for microbial associations with the onset of type-1 diabetes, commonly known as juvenile diabetes. Every day, 40 youth are diagnosed with this challenging lifelong disease, and each year nearly \$14.9 billion is spent in the United States on its treatment. Unlike type-2 diabetes, T1D is an autoimmune disease in which the body attacks its own insulin-producing cells. The exact cause of T1D is not yet fully understood, however both genetic and environmental factors are known to influence its onset. While some children with a high genetic risk develop T1D, others with a similarly high genetic risk do not.

By examining the human microbiome – the body's essential collection of bacteria, viruses and single-cell organisms – Dr. Petrosino aims to identify microbes that are associated with the progression to T1D. Ultimately, his research may help to identify hypothesized viral “triggers” for T1D, which would pave the way for groundbreaking, preventative interventions.



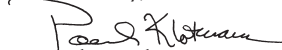
**Paul E. Klotman, M.D.**

Dear Men of Distinction:

I salute Baylor College of Medicine Board Vice Chair Robert C. McNair, Dr. James T. Willerson, James W. Crownover and Charlie Thomas as the 2013 Men of Distinction. You have distinguished yourselves through your remarkable leadership as businessmen, volunteers and philanthropists.

The MOD organization also deserves recognition for seven years of commitment to biomedical research, education and patient care. Thank you for selecting as a beneficiary of your luncheon Dr. Joseph F. Petrosino's important study of microbes associated with the onset of type-1 (juvenile) diabetes. Every year 13,000 young patients are diagnosed with the disease. Dr. Petrosino's work at BCM focuses on finding a new pathway for preventing type-1 diabetes, which would be a tremendous advancement for children's health in our community and around the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul E. Klotman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul E. Klotman, M.D.

President and CEO

Baylor College of Medicine



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## Mission Statement



*The mission of the Men of Distinction Annual Awards Luncheon is to recognize Houston men who have distinguished themselves through excellence in community achievement, thereby providing support in superior biomedical research, education, and patient care for children in the Texas Medical Center and directly benefiting the Houston community.*

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