



# HOUSTON HOSPICE

*Life Matters*

Volume 18 Issue 2 • A Publication of Houston Hospice

## Spirit Award Dinner to Honor Nancy and Bryan Ruez



Bryan and Nancy Ruez



**O**n behalf of Spirit Award Chairmen, Mary Ellen and Bruce Meyer, we are thrilled to announce that Nancy and Bryan Ruez will receive the **2018 Laura Lee Blanton Community Spirit Award on October 16, 2018** at a festive dinner celebration at the River Oaks Country Club, 1600 River Oaks Blvd.

“Nancy and Bryan reflect the true spirit of our mission and deeply care about the community,” says Cynthia Nordt, Houston Hospice Vice President of Development and External Affairs. “They are remarkable people and have been a blessing for the city of Houston. We are thrilled to honor them and the enormous impact they have made. Wherever and whenever Nancy and Bryan dedicate themselves you see a tangible difference by their involvement.”

Nancy Ruez has lived in Houston for 40 years and recently returned three years ago. She and her family have lived around the U.S. including in Ohio, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and New York. Nancy is highly involved in several organizations.

Nancy Co-Chaired a successful \$5 Million Capital Campaign for Houston Hospice in 2012. She serves on the Finance Committee of the Houston Community College Foundation Board and Opportunity 14 Scholarship Committee; is Chairman of the Education Committee for the Houston Museum of Natural Science and on the Executive Committee; and is Chairman of the Advisory Committee for the Children’s Learning Institute (CLI) for The University of Texas Medical School at Houston where she is also on its Advisory Council.

In addition to board positions, Nancy volunteers with the Houston Ladies Tennis Association, Junior League of Houston, River Oaks Luncheon Club, Texas Children’s Hospital Ambassadors, The American Cancer Society Cattle Baron’s Ball, The Salvation Army Women’s Auxiliary, and West Houston Ladies Tennis Association.

She is a former chair of the Houston Museum of Natural Science Guild and annual gala. She co-chaired Houston A+ Challenge Dinner, Houston Hospice Butterfly Luncheon and Yellowstone Academy Luncheon. Nancy attended Texas A&M University.

She and Bryan have two sons, William and Christopher, and two grandchildren. Along with family and friends, volunteering and playing tennis, Nancy spends time with her four Cavalier King Charles Spaniels.

One of the best examples of how Nancy and Bryan serve the community is found in their tireless support of childhood learning which became a top priority when oldest son William was a third grader who struggled with dyslexia.

Teachers doubted that William would even graduate from college, but he proved them wrong, going on to receive a master’s degree in economics from Southern Methodist University.

If he could achieve this success then Nancy and Bryan knew there were opportunities for other children to as well,

*(Continued on page 2)*

Newsletter

# Margaret Stone Named Houston Hospice Volunteer of the Year

**M**argaret Stone has been named Houston Hospice Volunteer of the Year for 2018. An 11-year volunteer and former nurse for Houston Hospice, Stone draws inspiration from selfless acts that other people demonstrate to give back. When assisting with clean up after Hurricane Harvey, she was struck by the kindness and thoughtfulness of people that came through the neighborhood with sack lunches they had made, for people they did not even know, because they wanted to help.

It's those acts of kindness and humanity that Stone appreciates. For instance, Stone says: "It's times when no one is paying attention and someone does the right thing." While helping a patient who was nearing the end of her life, Stone assured the woman that she would find a home for her life-long companion Yorkie. She did. Stone got friends to adopt the dog to become part of a new family.

"Volunteering is such a gift for the people and organizations you serve, but it is also SO personally rewarding. Volunteering is often the answer to someone else's prayer for help." Stone traveled to Puerto Rico this summer for Hurricane Maria recovery Efforts. Prior to the trip, she stayed busy by grocery shopping for younger patients and playing board games with them. "Volunteer opportunities are limitless. It's about being kind and trying to make someone else's life easier," said Stone.

The death of her mother was the main impetus for becoming a volunteer. Stone said: "Her loss not only got me more involved in volunteering, but it was also the catalyst for my eventually being a hospice nurse. Somewhere I either read or heard the wonderful advice that if you want to take your mind off of your own problems, focus outward, on helping others in need." Houston Hospice Manager of Volunteer Services Elisa Covarrubias said Stone has demonstrated a high level of commitment that's been nonstop for at least five or more consecutive years: "Volunteers like Margaret can make an enormous impact in the lives of others. Her passion and dedication really stand out."



Margaret Stone receives award from Courtney Hoyt at the Texas Medical Center's May 15th Salute to Volunteers.

## Nancy and Bryan Ruez

*(Continued from page 1)*

which led them to CLI whose work focuses on psychology, neurodevelopment, education and child development to give children a solid educational foundation.

Nancy was driven by the difference the program could make for children whose learning disability put them at risk of not succeeding in education.

Bryan Ruez has more than 35 years of experience leading the growth and development of global and regional consulting businesses. Bryan is a Managing Director and the Global Practice Leader of Alvarez & Marsal Dispute and Investigations.

He joined Alvarez & Marsal in 2003 and led the firm's overall Global Corporate Development efforts, where he played a key role in the development and growth of the firm's non-restructuring business. He is a leader in recruiting, building and testing new business practices at Alvarez & Marsal, helping the firm reach several milestones.

Prior to Alvarez & Marsal, he spent 22 years at former Big Five accounting firm Arthur Andersen, where he served as a Regional Managing Partner of Andersen's Tax and Business Advisory Practice. He also served as a Regional Managing Partner for Andersen's Outsourcing Services practice and was a

member of Andersen's Outsourcing Services leadership team. He was a founding Partner of the State and Local Tax Services practice, and was the National Leader for the Property Tax and Transactional Tax practices. Born and raised in Houston, Bryan earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Texas A&M University and is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

He serves on the Board of Directors for the YMCA of Greater Houston. Bryan has a strong personal connection to Houston Hospice. Two of his family members, his father Bill Ruez and brother Michael Ruez, were cared for by Houston Hospice.

"The realization that a family member was terminally ill turned our world upside down," said Ruez. "The unknowns of what to expect and how to care for our loved ones were almost unbearable. Our family's introduction to Houston Hospice was a blessing."

To honor Houston Hospice, Nancy co-chaired a successful Capital Campaign that added a third floor to the inpatient unit at the Margaret Cullen Marshall Hospice Care Center.

**"Our family's introduction to Houston Hospice was a blessing,"**  
Bryan Ruez

## Houston Hospice Board of Directors

### Chairman

Paul Mansfield, M.D.

### Vice Chairman

Joyce T. Salhoot, MSW, MHA

### Secretary

Sue White

### Members

Faisal H. Aboul-Enein, DrPH, RN, FNP-BC, FNAP, FRSPH, FACHE

Lance Boudreaux

Thomas R. Cole, Ph.D.

Gaylon B. Cunningham, CPA, CIA

Sarita A. Hixon

William A. Hyslop, FACHE

Conrad Johnson, CPA

Stephanie Martin

Mary Ellen Meyer

James A. Reeder, Jr.

Judson W. Robinson, III

Michele J. Sabino, Ed.D.

Jon A. Unroe, CPA

Jeanette B. Valdivieso, DO, MBA

### Associate Board Members

Michael A. Armstrong

Jessica L. Yeary

### President & CEO

James A. Faucett, Jr.

## Mission Statement

Houston Hospice provides uncompromising, compassionate end-of-life care to patients and families in our community.

# Advance Care Planning: A Reminder to Have the Conversation

**W**hat do we do? Who has the final say? These questions quickly arise between family members when a loved one becomes too ill to make a decision for themselves.

The decisions for care or treatment are made at the bedside during difficult times and when thought processes can be complicated by anxiety, worry and stress.

Advance directives can ease that situation. Houston Hospice VP of Medical Affairs Elizabeth Strauch says end-of-life care should start with conversations. Dr. Strauch told *TMC*

*News* it's "essential to remove barriers that may prevent physicians and patients from having conversations about end-of-life care."

Advance directives, end-of-life conversations are the focus of staff members who meet with neighborhood groups and church organizations. Houston Hospice also trains area physicians and medical students. Strauch added that the process can help make those conversations as routine as discussions about financial planning and life insurance. National Healthcare Decisions Day raised awareness about the topic in April, offering some tips to get started including:

- Speaking up about future healthcare

decisions. Though hard to begin, the result can help complete an advance directive,

- Thinking about your beliefs and values, writing them down,
- Choosing a healthcare proxy (someone who speaks for you if you are not able),
- Completing an advance directive, and
- Sharing with your healthcare proxy, family and doctors.

Most experts agree that the earlier, the better, helps create an easier environment for the discussion between physicians and patients.

## Affirming Our Mission

**Editor's note:** Our appreciation to Dr. Peter Pisters, President of MD Anderson Cancer Center, who shared with Houston Hospice Chairman of the Board Dr. Paul Mansfield a note he received from an employee named Lisa. A recent talk by Dr. Pisters about how health institutions should approach end-of-life patient care prompted Lisa's testimonial (below) about her experience at Houston Hospice.

My mother was transported from a local hospital to the Houston Hospice facility. While at the traditional hospital, I was actually in a state of aggravation as I interacted with her care team. While there were some individuals that were wonderful, the overall interaction with the medical team was rough.

A simple transport to Houston Hospice changed everything 180 degrees. My mom was relaxed. She was actually smiling and laughing on her last evening that she was able to engage with others. Her passing was peaceful. Moreover, the staff looked after me. A dear friend was also in hospice care at his home. He died on a Thursday morning. That Thursday my mother's blood pressure was undetectable.

I thought I had it all under control. A nurse that I passed in the hall to my mother's room took one look at me, motioned for me to stop, laid down the supplies she had in her hand, and reached out, grabbing my shoulders saying, "You are having a bad day. What can I do?" I immediately became a bucket of tears. This was not my mother's nurse. For the remainder of the day the staff checked on me as much as my mother.

The social worker I met on my mother's first day, had apparently been notified. She came to my mom's room. She did not sit in the sofa across from me, perhaps 3 feet away. Instead, she plopped down on the floor in front of me, scooped me up into her arms and let me cry. She talked with me for quite some time.

I left there knowing my mom's time was closing and I was okay. I miss my mom, but this lady released me from my own self-criticisms leaving me in peace before my mom died on that Saturday.

This hospice group already knows how to care for the patient and those that will have to stay behind. Perhaps entering into a partnership with them would enable both organizations to learn from one another.

Regards,

Lisa P.  
Employee

## Remembering Former First Lady Barbara Bush (1925-2018)



### Barbara Bush Taught Us That Life Matters

On April 20, 2018, Houston and the Nation paid respects to former First Lady Barbara Bush.

Houston Hospice will always remember her and the loving spirit she gave us.

Barbara Bush brought us to the forefront in many ways. In 1995, she cut the ribbon to help open the Margaret Cullen Marshall Hospice Care Center at the Texas Medical Center. She elevated our Butterfly Program as our special guest through the years.

The prospect of her presence made our Butterfly Luncheons among the most anticipated events ever, helping raise much needed proceeds

to fund Houston Hospice's operations and our program of pediatric hospice care.

The former First Lady called Houston Hospice "one of the finest facilities she had seen among her travels around the world."

Her support and warm thoughts meant the world to all on our compassionate team of physicians, social workers, nurses, hospice aides, chaplains, volunteers and staff as well as the communities we serve.

Barbara Bush was a much loved friend to Houston Hospice and champion for our care.



Houston Hospice  
1905 Holcombe Boulevard  
Houston, Texas 77030-4123

Phone: 713-467-7423  
Website: [www.houstonhospice.org](http://www.houstonhospice.org)

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Volume 18**      **Issue 2**

The Newsletter is published by Houston Hospice, a nonprofit organization providing comprehensive end-of-life services and education to Greater Houston and surrounding communities.

**Houston Hospice is a member  
of the Texas Medical Center**

