



# HOUSTON HOSPICE

*Life Matters*

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## Spirit Award Dinner to Honor Sally and Bob Thomas



Sally and Bob Thomas



River Oaks Country Club

**O**n behalf of Spirit Award Chairman, Lance Boudreaux, we are thrilled to announce that Sally and Bob Thomas will receive the **2017 Laura Lee Blanton Community Spirit Award on October 12, 2017** at a festive dinner celebration at the River Oaks Country Club, 1600 River Oaks Blvd.

Sally was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma and studied at the University of Oklahoma where she joined Pi Beta Phi, and graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a BS in Geology. Sally worked as a geologist with Humble Oil Company when she met and married Bob Thomas. Following the birth of Mary, Laura, Suzanne, and Kristen, Sally's life has centered around family and volunteer activities.

Sally organized and taught Red Cross and Girl Scout swimming programs for over 32 years. Her synchronized swimming team competed in the Junior Olympics in Nebraska. Sally is currently an Advisory Trustee of the Retina Research Foundation and she has served as a member of the Interfaith AIDS Respite Team at St. Cecilia Catholic Church where she is also a lector and Eucharistic minister.

Sally has shared her love for geology as a docent at the Houston Museum of Natural Science Gem and Mineral Hall. She was President of Memorial Women's Club, and Houston Hospice previously honored Sally with the Betty Evans Award for Service as both a patient volunteer and Board President. In 2012, The University of Oklahoma recognized her as a Distinguished Alumna of the Mewbourne College of Earth and Energy.

Bob Thomas was born in Maramec, Oklahoma and graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a BS in Geological Engineering. He is a member of Delta Tau Delta fraternity and a member of scholarship organizations Tau Beta Pi, Sigma Tau, Sigma Gamma Epsilon and Scabbard and Blade. Bob served over four years in the United States Air Force as a pilot including a one-year combat tour during the Korean War. He Returned to the University of Oklahoma for graduate studies in 1956.

Bob joined Tenneco's domestic exploration and production operations as a junior engineer in 1956. His distinguished career culminated in his election as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer in 1990 and he retired in 1994.

Like Sally, Bob is committed to serving the community. He served on the Houston Hospice Board of Directors from 2002-2012 and was instrumental in the success of two major fundraising campaigns which he co-chaired. While Secretary of the Board, Bob crafted its mission statement. He has served as Trustee of the Houston Museum of Natural Science and as a member of the Board of Governors for Houston Forum (a nonprofit, community platform dedicated to the free exchange of ideas. Today it is one of the top U.S. Speaking Forums).

Bob is a lifetime member and past Chairman of the Board of Stewards (the governing body) at Chapelwood United Methodist Church—a congregation of 5,500 members. He served as a member of the Building Committee that planned and supervised the construction of a \$25 million expansion of church facilities.

*(Continued on page 2)*

# Newsletter

# Judy Calabria Named Houston Hospice Volunteer of the Year

Judy Calabria has been named Houston Hospice Volunteer of the Year for 2017. Judy recently retired from Shell Oil (her one and only job). However, she began volunteering for Houston Hospice back in February 2009 because of her family's experience with hospice in Ohio.

Judy is exceptionally helpful in every aspect of volunteer services. She delivers meals at Thanksgiving and gifts and cards to our patient families for Christmas. Every Friday, Judy shares her heart by visiting patients in our Texas Medical Center inpatient care unit. She has even made numerous emergency visits to be with patients in distress at the request of our nursing staff. On these occasions, she spends hours visiting and comforting as many patients as necessary.

In addition to visiting patients and families, Judy helps the staff and assists with anything that needs to be done. When you ask Judy what a volunteer does, she answers "Anything you're asked to do by your Volunteer Coordinator!" Truly, she does anything we ask. She visits patients, assembles Angel Bags (bags of groceries, hygiene items and toys for our families in need), trains new volunteers, works in the office, and stocks and cleans the snack bar.

Judy has assisted with Houston Hospice fundraising events for several years. At the annual Spirit Award Dinners and the Butterfly Luncheons she's earned a reputation as a crack raffle ticket seller. Judy is a prime example of the extraordinary generosity and heart that makes hospice volunteers special. Thank you Judy, and congratulations on this well-deserved recognition!



Judy Calabria visits patients every Friday at Houston Hospice

## Sally and Bob Thomas

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Bob is currently serving as a Life Member of the Association Board of Directors for the YMCA of Greater Houston. He was elected to the Board in 1988 with past service including terms as Vice Chairman and Chairman of the Board. The board has responsibility for over forty community centers and permanent camps plus other facilities contained within the association. Bob's service to the YMCA has also included leading major fundraising efforts in 1996, 2004 and 2005 as campaign Vice Chairman or Chairman. The YMCA of Greater Houston is the third largest YMCA in the U.S. with an annual, unduplicated count of over 500,000 people participating in association activities and programs.

Over the years, Bob's distinguished career and dedication to community service have been acknowledged with several awards and honors:

- The American Gas Association Distinguished Service Award for outstanding lifetime achievement in the natural gas industry.
- The University of Oklahoma Regents' Award in recognition of dedicated service to the university and in acknowledgement of demonstrated leadership in assisting the university to achieve its goals.
- Bob was named a Distinguished Alumna of Oklahoma University Mewbourne College of Earth and Energy.

- YMCA of Greater Houston David Allen Award, the highest award bestowed by the association on its volunteers.
- Designated a Lifetime Member of the Board of Stewards for Chapelwood United Methodist Church.
- Elected a Life Member of the Association Board of Directors for YMCA of Greater Houston.

"Sally and Bob have made a profound, positive impact on Houston Hospice and our entire community," said Cynthia Nordt, Vice President of Development and External Affairs. "They personify the essence of the Laura Lee Blanton Community Spirit Award. They have made Houston a better place."

*Please join us for the Laura Lee Blanton  
Community Spirit Award Dinner at the  
River Oaks Country Club on  
October 12, 2017  
to celebrate Sally & Bob Thomas  
and their immeasurable  
contributions to our community.  
Reception—6 PM  
Dinner—7 PM  
Call 713-677-7123 or visit  
houstonhospice.org to sponsor a table or  
purchase individual tickets.*

## Houston Hospice Board of Directors

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## Mission Statement

Houston Hospice is a not-for-profit 501 (c) 3 organization that is community-supported. Our mission is to provide compassionate physical, social and spiritual support to individuals who have a life-limiting diagnosis, and their loved ones, irrespective of their ethnicity or beliefs.

# A Mission to Educate Through Community Outreach

**W**e hear regrets frequently: “I wish I’d known care was available for months,” “I didn’t know hospice could be done at home,” “I thought hospice meant giving up medical care.” The list goes on. The palliative and hospice medical specialties are fraught with myths and misunderstanding. Sadly, when families learn they missed out on care that could have made life better for a loved one, their grief is compounded.

Therefore, we’re on a mission to educate the public. The Houston Hospice Community Outreach Program makes approximately 300

presentations to religious, civic, professional and educational groups yearly at organizations such as St. Francis de Sales Catholic School, M.D. Anderson, Glazier Senior Education Center, the Jewish Community Center, Houston Community College, and Richmond State Supported Living Center. Popular topics include Hospice 101, Compassionate Listening Skills, and Medical Care Planning seminars that include free medical planning kits.

We also participate in health fairs and provide continuing education for nurses and doctors (CMEs and CEUs) throughout our 10-county service area. We’ve provided

educational programming for students from elementary school to medical school, and our physicians share their expertise by writing articles and providing interviews for press.

To schedule a speaker for your organization, contact Monica James at [mjames@houstonhospice.org](mailto:mjames@houstonhospice.org).

If you’d like an article or interview for print, radio or television, please contact [kgoolsby@houstonhospice.org](mailto:kgoolsby@houstonhospice.org).



Houston Hospice  
1905 Holcombe Boulevard  
Houston, Texas 77030-4123

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

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The Newsletter is published by Houston Hospice, a not-for-profit 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**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

