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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rose Cullen receives Laura Lee Blanton Community Spirit Award

Every color of roses provided by Richard Flowers and The Events Company, greeted the 300 guests who gathered at River Oaks Country Club, October 19, to generously support the Houston Hospice Program. The 23rd Annual Laura Lee Blanton Community Spirit Award Dinner, this year themed *Caring, Comfort, Love and Rose* Chairmen **Cathy Brock and Franelle Rogers** were thrilled that the evening raised over **\$350,000**. Honorary Chairman **Linda McReynolds** joined in the applause for the success of the evening. Emcee **Melanie Lawson** led the evening. **Father Juan Torres**, started the event with the invocation. Sharing comments about what Hospice does for people and that it serves people in 13 counties as one of the largest in the region was **President & CEO Rana McClelland**.

The evening's recipient of the Laura Lee Blanton Community Spirit Award was **Rose Cullen. Elizabeth Wareing**, whose mother the award is named after, in recognition of her support of Houston Hospice, her loving commitment to her friends and family, and the generous spirit in which she worked to make Houston a better place, presented the award to Rose. Long time philanthropist and community volunteer Cullen was congratulated by her many friends and supporters. An exciting 2 item live auction with auctioneer **Johnny "Bravo" Holloway**, included a dinner with **Steve Tyrell** and a cottage in Carmel. The live auction along with a sold out raffle, generated additional funds.

Bob Livermore, a local Houston veteran, introduced special guest speaker, Army veteran, burn survivor, actor, motivational speaker, *New York Times* best-selling author **J.R. Martinez** shared his message of resilience and optimism. Entertaining and interesting to the crowd, the message closed with much applause, including a standing ovation before and after his remarks. Martinez mentioned several times how his mother always listened, and he emphasized the importance of listening to people, really listening to what they are saying.

Seen in the crowd: Vice President of Development Aida Matic, Leshia and Tom Elsenbrook, Leisa Holland Nelson and Bob Bowman, Donna Chapman, Sue White, Molly and Jim Crownover, Jeannie and Wally Wilson, Trini Mendenhall and Philip Royalty, Cora and Judson Robinson, Robert Sakowitz, Beth Robertson, Lillie Robertson, Barbara Robertson, Carroll Ray, Kathy McCord, Sarah McCord, Christine and Paul Mansfield, Richard Flowers, Lynn Wyatt, Hallie Vanderhider, Cabrina and Steven Owsley, Gary Brock, Kelli and Eddy Blanton, Peter Wareing, Emily Crosswell, Regina Rogers and Beth Wolff.

Founded in 1980, Houston Hospice has evolved from an alternative grass roots concept to a leader in hospice care for people of all ages and all walks of life. Houston's oldest, largest,

independent hospice, is a 501 (c) (3) organization that is community-based, community-supported and not for profit. This independence allows the organization to react quickly to community needs and incorporate new innovations in hospice care. Thanks to the generous, unwavering support of corporate and private sponsors, Houston Hospice continues to serve Texans from all socio-economic groups irrespective of a person's ethnicity, beliefs or ability to pay.

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Photos Daniel Ortiz and Jacob Power