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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Spirit Award Dinner Highlights Family Legacy and Community Spirit by Raising \$375,000 in Honor of Houston Hospice**

Musical tunes provided by **The Shepherd School of Music at Rice University** greeted more than 320 guests who gathered at River Oaks Country Club, on October 20, to support Houston Hospice generously. The 24th Annual Laura Lee Blanton Community Spirit Award Dinner Co-chairs **Jennifer Tuttle Arnold, Susan Tuttle Lummis, and Emily Tuttle Wilde** were thrilled that the evening raised over **\$375,000**. Emcee **Rusty Gates** led the evening. **Dr. Alejandro Chaoul, founding director of the Jung Center's Mind Body Spirit Institute**, started the event with the invocation. Sharing gratitude towards those who generously support the hospice community and help patients and families live their best quality of life, **President & CEO Rana McClelland**.

The evening's recipients of the Laura Lee Blanton Community Spirit Award were **Jim Reeder and Eric Nevil** in recognition of the family's 40 years of support for Houston Hospice, Jim and Eric's continuation of the Reeder family's legacy of generosity, and the unyielding spirit in which they work to make Houston a better place for all. **Sue White**, Houston Hospice board member and philanthropy chair, presented the award and shared, "Jim and Eric truly reflect the true spirit of our mission and deeply care about the community and Houston Hospice."

The crystal award was accepted by Reeder and Nevil to a standing ovation, followed by a fireside chat. "Hospice Houston was there. They took care of us, and that's all we can ask for," said Eric Nevil. Jim Reeder added, "We promised to pay it forward for the parents and family members."

This year's event also recognized **Medical Director and Vice President of Medical Affairs Dr. Elizabeth Strauch** with the Heart of Houston Hospice Service Award for dedicating 30 years of her career to ensuring Houston Hospice serves quality care to all patients and families. **Philanthropist and Community Volunteer Anne Baillio** was recognized with the Heart of Houston Hospice Volunteer

Award for devoting 34 years to volunteering in the homes of hospice patients, long-term care facilities, and in the Inpatient Unit.

The sold-out raffle featured four nights in a picturesque Santa Fe Vacation Home, a garden chic cocktail party at the **Houston Botanic Garden** with light bites and delicious botanical mocktails provided by **Silver Stone**, and a Shopping Spree on River Oaks Boulevard donated by **Mariquita Masterson, Dos Carolinas, Itsy Bitsy Boutique and A Bientot**.

**Seen in the crowd: President and CEO Rana McClelland, Vice President of Philanthropy and Community Outreach Aida Matic, Jim Reeder and Eric Nevil, Jennifer Tuttle Arnold, Susan Tuttle Lummis, Emily Tuttle Wilde, Anne and Bob Baillio, Susan and Melbern Glasscock, Elizabeth and Peter Wareing, Bess and Matthew Wareing, Board Chair Joyce Salhoot, Kay and Paul Mansfield, Emily Crosswell, Lynn Baird, Flo Crady, Ann Johnson, Harriet Alexander, Winifred Riser, Jill and Conrad Johnson, Nancy and Al Gatmaitan, Penny and Craig Glidden, Seth Hopkins, Kim and David Sterling, Sue White, Nancy S. Thomas, Kingslea and Michael von Helms, Hester and George Hawkins, Kim and Sellers J. Thomas, III, Vivie O' Sullivan, Francey Fondren, Cora and Judson Robinson.**

Founded in 1980, Houston Hospice has evolved from an alternative grassroots 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 by Jacob Powers <https://tinyurl.com/hospicehouston> (list with names included)