

S O U T H W E S T E R N M E D I C A L
PERSPECTIVES

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Long-standing commitment to
philanthropy characterizes
Community Service Awardees



Mary McDermott Cook



Vester Hughes

Robert Korba

Charles Cameron Sprague

Community Service Award

Southwestern Medical Foundation has honored select individuals who have provided extraordinary support in enhancing patient care, medical education and medical research in North Texas. This year the organization named three people, whose names have become synonymous with generosity and leadership, as the 2011 recipients of its highest recognition, the Charles Cameron Sprague Community Service Award. Mary McDermott Cook, Robert Korba and Vester Hughes join an elite list of community leaders whose dedication to Dallas has earned them the award.

In 1991 the Foundation created a community service award, which later was renamed the Charles Cameron Sprague Community Service Award, in honor of the Foundation's former president, CEO and chairman emeritus, and in recognition of the significant and lasting influence his service at UT Southwestern Medical Center and at Southwestern Medical Foundation had on medicine in Dallas.

Prior award recipients have included: Ruth Collins Altsbuler, James W. Aston, Paul M. Bass Jr., Julie T. and Louis A. Beecherl Jr., H.R. (Bum) Bright, Nancy Brinker, Rita C. and William P. Clements Jr., Joe M. Dealey, Robert H. Dedman Family (Nancy Dedman, Patricia Dedman Nail, and Rachael and Robert H. Dedman Jr.), Jerry Farrington, Earl A. Forsythe, F.B. Pete Goldman, Cecil H. Green, Nancy B. Hamon, Jess T. Hay, Adelyn and Edmund Hoffman, Sydney and J.L. Huffines, Nancy and Ray Hunt, J. Erik Jonsson, George L. MacGregor, Margaret M. McDermott, Sammye and Mike A. Myers, Edith and Peter O'Donnell Jr., Margot and Ross Perot, Madeleine and T. Boone Pickens, Caren and C. Vincent Prothro, Charlene and Lee Raymond, Laura and Jack Roach, Ralph B. Rogers, Sarah M. and Charles E. Seay, Annette and Harold C. Simmons, Jean and Dr. Bob Smith, Gay F. and William T. Solomon, Charles Cameron Sprague, M.D., Jean and Tom Walter, and Donald Zale.



Mary McDermott Cook: Building bridges in the Dallas community

By Rachel Skei Donihoo

The influence of Mary McDermott Cook and her family has permeated virtually every aspect of UT Southwestern Medical Center – from its welcoming landscape and artwork to the highest and most exacting levels of research and education. Many of the medical center's most inspired projects were made possible through the McDermotts' staunch dedication to the UT Southwestern community. Long after Ms. Cook's family made its first gift to UT Southwestern, the daughter of industrialist Eugene McDermott and his wife, Margaret, has continued her family's legacy of giving, and, in her own right, is playing a much-admired role in Dallas philanthropy and civic leadership.

Ms. Cook, president of the Eugene McDermott Foundation, grew up immersed in philanthropy. She says she was profoundly influenced by her parent's civic involvement, and, as president of the family foundation, Ms. Cook carries on their storied support of the causes her family held dear.

The Biological Humanics Foundation (which Ms. Cook chaired until it was dissolved and the assets provided to UT Southwestern's *Fund for Molecular Research* campaign in the early 1990s) was established in 1950, and the Eugene McDermott Foundation was established in 1955 by Mr. McDermott, cofounder of Geophysical Services Inc. and its successor, Texas Instruments (TI), which made technological history. Mr. McDermott was TI's first board chairman and continued as director until his death in 1973. Ms. Cook and her mother, Margaret McDermott, have continued to fund impactful projects, programs and causes in medical science, education and community enhancement.

The McDermott family's tireless support of UT Southwestern includes gifts for the establishment of the Eugene McDermott



Academic Administration Building and Plaza, the Eugene McDermott Center for Human Growth and Development; the Eugene McDermott Center for Pain Management; the Eugene McDermott Distinguished Chair for the Study of Human Growth and Development; the Eugene McDermott Distinguished Chair in Molecular Genetics; the Eugene McDermott Scholar in Medical Research; the Margaret Milam McDermott Distinguished Chair in Anesthesiology and Pain Management; the Philip O'Bryan Montgomery Jr., M.D., Distinguished Chair in Developmental Biology; the S.T. "Buddy" Harris Distinguished Chair in Cardiac Anesthesiology; the Mary McDermott Cook Chair in Pediatric Genetics; and the Kern and Marnie Wildenthal Family Fund for Enhancement of the Arts at UT Southwestern and UT Dallas.

Ms. Cook, who holds a bachelor's degree in art history from Stanford University and a Master of Business Administration from UT Austin, serves on the executive committee of the Southwestern Medical Foundation board, is vice chair of the board of the Dallas Museum of Art, and serves on the executive committee of the Dallas Zoological Society.

A self-described lover of nature, Ms. Cook most recently has focused her time and attention on the Trinity River Corridor Project, the most ambitious public works project in the nation and one that will transform Dallas forever by improving the 20-mile riverfront area that runs through the heart of the city. Ms. Cook chairs the Trinity Trust Foundation, which is helping

the city raise private funds for the \$2.2 billion project, which includes a signature Calatrava bridge that will be dedicated in 2012 arching across the river. She is a founding member of the Trinity River Audubon Center.

For her life's work on behalf of both the medical center and greater Dallas, the Charles Cameron Sprague Community Service Award recognizes Ms. Cook's immeasurable contributions. Here, she explains her philosophies on civic involvement and talks about her philanthropic roots.

Q: You've done so much for the community and for UT Southwestern, in particular. Would you please explain what motivates that commitment?

Ms. Cook: It's really simple – the motivating factor is my father. He was a gorgeous man, inside and out, and he wholeheartedly loved Dallas and the medical center. It is difficult to find a building or program at UT Southwestern that has not benefited from Eugene McDermott's devotion. Science and technology obviously were very important to him, and he absolutely loved being on the front lines of anything new. My father had great respect – as do I – for the fine minds at work throughout the medical center, so he took great pleasure in the friendships he formed there and was proud to be a part of its growth. He was an incredibly smart man, so he did very well for our family. Giving back was part of his life, and he encouraged me to make it part of mine.

Q: Your mother, Margaret McDermott, has been equally dedicated to UT Southwestern. Her interests, however, are a bit different, aren't they?

Ms. Cook: Oh, yes. She has always been a great lover of art and beauty. Aesthetics are her thing, and she has poured her energy into "making over" the medical center. UT Southwestern University Hospital - Zale Lipshy would not be nearly as beautiful without Margaret McDermott's textiles, which she collected from all over the world and which now line the hallways of the hospital. Mom has always been about creating the best possible environment. Years ago, when my father gave a gift to support the anesthesiology program, the first thing my mom did was redecorate the residents' sleeping quarters! She genuinely cares, and she loves to have fun.

Q: You have said that you "grew up" on the UT Southwestern campus. Can you explain what kind of impact that had on you?

Ms. Cook: I have been a medical school groupie for a long time (laughs). One of my favorite things to do when I was younger was to visit the laboratories of the researchers. I loved science and always wanted to learn more, more, more. It was such a privilege to visit the labs of scientists like [Nobel Laureates] Dr. Joe Goldstein and Dr. Michael Brown, and others like them. Being a part of that environment seemed natural to me, largely because of my dad's interest in science. He was fascinated by the why of everything – how human beings are built, how they behave, and what makes them sick or healthy. All those questions captured his imagination, as they have mine.

Q: What advice would you give to a young person who wanted, as you have, to make his or her community a better place?

Ms. Cook: I guess the only thing I would say is: Just jump in. Get involved, and get to know people. So much of what I've done in and around Dallas has happened because I pursued my own personal interests. Out of that came friendships, which have led to even more involvement. For example, I love animals and I love nature. Those things really get me excited, so I've sought out organizations that support them. That, in turn, has put me together with people who share that passion. Those connections have been invaluable, both in terms of what they offer me personally and in how they have helped expand my role in the community.

Q: One of your newest and most substantial undertakings is the building of the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge in Dallas, designed by Santiago Calatrava. Your leadership in the Trinity Trust Foundation even prompted a \$10 million gift to support the project, which an anonymous donor gave in your honor. Can you please explain how you feel about the project?

Ms. Cook: I'm just crazy about that bridge. It's going to be a wonderful landmark and an important addition to our community. I really believe it is going to transform parts of West Dallas, and I'm very proud to be a part of it. Unless you've been right up on the bridge, it's hard to get a sense of how amazing, huge and formidable it is. I'm really looking forward to its official opening next spring, when the community will have a chance to explore it. My involvement in this project also goes back to my belief that if you pursue what you love – in this case, art and nature – opportunities will present themselves.

Q: Aside from your parents, who has been your greatest mentor?

Ms. Cook: Without a doubt, Dr. Philip O'Bryan Montgomery [the late UT Southwestern professor emeritus of pathology]. Philip had been a part of my life since I was 2 years old. My dad was his mentor, and then Philip became mine. He was truly a great man, and a giant in what he did for the medical center and for the Dallas arts community. But there also have been others who have impacted my life in vital ways – Dr. Charlie Sprague and Dr. Kern Wildenthal, just to name two. They all have helped guide me, and I think often about their wisdom and the kindnesses they've shown me.

Q: Of the many gifts your family has given to UT Southwestern, is there one that stands out as particularly meaningful to you?

Ms. Cook: Although my family has not always given large gifts, we have always been strategic. One of my dad's earliest contributions to the medical center was a chair in anesthesiology, which he named after my mother. It was the first chair in that field at UT Southwestern, and I believe the first of its kind in the United States. But I think one of my favorite gifts was for the McDermott Center for Human Growth and Development, which we created by dissolving my dad's first foundation, the Biological Humanics Foundation, which was then worth about \$5.4 million. I always thought my father was the most technologically advanced human being of his day and, although the gift was given after his death, we all thought it would have meant a great deal to him. We wanted to find a way to attract and retain some of the world's best geneticists – and we have, so it has turned out to be a fruitful and exciting gift.

Q: What was your reaction to hearing that you had been chosen for the Charles Cameron Sprague Community Service Award?

Ms. Cook: I was surprised and, to be honest, wasn't sure I should accept it. So much of what I've done in my life is due to my dad's self-made success, resulting in my good fortune. But I loved Charlie Sprague and am really humbled to be given an award that honors him. ■



Robert Korba (left) with Vester Hughes.

Robert Korba and Vester Hughes: Inspired by Charles Sammons, they continue to 'give back'

By Rachel Skei Donihoo

There is a long-standing debate about whether leaders are born or made. Robert Korba and Vester Hughes will tell you that neither is necessarily true. The desire to lead, they say, may indeed be an innate quality, but great leaders are shaped by those closest to them.

Among the guiding forces behind Mr. Hughes' and Mr. Korba's careers was Charles Sammons, who inspired them for more than three decades.

Mr. Korba, former chairman, CEO and president of Sammons Enterprises Inc. and former officer of the Sammons Dallas Foundation, and Mr. Hughes, who served as the principal attorney for the Sammons estate and the Sammons Dallas Foundation, devoted much of their careers to the Sammons organizations.

With their guidance, Sammons Enterprises and the Sammons Dallas Foundation became major philanthropic forces in the community, supporting numerous charitable causes and substantially enhancing some of the city's most vital programs through the decades. In December 2009, Sammons Dallas Foundation, with the support of Sammons

Enterprises, distributed a staggering \$100 million to worthy Dallas charities. The majority of this monumental gift went to medical institutions. In addition to \$20 million for UT Southwestern, other beneficiaries included Baylor Health Care System Foundation, Methodist Health Care System Foundation, Communities Foundation of Texas, the Salvation Army of Dallas County, and the Education Trust Fund of the Catholic Diocese of Dallas.

The \$20 million endowment to the medical center created the Charles A. Sammons Heart, Lung and Vascular Comprehensive Center, which will be a focal point of inpatient and outpatient cardiology services, as well as one of the finest clinical and translational research programs in the country at the new University Hospital, now under construction. As the medical center readies the hospital for its slated opening in 2015, the impact that the foundation's generosity has had on the institution will become even more apparent.

Sammons Enterprises and the Sammons Dallas Foundation both were established by the legendary businessman, who in 1938 founded Reserve Life Insurance Co. in downtown Dallas. Mr. Sammons believed that the value of a company was determined by more than the bottom-line numbers. With 3,800 employees internationally and assets approaching \$50 billion, Sammons Enterprises ranks among the largest privately owned companies in the world. The diversified holding corporation owns and operates businesses across a variety of industries and also manages a large investment portfolio.

When Mr. Sammons died in 1988, he entrusted his businesses to his wife, Elaine, and Mr. Korba to see that the employees and management remained true to his ideals. Elaine served as chairman of the board until her death in January 2009. Mrs. Sammons, Mr. Korba and Mr. Hughes played integral roles in perpetuating those ideals and continuing the spirit of giving and making a difference in the community.

Mr. Korba obtained his undergraduate degree from the University of Nebraska in 1965 and then earned a law degree from the University of Nebraska - Lincoln College of Law in 1968. Prior to joining Sammons Enterprises as assistant general counsel in 1973, he served in the Army as a first lieutenant in military intelligence. He was general counsel for Sammons from 1983 to 1988, when he was named president and CEO. He retired from the post in 2008 but continued his leadership role as chairman of the company's board of directors until September 2011. He holds numerous civic and business distinctions. He is a trustee of Southwestern Medical Foundation, University of Nebraska Foundation and Dallas County Community College District Foundation. Mr. Korba was recently honored by the University of Nebraska College of Law as a distinguished alumnus.

Mr. Hughes, a native West Texan, graduated *cum laude* from Harvard Law School in 1952 after graduating from Rice University, which later named him a distinguished alumnus.

He clerked for U.S. Supreme Court Justice Tom C. Clark and eventually founded the law firm Hughes & Luce, which recently merged with K&L Gates. He has repeatedly been named among the best lawyers in America by *Tax Law*, *Law & Politics Magazine*, *Texas Monthly* and others. His stellar reputation has earned him many accolades, including the Outstanding Texas Tax Lawyer Award from the State Bar of Texas in 2003 and the Morris Harrell Professionalism Award from the Texas Center for Legal Ethics & Professionalism and the Dallas Bar Association in 2005.

In addition to his service to the Sammons Dallas Foundation, where he was a longtime legal adviser, Mr. Hughes has played guiding roles in many other Dallas philanthropies, including the Communities Foundation of Texas, the Caruth Foundation and Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children.

Robert Korba and Vester Hughes have been awarded the Charles Cameron Sprague Community Service Award for their personal commitment and contributions to philanthropy, and for their effectiveness and dedication in guiding the Sammons organizations' generosity to Dallas charities for decades. Here, they share their thoughts on community service and giving back, in keeping with the goals of Charles Sammons.

Q: You are receiving the Sprague Award for your many contributions to health care, medical research and medical education. You both played pivotal roles in remarkable gifts from the Sammons Dallas Foundation and Sammons Enterprises to UT Southwestern and many other Dallas institutions. Would you please share with us your personal views of philanthropy, as well as the guiding philanthropic principles of the foundation and the company?

Mr. Korba: Before Charles Sammons died, he gave me two responsibilities: One was to act as the co-executor of his estate after he passed away, and the second was to be the chief executive officer of Sammons Enterprises, which, of course, is the company he built. I worked in a fiduciary capacity in both of those roles – carrying out Mr. Sammons' wishes and leading his organization, with the support of many Sammons' employees, to growth and success. In the case of philanthropic giving, both Mr. and Mrs. Sammons believed that the "business" side of things was interconnected to the "community" side. In other words, they thought the organization had a responsibility to share its success. What you might call "giving back" became one of my responsibilities through my roles in Sammons Enterprises and the Sammons Dallas Foundation.

Mr. Hughes: Yes, the gifts were the visions of Charles and Elaine. Bob and I simply worked behind the scenes to help carry them out, but it was Mr. and Mrs. Sammons whose hard work and dedication made that gift, and others, a reality.

Q: Philanthropy seems ingrained in the culture of Sammons Enterprises. Can you please explain?

Mr. Korba: Philanthropy is very much a way of life here. Mr. Sammons made it a priority to create a values-based culture, and, even after his death, those principles guide our behavior. Not only do we give back by sharing the company's financial success, but we also encourage the employees to donate their time and, to the extent they can afford it, their funds to charities of their choice. In the years that followed Mr. Sammons' death, Mrs. Sammons and I formalized a policy of philanthropy, and we focused on four recipient classes: medicine, the arts, education and the underserved. We encourage Sammons employees – which now number about 3,800 in the U.S., Mexico and the United Kingdom – to identify charities that mean something to them. The company supports the employees' efforts by encouraging and compensating them for any leadership role they might take in an organization. If we expect our employees to walk the walk and talk the talk, we're compelled as a company to do the same. One of the things that was very important to Mr. Sammons was creating jobs. He loved to acquire businesses, but his focus was always on the humans within those companies. Even today, one of our company mottos is that companies



Robert Korba

don't make or lose money; people do. And we care about the difference we make with the money we make.

Q: In 2010, the Sammons Foundation made a transformative \$100 million gift to six Dallas institutions, including UT Southwestern. Can you please explain how that gift came to be?

Mr. Hughes: Charles Sammons expressed his desire to support the community through the Sammons Dallas Foundation, which he felt was the best way to give back to the organizations he loved. In his estate planning, he very clearly indicated a plan to give part of his estate to charities, which he carefully chose before he died.

Q: In what ways was Elaine Sammons' philanthropic vision similar or different to that of her husband?

Mr. Korba: I think Charles Sammons' focus was more institutional, but his preferences were based on personal reasons. For example, he established the Charles A. Sammons Cancer Center at Baylor Hospital, largely because he had two sisters who had both been affected by the disease. He focused on institutions he liked and wanted to reward them by giving gifts that would enhance their overall visions. Elaine, on the other hand, was a bit more specific and highly personal in her giving. An experience with an individual, for example, might prompt her to give. She endowed two chairs at UT Southwestern in honor of her physicians, Drs. Gene Frenkel and John Fitzgerald, because she trusted them, believed in them and was grateful for the way they'd cared for her. She eventually created her own foundation, the Elaine Dewey Sammons Foundation, which is now overseen by her son. She was a book lover, so she focused much of her giving on education, which she felt was an area of critical importance.

Q: Mr. Hughes, you became one of Mr. and Mrs. Sammons' most trusted advisers. How did your long relationship with them begin?

Mr. Hughes: Charles hired me in the 1950s to try to save him from some tax problems he was having (laughs). We became good friends after that, and my relationship with him and, eventually, Elaine, grew as I helped them to plan their estates.

Mr. Korba: Vester is modest, but he has a unique and talented gift for helping his clients not only deal with legal matters, but with personal challenges that go well beyond that. Estate planning can be highly emotional and complex because it entails making important decisions about family, business and community obligations. In my mind – and in the minds of Mr. and Mrs. Sammons – Vester's expertise and experience in this area trumps them all. He does an exceptional job in helping his clients sort through all those personal issues, and



Vester Hughes

his expert guidance has led to significant gifts that have greatly benefited Dallas.

Q: Mr. Hughes, you have been closely involved with many other foundations and philanthropists throughout our community who have supported a variety of programs at UT Southwestern – and you, yourself, have long been active at the medical center. What are your thoughts about why so many in Dallas support our institution so strongly?

Mr. Hughes: I think that, for a lot of people, UT Southwestern is synonymous with the future of medicine. I've had the privilege of watching the medical center grow from the ground up, and it has been an absolutely magnificent experience. The eagerness, the intelligence and the dedication required to create a medical institution of this caliber is remarkable, and I think many people recognize that. Even if you weren't around when UT Southwestern was first built, as I was, it's impossible to miss its rich history, which you can still feel today. It's a special place, not only because of where it's been, but because of where it's going. The incredible research that's being conducted there stands to define the future of medical science.

Q: Mr. Korba, how did your relationship with Mr. and Mrs. Sammons begin?

Mr. Korba: I came to Sammons Enterprises as a lawyer. I got to know Mr. Sammons as the company's general counsel before

becoming president. I never expected to stay at Sammons for 35 years, but the organization, and Mr. Sammons himself, were intriguing. He was the consummate entrepreneur and a fearless risk-taker. Because there have always been a lot of business transactions and acquisitions to conduct, as a lawyer and then as a businessman, it has been a very exciting place to be.

Q: You both obviously formed close personal, as well as professional, relationships with Mr. and Mrs. Sammons. In what ways has that bond enabled you to carry out their philanthropic wishes?

Mr. Korba: My relationships with each of them were different. For Mr. Sammons, I served as a fiduciary and steward for his assets. He was a great mentor and role model to me, and I had tremendous respect for him. Mrs. Sammons, on the other hand, managed her own assets, so I served only as a sounding board for her. I got to know Mrs. Sammons much better than Mr. Sammons, however, because she lived for more than two decades longer than he did. She and I, as co-executors and as co-trustees of Mr. Sammons' estate, controlled 100 percent of the stock of Sammons Enterprises, so every business decision required her input. If we agreed on something, we did it; if we didn't agree, we didn't. That partnership forced us to work together to resolve any differences we had. Looking back over some of the investments we made, I have to say her judgment was probably better than mine (laughs).

Q: What was your reaction upon hearing that you were being honored with the Charles Cameron Sprague Community Service Award?

Mr. Hughes: It certainly was unexpected! And, although I don't necessarily feel deserving, I appreciate it very much. I take interest in creating opportunities and acting on them, and I've always operated on the belief that being a fulfilled human being requires you to live life each day doing the best you can. Mr. and Mrs. Sammons lived their lives that way, and I've tried to do the same. I think this award is a testament to the strength and legacy of what they created. It has been a pleasure to be a part of that, even in small ways.

Mr. Korba: Although I'm very proud of receiving the award, I hesitated to accept it simply because I felt the credit from Southwestern Medical Foundation should go to Mr. Sammons and the people of Sammons Enterprises. I agreed only to be honored as a proxy for them. To have been given a role of some accountability in his philanthropy, both as an executor and trustee of Mr. Sammons' estate and as CEO of his company, was a privilege. I always understood that my role was to build the kind of business he wanted and that the community deserved. ■