Dear Brass Family,

Wishing you all the joys of the holiday season. This has been a banner year for BRASS! We celebrated 25 years of BRASS moments, memories, and milestones; saluted our BRASS Scholars’ outstanding work; and toasted you, our generous donors, for your continued and dedicated support. Thank you, again, for your belief in BRASS and our mission. As we look to the next 25 years, we renew our commitment to these brilliant student scientists and their research, which continues to reveal countless medical discoveries and breakthroughs for all of us. We will look back at the impact we have made as a reminder and inspiration of the good that can be accomplished when people come together because they believe in a common goal...

Research is the Answer!

Although it was actually our 27th year, on May 4, 2022, we finally got to be together to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of BRASS. What a grand celebration it was, as 165 guests enjoyed Sidney Faust’s gracious and generous hospitality. Her beautiful home and gardens created a fun and festive evening for everyone. We saluted the legacy of many wonderful BRASS Memories & Milestones, acknowledging those who helped make them happen with a video showcasing 25 years of BRASS highlights. We welcomed back 12 of our past Scholars, including our very first BRASS Scholar, Julia Elvin. It was a magical evening of cherished memories as we reflected on all we’ve accomplished and the lasting foundation each of you have helped us build.

• Four endowed BRASS Scholarships - Sidney Broadfoot Faust, Don D. Jordan, Don D. Sykora, and Myra Branum Wilson
• William R. Brinkley BRASS Endowed Chair
• 20 active BRASS Scholars obtaining their Ph.D. in research
• Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo Research Partner & Benefactor
• David & Eula Wintermann Foundation /Jack and Judi Johnson Endowed Research Partner & Benefactor Fund
• Buck Bukowski Research Travel Endowment Fund
• Donald E. McMahon/Ed McMahon Research & Recruitment Endowment Fund
• More than $10M dollars raised to date

As always, the BRASS Board and I truly appreciate all of you for your continued support for our amazing BRASS Scholars. Our BRASS scholarships are increasingly effective in attracting the best and the brightest students who add to the college’s ever-growing expertise in biomedical research. We could not do it without your support!

Best wishes for a prosperous 2023,
Elsie
On May 4, 2022, 165 people gathered at the magnificent River Oaks home of Sidney Faust to celebrate the twenty-fifth Anniversary of BRASS. Hosted and underwritten by Mrs. Faust, the beautiful setting served as the perfect background for an evening to remember! The event raised more than $59,000 for research, education, and scholarship endowments for our BRASS Scholars. BRASS Founder Myra Wilson received the well deserved special honor of being named a BRASS Honorary Lifetime Member. Twenty-seven years ago Myra had the keen vision to recognize the need for BRASS and has worked tirelessly and successfully to bring it’s mission to fruition. A big BRASS salute to Myra! Dr. Kelly Larkin and her husband, Fernando Parra, who was unable to attend, were named 2022 BRASS Angels of the Year. Myra Wilson and Elsie Eckert presented Kelly with a Waterford Crystal angel and a framed certificate acknowledging Kelly and Fernando for their enduring generosity to BRASS and hosting the Scholars’ Reception every year. They are indeed BRASS Angels!

BRASS Scholar Matthew Penna MD/PhD (2018-19) presented his mentor Dr. Thomas Cooper with the Diana Brown Memorial Mentor of the Year Award and a $500 check. Matt submitted the winning nomination essay of why Dr. Cooper so richly deserved the award. BRASS salutes Dr. Cooper for sharing his wisdom, integrity and compassion that has so impacted the confidence and success of his students. Dr. Cooper is making a difference!

Jack and Judi Johnson were thanked for their 15 years of generous research support through the Wintermann Foundation. The Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo also received a big BRASS salute for its 16 years of providing funding for the scholars’ research equipment and trips to seminars to present their lab findings.
On May 4, twelve past BRASS scholars joined 16 of our current Scholars to embrace and share 25 years of BRASS memories. So many accomplishments and so many more ahead for each of them, it was exciting to have a chance to catch up.

Dr. Julia Elvin, MD/PhD (1995)  
Myra B. Wilson Scholar  
Laboratory Director and Sr. VP of Pathology & Diagnostic medicine for Foundation Medicine a molecular information company with more than 6,100 employees. Dedicated to a transformation in cancer care utilizing a deep understanding of genomic changes that contribute to each patient’s unique cancer. Married to Dr. David Elvin, they have two teenage children.

Dr. Matthew Baker, PhD (1996)  
Myra B. Wilson Scholar  
Oversees his own lab at UTMB and is a Postdoctoral Fellow at Baylor College of Medicine. Serves on the BRASS Board as the Scholar Selection Liaison and Research Grant Advisor. Married to Amber Baker, they have two girls.

Dr. Sergy Lemeshko, MD/PhD (1997)  
Don D. Sykora Scholar  
Diagnostic radiology specialist in Orange, Texas and is affiliated with multiple hospitals in the area, including Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas and Christus Southeast Texas Hospital-St. Elizabeth. He has a teenage son.

Dr. Mark Pennesi MD/PhD (1999)  
Myra B. Wilson Scholar  
Professor in Ophthalmology at Oregon Health & Science University. He holds the Kenneth C. Swan Endowed Professorship and is the Chief of the Ophthalmic Genetics Division at the Casey Eye Institute. Clinician scientist with a passion for developing novel therapeutic regimens for inherited retinal diseases.

Dr. Hsiao Tuan Chao MD/PhD (2004)  
Don D. Sykora Scholar  
Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Section of Neurology and Developmental Neuroscience, Department of Molecular and Human Genetics, Baylor College of Medicine. Oversees her own lab in the Jan and Dan Duncan Neurological Research Institute at Texas Children’s Hospital. Research Focus: neurodevelopmental and neuropsychiatric disorders (HADD syndrome, autism, and epilepsy). She is married to Dr. Mingshan Xue.

Dr. Shelly Buffington, PhD (2007)  
Don D. Jordan Scholar  
Assistant Professor, University of Texas Medical Branch where she oversees her own lab. Served three years on the BRASS Board as a BRASS Scholar Selection Committee member. Married to Jesse Buffington and they have three girls.

Dr. Kassie Manning, PhD (2012)  
Don D. Jordan Scholar  
Worked at McKinsey & Co. for three years. Currently is the Director of Operations at Every Sacred Sunday, LLC a spiritual journal company. Has written and published three books. Married to Stephen Manning, they have a baby girl.

Dr. Paul Fahey, MD/PhD (2014)  
Sidney B. Faust Scholar  
Research specialist in Neuroscience in the lab of Dr. Andreas Tolias at Baylor College of Medicine.

Dr. Larissa Nitschke, PhD (2014)  
Don D. Jordan Scholar  
Postdoctoral Associate at the Department of Pathology and Immunology in the Lab of Dr. Thomas Cooper at Baylor College of Medicine. Married to Walid Fakhour.

Dr. Elizabeth Bowling, PhD (2015)  
Don D. Sykora Scholar  
Research assistant in the lab of Dr. Trey Westbrook at Baylor College of Medicine. Married to Adam Bowling, they have a little girl.

Dr. Patrick Hunt, MD/PhD (2016)  
Myra B. Wilson Scholar  
Molecular & Human Genetics. PhD defense in 2022, back in medical school. Married to Fabiola Andujar.

Dr. Zachary Kadow, MD/PhD (2016)  
Don D. Sykora Scholar  
Developmental Biology. PhD defense in 2022, back in medical school. Married to Dr. Callie McCool.

Dr. Rowland Pettit, MD/PhD (2019)  
Myra B. Wilson Scholar  
Quantitative and Computational Biosciences. PhD defense in 2022, back in medical school.
1. Debby Leighton, Henry and Doe Florshaim
2. Rosanette Cullen and Judi Johnson
3. Kathleen and Tom Mach
4. Tamara and Dr. James Bonar
5. Michelle Collins and Craig Moffatt
6. Edna Meyer Nelson and Jody Merritt
7. Judi McGee and Mike Waller
8. Dee and Danny Faust
9. Vesna and Dr. Jeffrey Southwick
10. Elsie Eckert and Sidney Faust
11. Dean Carolyn Smith and Klys Reedyk
12. Harry* and Cora Sue Mach
13. Julia Elvin, Dr. Matt Baker and Lily Baker
14. Hershey Grace and Ed McMahon
15. Linda Kuykendall, Elsie Eckert and Joni Baird
16. David and Mary Ann McKeithan
17. Myra Wilson and Michelle Collins
18. Chris Kase and Sharon Worley
20. Kenoy Rogers, Robin Simon and Dr. David Wright
21. John and Betty Hrncir
22. Beth and Cynthia Wolfe
23. Betty and Jesse Tutor
24. Jo Ann Petersen, Lisa Chandler and Linda Kuykendall
25. Myra Wilson and Dr. Kelly Larkin
26. Steve and Marcia Brown
27. Julia Elvin, Frank and Ann Elvin
28. Sue and Will Swanson
29. Mary Ellen and Rod Crosby
30. Chuck and Arald Simmons
31. Dr. Scott Businger and guests enjoy the program
32. Jennifer and Donna Stokes
33. Stephanie Keeling and Malcolm McDonald
34. Ishani Desai and Chitra Kapila
35. Bob Bibb and Don Flowers
36. John Baik and Linda Zhang
37. Janet Hansen and Lynn Kamin

*Deceased
On July 20, the BRASS Executive board surprised Board member Don Jordan with the announcement that the Don D. Jordan BRASS Outstanding Trailblazer Scientist Award had been established in his honor. The award will be presented annually at the Tea & Toddies event and includes a $1,000 gift. It will be given to a current BRASS Scholar who exemplifies the traits of outstanding future leadership with unparalleled academic performance, research excellence, publications, fellowships, grants, patents, and presentations; combined with citizenship encompassing past honors, awards teaching, tutoring, community service and outreach.

Dinner at the Houstonian, complete with a birthday cake especially created for Don’s 90th birthday, followed. The BRASS Board thanked Don for his continued guidance and presented him with a BRASS PROCLAMATION of thanks for all he has done for BRASS. Ed McMahon, philanthropic BRASS Board member and long-time dear friend of Don, generously donated $10,000 in Don’s Honor to the Donald E. McMahon BRASS Scholar Education and Recruitment Endowment Fund.

BRASS Officers 2021-2022

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Scholar Selection & Research Grant Advisor Dr. Matthew Baker

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In Memory of
Harry Mach
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Sidney Faust
Jo Ann Peterson
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SJ and Will Swanson
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In Honor of
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Jerry Lamm
Janet Hansen
Betty & Jesse Tutor
Betty & John Hrncir
Lilly & Thurman Andress

In Honor of
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Ed McMahon

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In Memory of
Marcelle Marks
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