

1) **Opening program**

1) **1:30**

Welcome by Mistress of Ceremonies

**MELANIE LAWSON**

Ralph Waldo Emerson said: "*A hero is no braver than an ordinary man, but he is braver five minutes longer.*"

*Five extra minutes can shift paradigms and change lives.*

*Five extra minutes can mean the difference between commonplace and cutting-edge.*

*Five extra minutes separates the *humans* from the *humanitarians*.*

Tonight, you are in the *physical* company of seven individuals and the *spiritual* company of countless pioneers who put in the time to be exceptional, to be altruistic ... to be *heroes*.

Good evening.

My name is **Melanie Lawson**, and I am *proud* to serve as Mistress of Ceremonies of Texas Southern University's inaugural Black and White Ball. We are delighted that you have joined us tonight to commemorate Black History Month and recognize, as I stated, seven *extraordinary* individuals ...

Mayor Bill White

Ms. Algenita Scott Davis

Mr. Willard Jackson, Jr.

Professor Arbolina Jennings

Mr. Toby Mattox

Mr. Gasper Mir, III

and Dr. Richard Wainerdi

... individuals who have extended their service and endeavors to use their extra five minutes and contribute to the elevation of multiculturalism in our city and region.

We congratulate Texas Southern University, particularly President Priscilla Slade and her administration, for inaugurating such a significant event, the first official commemoration of its kind for Black History Month in the city of Houston.

So, in *celebrating* history, we are also *making* it. Please join me in a round of applause for Texas Southern University and its co-sponsors, the *Houston Chronicle* and *KTRK Channel 13*.

[PAUSE FOR APPLAUSE]

We will now have brief greetings from our Thurgood Marshall sponsors.

[BRIEF GREETINGS FROM JACK SWEENEY OF THE *HOUSTON CHRONICLE*]

[BRIEF GREETINGS FROM HENRY FLORSHEIM OF KTRK CHANNEL 13]

Thank you, gentlemen. I *know* everyone is excited to begin the program and partake of the delicious food, so without further ado, the **Reverend Marcus Cosby**, associate pastor of Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church, will lead us prayer before we dine.

Reverend, would you please come at this time?

[EXIT STAGE, ENTER REVEREND COSBY]

2) **Awards program**

2) **3:30**

Introduction to Texas Southern University President

**MELANIE LAWSON**

May I please have everyone's attention? We would like to continue with our program.

Are you enjoying yourselves so far?

[PAUSE FOR RESPONSE]

At this time, it is my privilege to present Dr. Priscilla Slade, the 10<sup>th</sup> President of Texas Southern University, who will deliver the historical perspective of this evening as well as began the Hero Awards presentation in recognition of tonight's honorees.

Ladies and gentleman, Dr. Slade ...

[EXIT STAGE, ENTER PRISCILLA SLADE]

Welcome and historical perspective by Texas Southern University President

**PRISCILLA SLADE**

Thank you, **Ms. Lawson**.

For those of you who are new to the Houston community, Anchorwoman Lawson has been with KTRK-TV, Channel 13, since 1982. She is a trusted, award-winning journalist and daughter to Reverend Bill Lawson, founding pastor of the *timeless staple* in our community, Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church.

During the University's December 2003 commencement exercises, we awarded Pastor Lawson with an honorary Doctoral Degree for his continued community leadership and ongoing support of Texas Southern University.

[TO MELANIE LAWSON] We are happy to have you here.

[TO THE AUDIENCE] Greetings.

On behalf of the Texas Southern University Board of Regents, administration, faculty, staff, students, and alumni, welcome to our *historic* Black and White Ball.

Thank you for joining us tonight, and may I say you look marvelous.

[ASIDE] *Many of y'all clean up well.*

[PAUSE FOR LAUGHTER]

Special gratitude to our sponsors, who made *generous* donations in honor of our past pioneers Thurgood Marshall, Barbara Jordan, Mickey Leland, Craig Cullinan, O'Hara Lanier, and Heman Sweatt as well as countless individual heroes here tonight.

As you know, tonight's ball will benefit the University's general scholarship fund, which ensures a quality, comprehensive learning experience for deserving scholars.

Also, I would be remiss if I did not thank all individuals involved in the tireless efforts to organize and present this magnificent event to you, particularly, Maureen Hackett and Eileen Lawal, co-chairs of this grand event, the members of the planning and host committees, my staff in the President's Office, the Office of Development, Office of Communications, our consultants Yaffe Deutser (Brad Deutser and family), and the overall support of the TSU faculty and staff.

[PAUSE FOR TRANSITION]

Heroes are fallible creatures who *boldly* perform modest acts of excellence when no one is watching ... except God.

Tonight, we watch and we witness greatness in-progress. In a few moments, seven distinctive "change agents" will receive Hero Awards for their unwavering commitment to simply "doing the right thing" ...

... in the areas of education, leadership, the arts, community development, and health and wellness.

As **Ms. Lawson** acknowledged in her welcome earlier, this ball marks the first official event of its kind that commemorates Black History Month in our city.

Black history is American history. It is Texas' history, it is Houston's history, and it is most definitely Texas Southern University's history.

How could we *not* host such a tribute, considering the numerous leaders and visionaries who were, are, and will be affiliated with our institution?

*We desired* to remove the question marks from people's minds regarding the magnitude of our past change agents such as **Heman Marion Sweatt** ...

... an African-American postal worker who endeavored tirelessly for justice and equality after being denied admission into the University of Texas School of Law in 1946.

As no one watched, except God, Mr. Sweatt, along with the assistance of the NAACP, which provided future Supreme Court Justice **Thurgood Marshall** as co-counsel, brought legal action against U.T. As a result of Mr. Sweatt's lawsuit, the District Court gave the state of Texas six months in which to establish a separate but equal law school for "Negroes" or admit him into the U.T. School of Law. Texas decided on a separate school in March 1947. While Heman Sweatt did not attend the Texas State University for Negroes, he paved the way for the establishment of what we now recognize as none other than Texas Southern University.

As the leadership of Houston implemented the court's and the state's decisions, **Craig Cullinan**, a founder of what is now known as ChevronTexaco, worked with other civic leaders as Chairman of the Texas State University for Negroes' first Board of Regents. He worked tirelessly to recruit a world-renowned African-American scholar, **R. O'Hara Lanier**, to be its first president. And the resulting institution of opportunity and excellence became the nurturing **alma mater** (latin for "other mother") for such towering historical national leaders as Congresswoman

**Barbara Jordan** and Congressman **Mickey Leland**. True heroes, each one of them, on their own merits.

[PAUSE FOR TRANSITION AND REFLECTION]

Today, many individuals are elevating the remarkable legacy of our past.

To Texas Southern University, they represent "true partners in education" whose integrity provides a viable model of eminence for our young people.

We are excited to arrive at this part of the program, wherein we honor seven heroes and their resolve to linger "five minutes longer" to change the way the world works.

[PROVIDE INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING PROCESSION OF HONOREES AND ACCEPTANCE OF AWARDS]

3) **Awards program**

3) **18:30**

Presentation of Hero Awards by Texas Southern University President

*[SCENE: A designated student will usher each honoree to the floor and give respective honoree an award. As honoree walks and receives award, Dr. Priscilla Slade or Melanie Lawson provides voice over and commemorative tribute.]*

**Professor Arbolina Jennings**

ANNCR/CHNGE

**MELANIE LAWSON (VO)**

Kofi Annan, secretary-general of the United Nations said:  
*Education is a human right with immense power to transform. On its foundation rest the cornerstones of freedom, democracy, and sustainable human development.*

Our first honoree, one of TSU's own, is **Professor Arbolina Jennings**, who wholly embraces this testament as an educator, linguist, author, and mentor.

During her 30-year tenure at Texas Southern University, Professor Jennings has been responsible for educating thousands of students, assisting them in negotiating a rewarding learning path.

Converting static principles into interactive life experiences, Professor Jennings, certainly, has leveraged the power of education to transform ...

As an instructor, she is considered a subject matter expert in literature and film, language history, and comparative grammar for bi-lingual teachers.

Reflecting the benefits of diversity within the University family, Professor Jennings is a *cherished* staple, serving on a variety of University committees including International Studies, Retention and Graduation, Instructional Technology, Distance Learning, and College Grade Appeals.

Congratulations Professor Jennings; we are proud to honor you with the **Education Hero Award**.

## Hoyt T. (Toby) Mattox

ANNCR/CHNGE

**MELANIE LAWSON (VO)**

Art thrives where there is vision and vitality.

Where there is **Toby Mattox**, there is art.

Executive Director of the Society for the Performing Arts since 1980, Mr. Mattox has dramatically elevated the artistic consciousness of Houston's creative environment.

Under his direction, the Society for the Performing Arts has welcomed more than 700 artists and companies that have illuminated the African-American cultural experience to the citizens of Houston during February and throughout the year including the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Boys Choir of Harlem, Dance Theater of Harlem, ensembles from Africa and Central and South America, and a current production at Jones Hall entitled *Three Mo' Tenors*. It is a phenomenal performance by operatic tenors who bring a mix of opera, jazz, gospel, blues, folk, soul, and Broadway tunes.

**[ASIDE]** *But y'all can't attend the production tonight, go tomorrow night.*

Mr. Mattox's leadership has educated Houston's masses with his work, and he definitely inspires the dreams of our creative students at Texas Southern University who aspire to emulate his success in the performing arts industry.

Congratulations Artist Mattox; we are proud to honor you with the **Creative Arts Hero Award**.



## **Gasper Mir, III**

### **PRISCILLA SLADE (VO)**

As an accountant, I appreciate our next honoree.

**Gasper Mir, III** has reached significant milestones in his professional career based on a strong belief system ...

Belief in hard work, integrity, and service ...

*[ASIDE] Not to mention, belief in the supposition that Einstein would have been more effective had he put his ideas into a matrix ...*

Seriously, as founder of Mir, Fox & Rodriguez, P.C., Mr. Mir has redefined the concept of leadership. In fact, his firm and its affiliated entities are recognized as one of the leading regional accounting and consulting companies in Texas. For many, that would be a significant enough achievement, but not for a hero. Mir saw the crisis in public education and stepped into the fray by leaving his firm to become Executive Advisor to HISD Superintendent Kaye Stripling, in order to receive the hands-on training to become a superintendent of an urban public school district.

He hopes to lead one out of crisis and into excellence someday. And if that isn't a heroic enough task, he's doing this while sitting as Chairman of the Board of Luby's Inc.

SCR/CHNGE

Mr. Mir is wholly commitment to building bridges for minority students to cross and reach their academic goals. He is a valuable member of the Texas Southern University Jesse H. Jones School of Business Advisory Council, which aims to strengthen the communication link between the School of Business and the business community.

His dedication to diversity and charitable efforts provides a viable model of excellence.

Mr. Mir is the past recipient of the Community Partners' Father of the Year award; the Humanitarian Award by the National Council for Community and Justice; the Houston Hispanic Chamber's Hispanic Businessman of the Year award; and the Distinguished Citizen Award by the Hispanic Scouting Committee of the Sam Houston Area Council.

Congratulations Mr. Mir; we are proud to honor you with the **Education Hero Award**.

## Algenita Scott Davis

ANNCR/CHNGE

### MELANIE LAWSON (VO)

Muhammad Ali said: *Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth.*

You could say that **Algenita Scott Davis** has an exceptional track record as a faithful, “paying tenant.”

As Senior Vice President and Community Affairs Officer at JPMorgan Chase & Co., Ms. Davis identifies and refers potential small business customers through chambers, community development organizations, and additional support resource groups.

Ms. Davis has served as a liaison in a long-standing relationship between Texas Southern University and JPMorgan Chase. She has kept us a part of all of the major economic development activity that is going on in Third Ward, and was especially instrumental in the company’s decision to establish the JPMorgan Chase Financial Literacy Center—a \$500,000 investment—at TSU, that will be matched dollar-for-dollar by the state of Texas.

This precedent-setting gift to higher education by a world-class financial institution like JPMorgan Chase makes it a significant contributor to Texas Southern University’s capital campaign, *Open Doors*.

From an early age, Ms. Davis appreciated the value of education. She received a scholarship to Howard University, where she graduated and entered the University’s Law School, subsequently earning a JD.

Ms. Davis believes that “the most important thing you can do in life is serve.” Her consistent dedication to elevating our community and the goals of higher learning is demonstration and validation of “rent paid.”

Congratulations Ms. Davis; we are proud to honor you with the **Community Outreach Hero Award**.

**Richard E. Wainerdi, P.E., Ph.D.**

ANNCR/CHNGE

**MELANIE LAWSON (VO)**

Our next honoree can seamlessly enter the prestigious circles of incredibly gifted American physicists, chemists, engineers, inventors, and medical pioneers ...

**Dr. Richard E. Wainerdi** joins the ranks of extraordinary individuals who have leveraged the power of research, new discoveries, and technology to create a phenomenal impact on our society.

During his tenure as President, Chief Executive Officer, and Chief Operating Officer of the Texas Medical Center, Dr. Wainerdi has successfully managed and dramatically improved the campus, which represents 43-member institutions including nine university or college systems.

In 2002, Dr. Wainerdi saw a need to improve the Texas Medical Center in both its diversity and its pharmaceutical research and extended an invitation to one of Houston's leading institutions in the field—Texas Southern University. We accepted the invitation and became an official member of the Texas Medical Center; we will soon have a prominent physical presence on their campus on Almeda Road.

Dr. Wainerdi spent 20 years with Texas A&M University in both scientific and academic affairs. He founded Texas A&M University's Nuclear Science Center, the Activation Analysis Research Laboratory, the German Synfuels Technology Retrieval Program, the Center for Energy and Mineral Resources, and most notably, the University's College of Medicine.

He serves in myriad Adjunct Professor roles at Baylor College of Medicine, the University of Texas Houston Health Science Center, University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, and the Texas A&M University System Health Science Center.

Dr. Wainerdi was named "Master Builder" by the Houston Chapter of the Associated General Contractors in 2002 and "International Executive of the Year" that same year.

Congratulations Dr. Wainerdi; we are proud to honor you with the **Health and Wellness Hero Award**.

## **Willard L. Jackson, Jr.**

### **PRISCILLA SLADE (VO)**

“Directing does much, but empowering does more ...”

Our next honoree, **Willard Jackson, Jr.**, is a member of Texas Southern University’s “empowering body,” its *esteemed* Board of Regents.

Mr. Jackson is chairman and CEO of Metroplex Core, a Houston-based professional civil/environmental engineering and industrial services company.

Appropriately, he incorporates his entrepreneurial spirit and *inspired leadership* to assist our administration in opening doors to opportunity and academic excellence for all students.

President George W. Bush appointed Mr. Jackson to the Board of Regents in 1995, and in 1997, he was elected Chairman. During his administration, the University came under fire from Austin regarding administrative and academic challenges. The discussion to place the University under a system arose unless extremely tight deadlines were met. Many tough and sometimes unpopular decisions had to be made ... but thanks to the determined leadership of the regents under Chairman Jackson, the University prevailed and emerged from that tumultuous time, independent, *stronger* and *better* than ever!

Well seasoned by guidance, Regent Jackson is an *active* community leader, serving diligently on several civic committees and service boards.

His professional partnerships and affiliations include the National Minority Supplier Development Council, the Greater Houston Partnership, the Greater Southwest Houston Chamber of Commerce, and the Houston Minority Business Council.

Congratulations Regent Jackson; we are proud to honor you with the **Leadership Hero Award**.

## Mayor Bill White

### PRISCILLA SLADE (VO)

Character is the sum total of a person's choices.

The positive choices of our final honoree speak volumes of his character and conscience ...

... and make him the appropriate recipient of the Texas Southern University Lifetime Hero Award.

The **Honorable Bill White**, Houston's 51<sup>st</sup> mayor, fosters a spirit of inclusion, opportunity, growth, and success in the nation's fourth largest city.

Like Texas Southern University, he embodies the commitment of opening doors for all Houstonians. He is dedicated to excellence in achievement, stimulating economic development, and increasing job opportunities in the Houston metro area.

Mayor White appreciates the beauty of diversity and its power to accomplish common goals. He was deliberate in showcasing this belief by conducting one of the most inclusive, broad-based mayoral campaigns in the city's history. It is evident by his first weeks in office that he will continue to lead this city with the same, comprehensive spirit that led Bill White to become the mayor of the one of most energetic and fastest-growing cities in our nation.

As such, Mayor White deserves an extended round of applause for supervising one the most exciting, organized, and profitable events in Houston's history, Super Bowl XXXVIII.

Moreover, with his support of an extended rail system, small business development, and quality education from kindergarten through college, certainly, we selected the appropriate individual to move our city forward in the new economy.

Lifetime recognition signifies a long-standing, consistent, and proven track record of leadership and service. Moving to Houston to pursue dreams of building a life for himself and his family, Mayor White succeeded in business and public service far beyond the dreams he must have had during his humble beginnings. From 1993 to 1995, the magna cum

laude Harvard graduate served as Deputy Secretary of Energy of the United States

He served as a lead negotiator for the United States on energy-related issues between our nation and Russia. Prior to his service in Washington, D.C., he was a partner and attorney with the law firm Susman Godfrey, where he handled complex litigation business.

Throughout this *illustrious* career, service and equality have remained at the forefront.

Congratulations **Mayor White**, we are proud to bestow you with the **Lifetime Hero Award** and invite you to provide any remarks at this time.

SCR/CHNGE

[DR. SLADE YIELDS THE FLOOR TO MAYOR WHITE WHO MAKES BRIEF REMARKS]

### **PRISCILLA SLADE**

Thank you Mayor ...

[TO THE AUDIENCE] Ladies and gentleman, it is my *honor* to present to you our Hero honorees for Texas Southern University's inaugural Black and White Ball.

[PAUSE FOR APPLAUSE]

Please extend your personal congratulations during the entertainment portion of our ball.

Close of program by Melanie Lawson

[MELANIE LAWSON RETURNS]

### **MELANIE LAWSON**

Wasn't it simply thrilling to see these current heroes—heroes we can touch and embrace tonight—receive just a little of the thanks they so richly deserve for their work in making all

of lives just a little bit better and especially the lives of the students that attend Texas Southern University?

Their moment in the spotlight isn't over just yet. We will now welcome Houston recording artist Kathy Taylor Brown and the choir and praise dancers of the Windsor Village United Methodist Church as they present a tribute to our heroes, past and present. Kathy, will you and your groups now come forward with your tribute?

[TRIBUTE IS PERFORMED]

[MELANIE LAWSON RETURNS]

### MELANIE LAWSON

Well everyone, we've learned a lot tonight about our heroes past and present, their roles in creating new pages in history—and we now realize that Black History is *truly* an integral part of knowing American/Texas history—and we've celebrated one of the real national treasures in this city, Texas Southern University.

We want to call your attention to the many sponsors of this evening's gala in your program and the donors to the *Open Doors* capital campaign, which are providing the resources for TSU to continue to develop leaders and make history that benefits us all. Won't you contact the University to find out how to join their ranks if you haven't already done so?

SCR/CHNGE

Also, you will notice a gift at each place setting. This is a special token of appreciation on behalf of the Texas Southern University family. It is given to commemorate your experience here tonight and to serve as a reminder of TSU's unwavering commitment to higher education and service in our great community.

There is nothing more that needs to be said after such a thrilling evening. We sincerely appreciate everyone's presence and participation.

Let's get the party started; so mix, mingle, dance, and enjoy your evening!

[EXIT STAGE]

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