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COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS CELEBRATES THREE DECADES OF ACHIEVEMENT ON APRIL 5

Mayor Annise Parker will provide keynote address and share her personal connection to homelessness

Houston, Texas (March 25, 2013) On April 5 at 11:45 a.m. the staff, Board of Directors both present and past, homeless service providers, supporters and friends of the [Coalition for the Homeless of Houston and Harris County](#) will gather at the Doubletree by Hilton Houston Downtown to celebrate *Three Decades of Achievement*. The mission of the Coalition for the Homeless is to lead in the development and implementation of community strategies to prevent and end homelessness in the greater Houston area.

Coalition friend and ABC-TV Channel 13 anchor Melanie Lawson will emcee the lunch. Lawson's father, Rev. William Lawson, was one of the co-founders of the Coalition along with Archbishop Joseph Fiorenza, Rabbi Samuel Karff, Mayor Kathy Whitmire and County Judge Jon Lindsay. Speakers at the *Three Decades* luncheon include: Robert M. Eury, President of Central Houston Inc. sharing the Coalition's history; Stephen L. Williams, Coalition Board Chair presenting the 2013 Friends of the Homeless Awards; and Mayor Annise Parker providing the keynote address sharing her personal connection to homelessness. Marilyn L. Brown, Coalition President & CEO, will conclude the luncheon program with the release of the results of the 2013 Point-in-Time Homeless Count.

The Friends of the Homeless Award Honorees to be recognized at the event include: Achiever of the Year -- Shane Schlemeyer and Twaunette Sharpe; Business/Corporation -- Bank of America; Foundation -- The Frees Foundation; Peg Dudar Individual Advocate -- Mayor Annise D. Parker; Media Outlet/Journalist -- Lisa Falkenberg, The Houston Chronicle; Sally Shipman Service Provider Staff -- Eva Thibaudeau-Graczyk, SEARCH Homeless Services.

Sponsors and partners involved in *Three Decades of Achievement* include: Marilyn L. Brown; The Frees Foundation; Harris County Department of Education; Diane and Tim Horan; The Lee Group; Martha and Aris Macris; Kimberly Sterling/Sterling Associates; Ashley and Thomas J. N. Verhagen; Housing for Houston Housing Authority; New Hope Housing; and Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church

The *Three Decades of Achievement* Host Committee members include: David Benson, Council Member Ellen Cohen, Ira C. Colby, Clara B. Cooper, Travis Courville, Renee D. Cross, Cathy Crouch, Shelly Cypress, Stephan Fairfield, Nancy Frees Fountain, Tory Gunsolley, Celes Harris, Cathy Henderson, Donna J. Herron, Tim Horan, Frances Isbell, Brenda Kirk, Lynn Lohr, Martha Macris, Linda K. May, Dennis W. Nelson, Charles J. O'Connell, Timothy N. Oettmeier, Gordon J. Quan, Pastor Rudy Rasmus, Gayla Rawlinson, Steven B. Schnee, Ph.D., Robert Sohns, Clarissa Stephens, Kimberly Sterling, Thomas J.N. Verhagen and Stephen L. Williams.

Tickets for the event are available on-line at <http://www.homelesshouston.org/three-decades-of-achievement/> or by contacting Jeff Sokoloff, Coalition Director of Development, at 832-531-6005.

The **Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County** was established in 1982, incorporated as a 501(c)(3) in 1988, and has evolved to be the lead agency coordinating the community response to homelessness in Houston. Under the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act, passed in 2009, an entire community rather than individual service providers must demonstrate success in preventing and reducing homelessness. In 2011, HUD named Houston as a priority community. This designation recognizes the great need to transform Houston's existing homeless service system and the tremendous opportunity to make significant advances due to the commitment of homeless service providers and key community stakeholders, including both private and public contributors. For more information about the Coalition's efforts, visit www.homelesshouston.org.

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