

18 December 2020

Dear TBHF Legends, Directors and Alumni,

It is my pleasure to include my Annual Letter of Report in our last newsletter of 2020. For almost four decades, the Hall of Fame has had a two-part mission--to honor transformational business leaders who have dramatically impacted the economy, well-being and business reputation of our State AND to inspire and award the game changers of tomorrow. The year 2020 has been successful in both capacities and in ways we could never have imagined.

We continue to strive for an inductee stage that is truly statewide. This year recognizes one of the most geographically and professionally diverse inductee classes in recent TBHF history. Our inductee class includes two U.S. Veterans, three first generation college graduates, and the third African American to be inducted into the Hall of Fame. All six of our inductees have national and, in some cases, global impact in the reach of their businesses, and all six have been instrumental in contributing to the growth and advancement of their communities. I am also happy to report that the majority of our existing Legends chose to be involved in our inductee nomination and selection process this year. More than ever before, it is our Legends that determine who we nominate and help enhance and protect the prestige of the TBHF and the honor of being inducted into the Texas Business Hall of Fame.

In addition to selecting our 38th annual class of inductees, the Texas Business Hall of Fame awarded a record number of 38 \$15,000 scholar and veteran awards across the state of Texas. Of our 38 2020 awardees, 61 percent have started their own companies, three are first generation Americans, seven are the first in their families to attend college, and five are U.S. Veterans. 37 percent of our awardees are minorities (13 percent of which are African American), and almost 40 percent are female. Their November 4th [virtual conversation](#) with our six 2020 inductees will remain one of the most memorable hours of this year.

The stories of our Legends, Directors and Awardees are valuable. Sharing them is part of our mission to inspire better business leaders of tomorrow, and we have worked hard to improve how we share. In the last year, we have hired an Alumni-owned company, BC Media, to provide daily news feeds of our Legends, Directors, and Alumni. We share as much of that information as possible on social media, on the TBHF website ([In The News](#)), and through a new quarterly newsletter (yet another 2020 first).

In 2020 we engaged in a record number of new partnerships with other organizations to promote our organization and its mission as a whole. We partnered with entities like *Texas Monthly*, Texas Capital Bank, and *Inc.* magazine to bring new audiences and awareness to the Texas Business Hall of Fame. These partnerships exponentially increased our reach and made a large part of our programming available to the general public for the first time in TBHF's history. Seemingly overnight, we shifted from an organization that reached a couple of 1000 people a year to one that reaches countless thousands and this year is only the beginning.

TBHF also introduced a new kind of exclusive event this year—virtual “private conversations.” We invited the participation of both Legend keynotes and Legend/Director participants and the response was overwhelming. These high-level exchanges brought in record attendance from our network and laid the foundation for what, moving forward, we will call “TBHF Titan Talks.”

For the first time this year, we fundraised outside of our Annual Induction Dinner. Despite this relatively quiet effort, the campaign has resulted in several firsts (including three new named awards, the first award funded by a female Legend, and the second award funded by a Hall of Fame Director). These firsts have helped improve our cash position moving into 2021 and have allowed us to sustain our Scholar and Veteran Award program during this challenging time. We continue to work hard at reducing operational costs and improved administrative efficiency to allow for more programmatic support and development.

Looking towards the future, we look forward to building on our success, including:

- building better relationships with our universities to promote our award and improving our application process;
- fine-tuning the selection process for our 4 veteran awards; and
- awarding more entrepreneurs both within and outside our traditional higher education space; and to implementing more sustainable funding strategies for our existing programs and new program initiatives.

I would be remiss in not thanking all the people who make this organization so special.

Thank you to our Legends who are a constant reminder of one of my favorite quotes: “If you want something done, ask a busy person.”

Thank you to our 2020 Chairman, Jon Karp, our Executive Committee, other Committee Members and to all of our Directors who give so generously of their time and resources to support our mission in every possible capacity. The engagement of our Board is impressive by any standard in the non-profit community, and we are fortunate to have you.

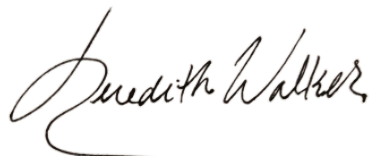
Thank you to our Alumni who are a testament to the impact of our funding and whose entrepreneurial spirit and determination push us to do better. Thank you, in particular, to our Alumni leadership and to our 2020 President, Amanda Domaschk, and our incoming 2021 President Barton Cromeens. Their tireless dedication is perhaps the most possible powerful commentary our Foundation has on what we aim to inspire in others.

I would also like to thank Lynne Tiras and her team at IMM for their cooperation and support in ushering in a new era for this organization. Last but not least, I would like to thank Denise Cinadr, who administers and oversees 99 percent of our day to day operations. We would not be where we are without her.

On behalf of the TBHF Board of Directors, I would also like to extend a very special thanks to our longtime presenting sponsor Texas Capital Bank. It is so much more than a sponsor and is a true partner in so much of what we do.

Thank you to all of you have supported our 2020 campaign, "In Times of Chaos, Business Moves Forward" and to all of you who have lived this slogan and led so brilliantly in your communities this year. We look forward to seeing everyone in 2021.

Wishing everyone the warmest and most hopeful of holidays,



Meredith Walker
TBHF Executive Director