



American  
Heart  
Association.

MADE FOR THIS

*moment*

AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION  
2021 NATIONAL VOLUNTEER AWARDS

JUNE 22, 2021

#AwardsWithHeart

## 2021 NATIONAL VOLUNTEER AWARDS

### GOLD HEART AWARD

Lynne Braun, Ph.D., CNP, FAHA, FAANP, FPCNA, FNLA, FAAN  
Marc Fisher, M.D., FAHA  
Alvin L. Royse, J.D., CPA  
Steven R. Houser, Ph.D., FAHA

### MORGAN STARK MEMORIAL AWARD

Susan Croushore & Martha C. Stark

### LOUIS B. RUSSELL, JR. MEMORIAL AWARD

John Russell Houston III, *Posthumous Honoree*

### AWARD OF MERITORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT

James de Lemos, M.D., FAHA &  
Sandeep Das, M.D., MPH, MBA, FAHA  
Keith Churchwell, M.D., FAHA  
Denise Bradley-Tyson  
Ann Marie Navar, M.D., FAHA  
Aramark

### EARL B. BEAGLE AWARD FOR STAFF EXCELLENCE

John Meiners

### HEALTHCARE VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Sandra B. Dunbar, RN, Ph.D.,  
FAAN, FAHA, FPCNA

### RON HADDOCK INTERNATIONAL IMPACT AWARD

Bruce Ovbiagele, M.D., MSc,  
MAS, MBA, FAHA

### PHYSICIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Stacey E. Rosen, M.D., FACC, FACP, FAHA

### VOICE OF THE MISSION AWARD

The Blumenthal Family

### WOMAN CHANGING THE WORLD AWARD

Cindy Marten

### DISTINGUISHED NATIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD

Bertram L. Scott  
AHA Chairman of the Board, 2019-21  
Mitchell S. V. Elkind, M.D., MS, FAAN, FAHA  
AHA President, 2020-21

# — THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION — *mission*

To be a relentless force for a  
world of longer, healthier lives

## EMCEE

Sonia Azad  
Health & Wellness Reporter, WFAA-TV Dallas

## HOSTS

Bertram L. Scott  
AHA Chairman of the Board, 2019-21

Mitchell S. V. Elkind, M.D., MS, FAAN, FAHA  
AHA President, 2020-21

Nancy Brown  
AHA Chief Executive Officer

# Gold Heart AWARD



**Lynne Braun**  
Ph.D., CNP, FAHA, FAANP,  
FPCNA, FNLA, FAAN

**Professor Emerita**  
Rush University

**Consultant**  
Rush Heart Center for Women

The American Heart Association's highest volunteer honor,  
recognizing a lifetime of transformative contributions.

When she was a little girl, Lynne Braun dreamed of being a teacher. Then, at 16, her father's death from colon cancer changed her perspective.

"I felt helpless, and I didn't want to feel that way again if a loved one became ill, so I decided to become a nurse," she said.

Still, the desire to teach kept tugging at her heart after obtaining degrees in nursing. So, she set her sights on Rush University Medical Center, one of few hospitals that offered a practitioner-teacher model in nursing at the time. She joined the faculty as a specialist in cardiovascular nursing, enabling her to care for patients and instruct students — an opportunity historically available only to physicians.

"My first boss said to me and other faculty, 'I expect you to go out into the community and make a difference,'" she said.

Braun responded by volunteering with the American Heart Association.

Since 1980, Braun has been a volunteer leader at every level of the AHA. She has co-authored scientific statements and clinical practice guidelines, chaired the Council on Cardiovascular Stroke Nursing and led the Midwest Affiliate board as 2019-20 president.

Notably, she and cardiologist Dr. Annabelle Volgman co-founded the Women's Legacy Luncheon in Chicago, a forerunner to the AHA's Go Red for Women® movement. They also co-founded the Rush Heart Center for Women to address the disparate impact of cardiovascular disease in women.

FROM THE *heart*

"I'm accepting this award on behalf of the nurses who have been instrumental to the AHA. Some are clinicians, educators and scientists — all are invaluable." — Braun

# Gold Heart AWARD



**Marc Fisher**  
M.D., FAHA

**President**  
World Stroke Association

**Former Editor-in-Chief**  
*Stroke*

**Professor of Neurology**  
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center  
Harvard Medical School

The American Heart Association's highest volunteer honor,  
recognizing a lifetime of transformative contributions.

When a stroke strikes, determining the optimal timing to evaluate, triage and treat a patient before brain cells die is key.

That's where world-famous neurologist Dr. Marc Fisher comes in.

He was among the first doctors to use magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to evaluate how much brain tissue experiences decreased blood flow during a stroke but can still be saved — called ischemic penumbra.

"We're trying to salvage as much of the tissue as possible so that the damage is as small as possible," he said.

Fisher led a stroke modeling lab that focused on MRI technology in ischemic penumbra during his 36 years as a professor and vice chairman of neurology at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

At the AHA, he has served on numerous committees, but is best known as the former editor-in-chief of *Stroke*, the highest-impact stroke journal in the world. During his 10-year tenure, he exponentially increased submission rates and social media engagement before stepping down in 2020 — the same year *Stroke* celebrated its 50th anniversary.

Today, as president of the World Stroke Organization, he champions stroke education for health care professionals and the public.

FROM THE *Heart*

**"Doing telehealth visits during the pandemic allowed me to help people with neurological disorders and stroke receive care and, in some cases, peace of mind in a challenging environment."**

— Fisher

# Gold Heart AWARD



**Alvin L. Royse**  
J.D., CPA

**Mayor**  
Town of Hillsborough, CA

**Chairman of the Board, 2015-17**  
American Heart Association

**Retired Partner**  
Deloitte & Touche LLP

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The American Heart Association's highest volunteer honor,  
recognizing a lifetime of transformative contributions.

Growing up in North Dakota, Al Royse learned the value of hard work early. From age 5, he and his four siblings worked after school and during the summer, selling the harvest from farms across the country at their family-owned produce stand. Royse found an escape from the rigor in his favorite TV drama, "Perry Mason."

"I did not know what I wanted to do as a career, but I knew I wanted to be like Perry Mason," he said. "I also liked business."

He blended both interests as a tax specialist for the accounting and consulting firm, Deloitte, after graduating from law school in 1976. He'd already built a reputation as a maverick, winning a seat in the state legislature at 21, one of only two people under 30 in North Dakota history to do so, at that time.

By 1997, Deloitte made him managing partner of its San Francisco and Silicon Valley tax practices. That's when the American Heart Association reached out to ask if he would chair the local Heart Walk. For Royse, saying yes was easy.

Nearly 25 years later, he has elevated the AHA as a catalyst for global change through the Strategic Plan and Strategic Value Proposition, greater focus on patient-centered research, Voices for Healthy Kids policy advocacy and more.

He was vital in launching Cardeation Capital, a \$30 million venture capital fund to spark stroke and heart disease innovations to improve patients' lives and reduce health care costs.

Today, as mayor of the Town of Hillsborough, California, he strives to make his city healthier.

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FROM THE *Heart*

**"I believe in the mission, I believe in the people and I believe in the results. We save lives and there can be no better purpose." — Royse**

# Gold Heart AWARD

**Steven R. Houser**  
Ph.D., FAHA

**President, 2016-17**  
American Heart Association

**Vera J. Goodfriend Endowed Chair**  
Cardiovascular Research

**Director**  
Cardiovascular Research Center

**Professor and Chair**  
Department of Physiology

**Temple University School of Medicine**



**The American Heart Association's highest volunteer honor,  
recognizing a lifetime of transformative contributions.**

Early in Dr. Steven Houser's career, he got an idea for a research project, so he applied for a grant from the National Institutes of Health. The NIH turned him down. He tried again. Still, the answer was no.

After he was rejected a third time, he submitted his idea to the American Heart Association. The AHA said yes and awarded him \$7,500.

"I appreciated it so much that I became a volunteer," he said.

His 40-year AHA legacy includes serving as national president and chairing the National Research Committee and the National Science Advisory Coordinating Committee.

Under his leadership, the AHA adopted its Strategic Value Proposition, sharpened its focus on health equity and launched the seminal One Brave Idea Science Innovation Center in Boston to revolutionize coronary heart disease detection.

His bold vision powered infinite AHA milestones that still guide the organization today, including the launch of My Research Legacy, the AHA-Paul G. Allen Initiative in Brain Health and Cognitive Impairment, Resuscitation Quality Improvement and Strategically Focused Research Networks in children's health, women's health and obesity.

FROM THE *heart*

**"After my early AHA experience, I went back to the NIH and they've supported my research ever since." — Houser**

# Morgan Stark

## MEMORIAL AWARD



### Susan Croushore

Retired CEO  
Mercy Health System of Southeast  
Pennsylvania

&

### Martha C. Stark

Retired Group Director & Senior Vice  
President  
Signature Bank

Co-chairpersons  
AHA National Volunteer Oversight Group



Honors outstanding stewardship and leadership  
in human resources, finances or operations.

Susan Croushore and Martha Stark were busy executives from separate industries — Croushore in health care and Stark in banking — when the American Heart Association united them decades ago.

The two have spent a combined 50 years in multiple AHA volunteer leadership roles — training and chairing local cause campaigns.

In 2012, they were invited to join the AHA's National Volunteer Oversight Group and later served as co-chairpersons.

Together, they innovated strategies to engage volunteers, leading the Gold Standard Board program, which establishes best practices for AHA boards of directors and recognizes their achievements.

"We learned the importance of having one-on-one conversations with the local boards to find out what's important to them and their communities," Stark said.

Croushore said local boards feel a greater sense of purpose serving their local areas while aligning with the AHA mission.

FROM THE *heart*

"My secret power, if I truly have one, is listening. There is nothing I enjoy more than learning about a person and finding out what motivates them."

— Stark

"I helped set up and lead a COVID field hospital, and the patients we treated were those often forgotten by society. COVID revealed the disparities, but the AHA's focus on under-resourced communities reflects a better future."

— Croushore

# Louis B. Russell, Jr.

## MEMORIAL AWARD



### John Russell Houston III

Posthumous Honoree

Former Owner, CEO  
Houston Associates

Founder  
Historically Black Colleges and Universities  
Barbara W. Houston Legacy Award

Honors outstanding contributions to communities  
of color and under-resourced populations.

An activist at heart, John Houston III enjoyed empowering young people to lead change in their communities. So, after attending a reception in 2017 and learning of the American Heart Association's work to address health disparities, he donated his first \$500,000 to the mission.

His philanthropy launched the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Barbara W. Houston Legacy Award, named in his late wife's honor, to fund students' leadership and innovative ideas to diminish health disparities on their campuses and within their communities.

It was a proud moment when Houston met student Brenda Montanez of Johnson C. Smith University (JCSU) during the AHA's EmPOWERED Voices event in 2019. The previous year, JCSU received a \$100,000 HBCU Barbara W. Houston Legacy Award for Grow with the Green, a student initiative that delivers campus-grown produce to food-insecure families.

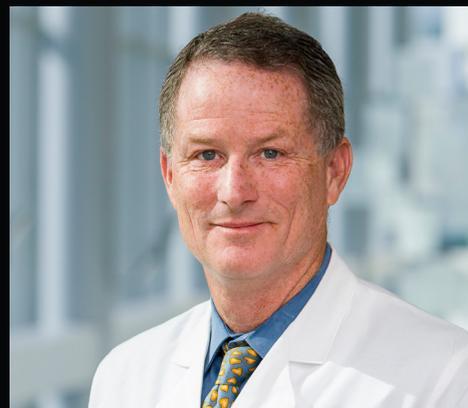
Houston's final gifts support the AHA's Faith-Based Business Accelerator and bring the AHA Social Impact Fund to Greater Washington to address food, housing and economic insecurity in the region he called home.

FROM THE *heart*

Houston's son, John IV, shared his father's personal credo:

**"He'd say, 'Son, bad news won't get any better with time.'  
You can't put your head in the sand and ignore the problem.  
Just deal with it."**

AWARD OF  
*Meritorious Achievement*



**James de Lemos**  
M.D., FAHA

&

**Sandeep Das**  
M.D., MPH, MBA, FAHA

Internal Medicine Professors  
Cardiology Division  
University of Texas Southwestern Medical  
Center

Co-creators  
AHA COVID-19 CVD Registry

Editors  
*Cardiology*



Presented for a specific accomplishment or project that supports  
the American Heart Association's national initiatives.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, disrupting the health care system and postponing many surgeries and procedures, Dr. James de Lemos and Dr. Sandeep Das turned their attention to research.

They collaborated to collect information on the cardiovascular implications of COVID-19 among Dallas patients. This laid the foundation for a registry that medical sites could use to better understand, track and treat the virus.

"At the start, the data was about single-center experiences," Das said. "We needed comprehensive data not prone to bias or local environment."

What began locally expanded nationally once they paired with the American Heart Association.

"We got a copy of the database and placed it on the AHA's Precision Medicine Platform, allowing multiple investigators to work simultaneously on the same dataset," de Lemos said.

Now, the COVID-19 CVD Registry, powered by Get With The Guidelines®, includes 47,156 patient records from 128 sites actively uploading data.

FROM THE *heart*

"The pandemic has humbled me, reminding me how fragile health is — personal, community and population health. It's made me think outside my comfort zone to make a difference." — de Lemos

"I've walked in the shoes of patients who are uninsured and barely making ends meet. This connects me to them in a personal way." — Das

AWARD OF  
*Meritorious Achievement*



**Keith Churchwell**  
M.D., FAHA

**President**  
Yale New Haven Hospital

**Chairman**  
AHA Advocacy Coordinating Committee

**Writing Group Chairman**  
"Presidential Advisory and Call to Action on  
Structural Racism as a Fundamental Driver of  
Health Disparities"

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Presented for a specific accomplishment or project that supports  
the American Heart Association's national initiatives.

COVID-19 has sparked a national conversation about more than health care, and Dr. Keith Churchwell is among those informing the dialogue.

"The issues of socioeconomic, transportation and nutrition are contributing to a higher risk for our Black and brown communities, not only in terms of COVID but diabetes, cardiovascular disease and overall morbidity and mortality," he said.

To address social determinants of health — the conditions in which people are born and live — Churchwell was instrumental in drafting the AHA's seminal presidential advisory, "Call to Action: Structural Racism as a Fundamental Driver of Health Disparities."

"The pandemic has reinforced the reasons I went into medicine," he said.

As chairman of the AHA Advocacy Coordinating Committee, Churchwell also keeps the organization laser focused on policy priorities to advance cardiovascular health for all and remove barriers to quality health care.

With staff and volunteers in every state capital and communities nationwide, the AHA helped to pass or defend more than 100 state and local policies this past year, alone, and supported federal policies addressing affordable care, food security and more.

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FROM THE *heart*

**"The extent of work to do is significant, and there is a true opportunity  
to enhance and improve the health of all we can and should touch."**

— Churchwell

AWARD OF  
*Meritorious Achievement*



**Denise Bradley-Tyson**

**Founder and Executive Committee Chairperson**  
Bernard J. Tyson Impact Fund

**Member**  
Impact Funds Governing Committee

After Kaiser Permanente Chairman and CEO Bernard J. Tyson died unexpectedly at age 60 in 2019, his wife, Denise Bradley-Tyson, immediately set out to honor his life devoted to service.

“During 30 years of ascending leadership roles at Kaiser and over 10 years of service on the American Heart Association’s national board and CEO Roundtable, Bernard committed himself to addressing the social causes of poor health,” Bradley-Tyson said.

To continue his work to shatter barriers to affordable health care, promote mental well-being and dismantle systems that imperil health in communities of color, she engaged the AHA to establish the [Bernard J. Tyson Impact Fund](#).

Her leadership has inspired \$11.8 million in contributions, with 31 investments going to social entrepreneurs and organizations operating in the Bay Area, Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, Atlanta, Seattle and Washington, D.C. The fund will make another 20 investments by the end of 2021.

Walmart Foundation is the largest contributor, awarding a \$5 million grant as part of its Center for Racial Equity.

Bradley-Tyson also serves on the advisory board of the World Economic Forum's new social determinants of health platform.

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Presented for a specific accomplishment or project that supports the American Heart Association’s national initiatives.

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FROM THE *heart*

“I used to describe the fund as my love letter to Bernard, but he was so much bigger than our relationship. He touched everyone’s life in a profound way.” — Bradley-Tyson

AWARD OF  
*Meritorious Achievement*



**Ann Marie Navar**  
M.D., FAHA

**Associate Professor of Medicine**  
Department of Cardiology  
University of Texas Southwestern  
Medical School

**Lead**  
Doctors with Heart  
AHA Center for Health Technology  
and Innovation

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Presented for a specific accomplishment or project that supports  
the American Heart Association's national initiatives.

When Dr. John Navar and his wife, registered nurse Lynette, opened the Mission of Mercy free clinic in Corpus Christi, they discovered that many of their patients were in dire need of specialty care — namely cardiology.

But cost was a barrier, as it is for many federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) that serve the under- and uninsured.

Fortunate for the Navars, their daughter Ann Marie — a physician-researcher and practicing cardiologist — was available to provide once-weekly support. She also happened to be an adviser to the American Heart Association Center for Health Technology and Innovation (CHTI).

Together they created Doctors with Heart, a national initiative administered through CHTI that provides expert cardiovascular consultation to patients of FQHCs at no cost via a telemedicine model.

“COVID-19 has forced medicine to fast-forward and embrace telemedicine to deliver care,” Dr. Ann Marie Navar said.

She refined the program and inspired the Aetna Foundation to fund the pilot for \$300,000, which spurred support from individual donors.

As a result, cardiology consultations have expanded to five more FQHCs across the country. The program is improving heart health and increasing capacity for preventive services in communities that need them most.

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FROM THE *heart*

**“My parents are a constant reminder of what hard work,  
passion and a mission-driven spirit can accomplish.” — Navar**

# AWARD OF *Meritorious Achievement*



## Aramark

Creator  
Healthy for Life®

National Supporter  
American Heart Association

Good health is good business for Aramark, which serves nearly 2 billion meals per year at dining operations in 19 countries.

The food service giant approached the American Heart Association with a five-year goal to combine menu innovation with community health education to improve the health of all Americans.

Aramark and the AHA teamed up to launch Healthy for Life, empowering Americans to choose healthy food, nutrition and active lifestyles.

“Aramark is committed to reducing inequity, doing great things for our communities, and protecting our planet,” said CEO John Zillmer.

By training its chefs in plant-forward cooking, Aramark created 300 new healthy menu items.

The results are astounding — an average 20% reduction in calories, saturated fat and sodium and an almost 20% increase in fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

As a member of the AHA CEO Roundtable, Zillmer is also leading Aramark in building a corporate culture of health. Two-thirds of Aramark employees surveyed said they believe the company encourages them to live a healthier life.

Presented for a specific accomplishment or project that supports the American Heart Association's national initiatives.

FROM THE *heart*

“From hundreds of community organizations embracing the nutrition curriculum to engaging millions of consumers, Healthy for Life is an extension of year-round efforts to create a better world.”

— Dan Wainfan, Aramark Vice President of Health and Wellness

# Earl B. Beagle

## AWARD FOR STAFF EXCELLENCE



### John Meiners

Chief of Mission Aligned Businesses  
& Healthcare Solutions  
American Heart Association

Recognizes an employee who exemplifies leadership,  
professionalism, dedication and performance excellence.

As an ambitious teenager living in Florida, John Meiners became a scuba diver, an EMT and co-founded an oceanic search-and-rescue team.

He left the high seas in 1990 to launch a fundraising career at the American Heart Association, but he did not leave life-and-death emergency care behind. He would eventually return to his roots by innovating CPR training at the AHA.

He joined the organization as a fundraising development director in St. Petersburg. From there, he became metro director in Tampa, where he organized the city's first Heart Walk and Heart Ball.

John soon set his sights on opportunities for national impact, first as a national Heart Walk consultant, then as an affiliate management consultant working alongside the board of directors to help modernize AHA's governance and usher in a new era of growth and efficiency.

As executive vice president of the former Ohio Valley and Great Rivers affiliates, he engaged others in a shared vision.

As executive vice president of Emergency Cardiovascular Care and Global Strategies, he expanded the AHA's global footprint in science, professional education and advocacy to more than 100 countries.

"We now train 24 million people in lifesaving CPR a year, including other countries, and have 450,000 instructors," he said.

FROM THE *heart*

**"When I started working for the AHA, heart disease had little direct impact on my family. Since then, three of my grandparents have died of heart disease and several other family members now have it." — Meiners**

# Healthcare Volunteer OF THE YEAR AWARD



**Sandra B. Dunbar**  
RN, Ph.D., FAAN, FAHA, FPCNA

**Cardiovascular Nursing Professor**  
Senior Associate Dean  
Emory University

**Member**  
Oversight Committee  
AHA Strategically Focused Research Network for  
Atrial Fibrillation

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**Celebrates achievements in cardiovascular diseases or stroke patient care, or improvements in the delivery of care.**

Since receiving one of her first research grants from the Miami-Dade, Florida chapter of the American Heart Association in 1983, much of Sandra Dunbar's work has focused on the psychosocial aspects of managing heart disease.

"A lot of patients' distress is because of a lack of understanding about what is happening to their health and why," she said. "Patients appreciate knowing not just what they need to do, but why they should do it and how to do it."

During a 49-year career, Dunbar has improved cardiovascular care for patients worldwide and served in 24 AHA volunteer positions — among them chairperson of the Council on Cardiovascular and Stroke Nursing.

With interdisciplinary colleagues, she has led clinical trials to improve patient self-care and quality of life, reduce cardiovascular risk and mitigate psychosocial distress.

Her research has inspired more than 160 peer-reviewed publications, and her expertise is reflected in AHA scientific statements, policy statements and guidelines.

Perhaps Dunbar's greatest contribution is the excellence she engenders. She has mentored nearly 20 doctoral students, more than 10 postdoctoral fellows in cardiovascular nursing and more than 30 master's candidates.

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FROM THE *heart*

**"I am inspired by observing success and creativity in mentees and colleagues who achieve a goal, whether it's a paper, grant or personal accomplishment, as well as those who set far-reaching goals and make them happen!" — Dunbar**

# Ron Haddock

## INTERNATIONAL IMPACT AWARD



**Bruce Ovbiagele**  
M.D., MSc, MAS, MBA, FAHA

Professor of Neurology and Associate Dean  
University of California San Francisco

Chief of Staff  
San Francisco VA Health Care System

Named in honor of the American Heart Association's  
2012-13 chairman of the board, Ron Haddock, for outstanding  
contributions to the achievement of international goals.

As a child in Lagos, Nigeria, Dr. Bruce Ovbiagele witnessed the effects of tribalism, medical care inequities and the stigma of brain conditions.

When a friend with epilepsy died, he questioned Africa's outdated treatments and folk remedies.

"Those experiences are what fostered my desire to find better ways to educate people in Africa on health care," he said.

Ovbiagele has made global stroke awareness and prevention his life's mission. His work has led to policy changes around the world, and he oversees multiple research programs, many of them funded by the National Institutes of Health.

He is principal investigator of African Rigorous Innovative Stroke Epidemiological Surveillance (ARISES), the largest stroke study in sub-Saharan Africa. ARISES is building a first-of-its-kind, community-based system for tracking stroke burden while improving stroke literacy.

For the AHA, he has served as a local and regional board member, grant reviewer, practice guideline writing committee member, policy statement writing group chairperson, scientific conference chairperson and national spokesperson for Power to End Stroke.

FROM THE *heart*

"I was fortunate to be exposed to the AHA very early in my career. I have grown up career-wise, imbibing and practicing the core values of the AHA, which helped shape my professional perspectives and choices." — Ovbiagele

# Physician OF THE YEAR AWARD



**Stacey E. Rosen**  
M.D., FACC, FACP, FAHA

**President**  
AHA Eastern States Board of Directors

**Senior Vice President**  
Cardiologist  
Katz Institute for Women's Health

**Partners Council Professor of Women's Health**  
Northwell Health and Donald and Barbara  
Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell

Honors longstanding commitment to the highest  
ideals of patient care and exemplary leadership in  
the American Heart Association's mission.

Stacey Rosen was fascinated in medical school by the anatomy of the heart, leading her on a lifelong mission to understand and prevent heart disease.

"Cardiology was a perfect balance of developing long-term relationships with patients and applying research as well as the most technological advances in the field to help individuals live longer and healthier lives," she said.

For nearly 20 years, Rosen has held volunteer leadership positions with the AHA, including Go Red for Women® national spokesperson and national committee member. She uses her voice to raise awareness about health care disparities impacting women and people of color.

As president of the AHA Eastern States board of directors, she has been integral to shaping the region's COVID-19 pandemic response — even sharing her family's private battle with the virus to inspire others.

Rosen co-authored the book "Heart Smart for Women, Six S.T.E.P.S. in Six Weeks to Heart-Healthy Living" and co-produced the documentary "Ms. Diagnosed," which premiered at the California-based Cinequest film festival in March 2020.

FROM THE *heart*

**"My patients inspire me every day! I admire the strength, integrity and commitment these individuals have to manage their chronic conditions. I consider it to be the ultimate privilege to be part of their journey." — Rosen**

# Voice of the Mission AWARD



## The Blumenthal Family Kelly, Michael, Mason & Finn

Finn Blumenthal  
National Youth Ambassador  
Kids Heart Challenge

Recognizes an individual or a family who has made a major impact by using their voice and telling their personal story to amplify the American Heart Association's mission.

For Kelly, Michael, Mason and Finn Blumenthal, supporting the American Heart Association is a family affair.

The legacy was born in 1967, when Kelly's great-grandmother Letitia Galloway raised \$45,000 for AHA research by going door to door.

Letitia would never know how she helped future generations, namely Kelly and her husband Michael's 6-year-old son, Finn, who was born with severe congenital heart defects (CHD).

Finn spent the first eight months of his life in the hospital, and has had more than a dozen surgeries, including two open-heart procedures.

Reflecting on her surprise at learning CHD is common, Kelly said: "Why isn't there a pamphlet about congenital heart defects in every pediatrician's and OB-GYN's office?"

The Blumenthals began raising funds for the AHA when Finn was 1. By the time he started preschool at 3, he was named National Ambassador for the AHA's Kids Heart Challenge — a role he embraces with utter joy.

The family also teamed with Gilson ski products on a Life is Why We Give campaign — donating \$100 to the AHA for every sale of Finn's Shred Shark custom snowboard.

FROM THE *heart*

"I wrote a book about siblings going on adventures together after heart surgery, and 100% of the proceeds will go to the AHA. When it comes to the AHA, the answer will always be 'yes.'" — Kelly

# Woman Changing the World AWARD



**Cindy Marten**

Former Superintendent  
San Diego Unified School District

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Conferred upon one woman who is a leader in her field or community in driving significant change and outcomes that forward the American Heart Association's mission.

Lured by a rainbow of fruity and minty flavors, 3.6 million youth in the U.S. smoke electronic cigarettes —commonly called vaping. What's more, almost 40% of high school users vape 20 or more days out of the month and almost a quarter of them do it daily, according to the 2020 National Youth Tobacco Survey.

Most youth are unaware that a single vape pod is the nicotine equivalent to a pack of regular cigarettes.

But Cindy Marten — who has been an educator for 32 years — knows that vaping is the nicotine industry's answer to declining tobacco use. So, during her term as superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD), she did something about it.

Marten led SDUSD in filing a lawsuit against e-cigarette maker, Juul Labs, joining the American Heart Association's battle against Big Vape. Under her guidance, SDUSD engaged students in creating a districtwide anti-vaping peer campaign — setting an example for the rest of the nation.

But the district's advocacy didn't begin or end there. SDUSD has supported the AHA's Kids Heart Challenge for over 31 years and was the first in the country to implement the AHA's Dance Challenge, a collaboration with the American Dance Movement.

Marten's support also extends to women's health initiatives. During two years as chairperson of Go Red for Women® - San Diego, she helped raise more than \$1.2 million to fund research and advance health equity.

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FROM THE *heart*

**"My connection to the AHA is personal. My husband, Sergio, passed away in 2016 after a series of heart attacks and strokes. And my mother suffered a heart attack. I serve to honor them." — Marten**

DISTINGUISHED  
*National Leadership*  
AWARD



**Bertram L. Scott**

**Chairman of the Board, 2019-21**  
American Heart Association

**Retired Vice President**  
Population Health & Value-Based Care  
Novant Health

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**Presented to outgoing officers of the American Heart Association  
to recognize their exemplary service to its mission.**

Growing up in Chicago and now residing in North Carolina — part of the 11-state Stroke Belt where the risk of stroke is 34% higher than other states — Bert Scott has seen health disparities up close.

“I’ve witnessed the disproportionate impact of heart disease, hypertension, stroke and brain disease on people of color,” he said. “Lack of access to health care plays a big part, as well as nutrition insecurity, inadequate spaces to exercise and more.”

Scott says volunteering for the American Heart Association has allowed him to pursue health equity and stroke prevention — two passions inspired by personal loss.

“I lost my dad to heart disease and my first wife to stroke, both at age 52,” he said. “That experience made me keenly aware of disparities and strengthened my resolve to personally support the AHA’s research enterprise.”

Scott led the AHA through one of the most challenging periods in its history, as the organization galvanized to confront COVID-19 and the health inequities amplified by the pandemic.

With calls for social justice reaching fever pitch following the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and others, Scott has been a powerful voice against structural inequities that compromise health and shorten lives in communities of color.

Guided by the [2024 Impact Goal](#) to ensure equitable health for all, under his watch, the AHA committed to invest more than \$230 million to deconstruct health barriers in all communities. Investments will be made over the next four years, as the AHA approaches its centennial anniversary.

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FROM THE *heart*

**“I did not aspire to be AHA chairman — just a good volunteer with good ideas. I’ve been able to channel my passions to help others.” — Scott**

DISTINGUISHED  
*National Leadership*  
AWARD

**Mitchell S. V. Elkind**  
M.D., M.S., FAAN, FAHA

**President, 2020-21**  
American Heart Association

**Professor of Neurology & Epidemiology**  
Chief, Division of Neurology Clinical  
Outcomes Research & Population Sciences  
Columbia University

**Attending Neurologist**  
New York Presbyterian/Columbia  
University Medical Center



**Presented to outgoing officers of the American Heart Association  
to recognize their exemplary service to its mission.**

Twenty years ago, Dr. Mitchell Elkind became the first recipient of the Kathleen Scott Research Fellowship — established by American Heart Association chairman, Bert Scott, in honor of his late wife. The grant funded Elkind’s exploration of inflammatory markers in stroke as part of the landmark Northern Manhattan Study.

“That fellowship helped launch my research career and made me a lifelong volunteer of the AHA,” he said.

As only the second neurologist to be AHA president, Elkind’s appointment was the perfect fit with AHA’s planned expansion in brain health. He took the helm as the coronavirus pandemic accelerated its global course, also making his epidemiology background an invaluable asset.

The AHA’s early pandemic priorities included funding rapid research on how COVID impacts the heart and brain, training front-line health care workers and launching the COVID-19 CVD Registry using Get With The Guidelines®.

As the pandemic evolved, priorities shifted to the AHA’s campaigns encouraging people to continue seeking routine care and the Ad Council campaign promoting vaccination.

With COVID disproportionately devastating communities of color, Elkind led the AHA in declaring structural racism a cause of health disparities and setting the [2024 Impact Goal](#) to bridge the divide through 10 commitments.

FROM THE *heart*

**“The pandemic deepened my appreciation for my colleagues. Living and working in New York when it was the world’s COVID epicenter, I witnessed the tireless commitment of the medical community.” — Elkind**

