

HONORARY JONATHAN

Awarded Congressional Gold Medal



White House photo by Chris Greenberg

In 1909, "the year that **Michael DeBakey** was born, Theodore Roosevelt sat in the White House, Henry Ford produced the first Model T automobile, and the average American's life expectancy was a little more than 51 years. That last point is worth noting, because the number today is nearly 78 years. Our lifetimes have been extended by more than 50 percent within the course of a century, and the man we're honoring today is part of the reason why," said President George Bush at the Congressional Gold Medal presentation ceremony for Dr. Michael DeBakey held April 23, 2008 at the nation's capitol. Those who were in attendance were Mrs. DeBakey, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, members of Congress, and many other distinguished guests.

As the Chancellor Emeritus of the Baylor College of Medicine and the Director of the DeBakey Heart Center, Dr. DeBakey has greatly advanced the world of medicine and enhanced the lives of many. President Bush's speech underscored the impact of such a living legend on that of society in noting, "Dr. DeBakey has an impressive resume, but his truest legacy is not inscribed on a medal or etched into stone. It is written on the human heart. His legacy is the unlost hours with family and friends who are still with us because of his healing touch." DeBakey pioneered coronary bypass surgery, invented devices to aid open-heart surgery, developed the Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (M.A.S.H.) concept, and helped create a magnet school in Houston for young people pursuing careers in science.

Throughout our nation's history, the Congressional Gold Medal has been awarded sparingly in recognition of the tremendous accomplishments that it takes to earn this high honor. The recipients of this medal who have come from the world of science are few, but they are iconic, they include Thomas Edison, Walter Reed, and Jonas Salk.

Dr. Michael DeBakey is the recipient of the Jonathan Club 2006 Reagan Distinguished American Award.

The DeBakey Legacy

Michael DeBakey's significant contributions and achievements in the field of medicine stem from a family legacy the DeBakey parents passed on to him and his siblings. Their gift to their children was instilling the immeasurable value and necessity of education, compassion, and obligation to give back to mankind. No wonder that sisters Lois and Selma DeBakey have also continued to uphold the family legacy as communication pioneers

in the field of medicine and science. Lois and Selma have committed their careers toward helping doctors communicate with their patients in a more practical, comprehensive, and effective method. Encouraged on by their brother, Lois and Selma have dedicated their lives to supporting the work of Dr. Michael DeBakey and continually improving the doctor-patient dialogue.

Today Lois and Selma are professors at the Texas Medical Center Baylor College of Medicine, and just one door down from their brother's offices. They credit their family's success with the strong family values their parents instilled in them at a young age. "Never in history has such a great man had two sisters who supported and helped him as much as these two. They are part of his legacy," said a friend and colleague Dr. Philip A. Salem.



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JONATHAN

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ON OUR COVER:

Designed by Leslie O'Dell.

Jonathan

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