

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Crohn's & Colitis Foundation, Southern Texas Chapter, Celebrates 2026 Women of Distinction Honorees

Valobra Master Jewelers hosts a celebration of the new class and launch 2026 fundraising

Houston, TX – [October 17, 2025] – The Crohn's & Colitis Foundation, Southern Texas Chapter, celebrated the 2026 Women of Distinction honorees at a private event at Valobra Master Jewelers on Wednesday, October 15. The reception recognized eleven of Houston's most accomplished women for their extraordinary leadership, philanthropy, and lasting contributions to the community. Valobra has been supporting the Winter Ball and the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation for nearly 2 decades by donating a custom piece created specifically for the Winter Ball luxury raffle.

Since its inception nearly 40 years ago, the Women of Distinction Winter Ball has been regarded as one of Houston's most elegant and anticipated high-society events, drawing civic leaders, philanthropists, and society patrons together to honor women whose achievements elevate Houston's cultural, charitable, and civic landscape.

To be honored at the 2026 Women of Distinction gala are eleven remarkable leaders whose vision and generosity have shaped the betterment of Houston. New Women of Distinction are Kristen Cannon, Lauren Gow, Jennifer LeGrand Howard, Robin Klaes, Michelle Lilie, Linda Sagarnaga Magill, MD, Desrye Morgan, Pitsami Norm, and Karen DeGeurin Remington. Ambassadors, Helen Shaffer and Shawn Stephens, are alumni Women of Distinction that have continued to contribute in remarkable ways and are held in the highest regard. To be named an ambassador is truly a significant and special distinction.

The 2026 honorees represent excellence across philanthropy, business, health, education, and the arts, united by a commitment to service that strengthens the fabric of Houston. Since its inception, the event has been a keystone event in Houston, raising almost \$25 million dollars to support groundbreaking research, cutting edge patient programs, life-changing children's camp, and efforts that move us closer to cures for Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. This year's gala promises to be both a dazzling social affair and a moving celebration of women whose generosity and achievements inspire the next generation of leaders.

"Each of these outstanding women embodies the spirit of distinction through her dedication to lifting others, advancing important causes, and shaping a brighter future for Houston," said Franco Valobra, the event's host. "They are truly women of distinction in every sense. And Valobra is proud to create and donate our only custom piece this year to support the Foundation. They do tremendous work for the IBD community and maintain a level of excellence in their financial management and programs for patients that Valobra is thrilled to be associated with and support in this way," he added.

The 2026 Women of Distinction Winter Ball will take place on January 24, 2026, at the Post Oak Hotel, featuring a cocktail reception, elegant, seated dinner, and presentation of the honorees before an audience of Houston's most prominent supporters of philanthropy. 100% of funds raised from the raffle and all proceeds from the event will benefit the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation's mission to find cures for Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis (collectively known as IBD) and improve the quality of life of children and adults living with these diseases.

Event Details

What: 2026 Women of Distinction Winter Ball

When: January 24th, 2026

Where: Post Oak Hotel, Houston, TX

Benefiting: The Crohn's & Colitis Foundation, Southern Texas Chapter

Website: <https://onecau.se/2026winterball>

About the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation

The Crohn's & Colitis Foundation is a non-profit, volunteer-fueled organization dedicated to finding cures for Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis and improving the quality of life of children and adults affected by these diseases.

Since its founding in 1967, the Foundation has played a role in every major breakthrough in IBD research. We have invested more than \$500 million into finding the causes, treatments, and cures for Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis and won't stop until we realize our vision of a future free from Crohn's and colitis.

The Foundation operates at the highest ethical standards and consistently meets guidelines established by charity watchdogs, including the Better Business Wise Giving Alliance.

Learn more about our impact: <https://www.crohnscolitisfoundation.org/impact>

For media inquiries, sponsorship opportunities, or ticket information, please contact:

Megan Jordan

Senior Manager Fundraising Campaigns & Volunteer Engagement

mjordan@crohnscolitisfoundation.org

713-791-2102