The 2019-2020 BRASS scholars were introduced by the BRASS Scholar selection committee on October 17th. This year designated seven years ago by the BRASS scholars, celebrates Jack and Judi Johnson, for the continued generous research support they provide every year through the Wintermann Foundation. The Wintermann Foundation guarantees that the 16 BRASS scholars in the Baylor College of Medicine School of Biomedical Sciences will receive $1,000 for funding for their research during years 2-5 in their graduate studies. Scholars use this funding for discretionary spending to aid and advance their research. BRASS scholars (2016-2017) Patrick Hunt M.D./Ph.D. and Zach Kadov, M.D./Ph.D. spoke on the importance of the award’s funding and its help in advancing their research.

Ed McMahon and Don D. Jordan presented the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo 2018 Outstanding Community Award Certificates and award money to BRASS Scholars Zachary Criss, Carli Domenico, Kristyn Hoffman, and Paul Fahey.

BRASS Scholars were on hand celebrate the good news about the 2019-2020 BRASS scholars. The Felder Foundation, of Houston, is a dream come true - and made possible thank you to Ed and Ed McMahon. As rodeo committee members, Don and Ed’s belief in our mission has secured the important funding needed for the BRASS scholars’ research, lab equipment, and academic travel. March 13 was Texas Medical School Night and it was announced that BRASS would again receive $95,000 to support and enhance the BRASS scholars in their research pursuits and community outreach. Following the presentation Don Jordan hosted the BRASS Scholars, Dr. Adam Kraus and BRASS board members in his suite for a very fun and memorable evening at the rodeo!

March 13, 2019, found BRASS at the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo for one great night and the perfect opportunity to tip our cowboy hats to BRASS Executive Committee Members Don D. Jordan and Ed McMahon. As rodeo committee members, Don and Ed’s belief in our mission has secured the important funding needed for the BRASS scholars’ research, lab equipment, and academic travel. March 13 was Texas Medical School Night and it was announced that BRASS would again receive $95,000 to support and enhance the BRASS scholars in their research pursuits and community outreach. Following the presentation Don Jordan hosted the BRASS Scholars, Dr. Adam Kraus and BRASS board members in his suite for a very fun and memorable evening at the rodeo!

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A Message from the BRASS President

Dear BRASS members and supporters:

2018 ended with many highlights and fun events for BRASS and the anticipation of many more for 2019.

In September the Scholarship Committee selected from a total of 31 applicants and nine interviews the four outstanding 2019-2020 scholars who are highlighted in this issue. It is an impressive line-up of brilliant young scientists and we are thrilled to welcome them to the BRASS family!

The October 17 Scholars reception at the Decorative Center of Houston Roots Café, underwritten by Don Jordan, was the perfect setting to welcome the four new scholars and celebrate the 7th Annual Judi and Jack Johnson BRASS “Super Star” Day. Ed McMahon surprised all 20 BRASS scholars with a $500 check for each of them with the only stipulation being “spend it anyway you wish to”. Ed then announced an additional gift of $50,000 for Donald E. McMahon BRASS Scholar Education and Recruitment Endowment Fund. It was an exciting and memorable evening for everyone. The BRASS Holiday Party on December 5, was once again, graciously hosted and underwritten by Carol Faulk. The festive Canova Room in the Montebello Highrise provided the perfect setting to ring in the holidays and welcome more than 80 BRASS members, scholars, and their lab mentors. Guests brought gift cards for all the BRASS scholars which always lends fun and cheer to their holidays.

Super Bowl Sunday found us at the home of Jeannie and Marshall Smith where 45 scholars, spouses, friends and members chatted, ate and had a great time. The註 2018 BRASS Scholars’ Research Pursuit and Community Outreach. It was the perfect way to begin the new year.

So, here’s to a GREAT year ahead for each of you and as always, I am grateful for your continued support!
Kali Deans grew up in Naperville, Illinois. She received a full-merit scholarship to attend the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In 2014, she graduated with a B.S. in nutritional science and a certificate in Global Health, and she was awarded the Meyerhoff Award for Excellence in Leadership, Scholarship and Service. During undergrad, her inquisitive spirit led her to join the lab of her professor, Dr. Clay Goldman, where she studied an animal model that was thought to be critical to understanding the pathology of chronic pancreatitis. Prior to matriculating at Baylor College of Medicine, she further explored his interests in inflammatory bowel diseases through a one-year research fellowship at the University of Chicago.

Kali is currently an M.D./Ph.D. student in the Translational Biology and Molecular Medicine Program. Her interests remain associated with nutrition with a focus on inflammatory bowel diseases. It is her goal as a future physician scientist, to work with and for these patients from multiple angles of research and medicine to enhance their lifestyles and improve treatments.

In her free time, Kali enjoys going to the gym, gardening, cooking, and spending time with her friends and family. Kali is excited to join the BRASS family and looks forward to networking with the Houston community. She would like to thank the BRASS administration and all of the donors that contribute to such a great organization.

Matthew Penna was born and raised in Miami, Florida. He recently graduated cum laude with a B.S. in biomedical engineering and a minor in biochemistry from the University of Miami in 2016. During his freshman year, Matt joined a research lab and his passion for research was ignited. He conducted research in the field of tissue engineering and stem cell research with projects in endocrinology, cardiology, and neuroscience. He began shadowing physicians and planning a career where he could adopt an all-inclusive approach to medicine as a physician-scientist.

In 2016, Matt joined the M.D./Ph.D. program at Baylor College of Medicine and began his path toward becoming a physician-scientist. After spending two years in medical school, he joined the Translational Biology and Molecular Medicine Graduate Program at Baylor. He is currently a first-year graduate student with interests in neuroscience and regenerative medicine, pursuing his goal of becoming a physician-scientist.

Outside of lab, Matt enjoys exploring the city of Houston mostly through running and eating. The city of Houston is some of the most diverse and exciting he has ever experienced. His main motives for running is to continue enjoying the delicious food that Houston has to offer. Matt is excited to become part of the BRASS family.

Sarah Herzog is a first-year graduate student in the Translational Biology and Molecular Medicine Program. Her interests remain associated with nutrition with a focus on inflammatory bowel diseases. It is her goal as a future physician scientist, to work with and for these patients from multiple angles of research and medicine to enhance their lifestyles and improve treatments.

Sarah is now a first-year student in the program in Integrative Molecular and Biomedical Sciences (IMBS). She has an interest in cancer biology, intending to work in breast cancer. She hopes to integrate her skills in computer coding with her love of cellular and molecular biology to understand cancer mechanisms and develop better treatment strategies for breast cancer patients.

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