



THE PHILADELPHIA AWARD

Celebrating 100 Years

Est. 1921

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Taylor Feinman

Jacobson Strategic Communications

taylor@jacobsonstrategic.com

August 12, 2021

Dr. Ala Stanford and Brian L. Roberts Receive Prestigious Philadelphia Award

Award's Centennial Anniversary Recognizes Efforts to End Racial, Social Inequities and Leading Community Impact

PHILADELPHIA – Ala Stanford, MD, FAAP, FACS, and founder of the Black Doctors COVID-19 Consortium, and Brian L. Roberts, Chairman and CEO of Comcast Corporation, will receive the distinguished Philadelphia Award, celebrating its 100th year. The 2021 recipients were selected by the Board of Trustees of the Philadelphia Award for their locally- and nationally-recognized leadership efforts to address racial and social disparities and inequities in healthcare and education. Additionally, Roberts is being recognized for his leadership of Comcast's great corporate citizenship. The current plan is to present the awards at a ceremony in late October 2021.

"On the 100-year anniversary of the Philadelphia Award, Dr. Ala Stanford and Brian Roberts exemplify the purpose behind the annual recognition that has sought to identify and highlight individuals making significant community service achievements in Philadelphia," said **David L. Cohen, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Philadelphia Award**. "Their quick and decisive efforts at the beginning of an unprecedented time of challenge and reckoning not only raised awareness of the disproportionate effects of race and socioeconomic factors in healthcare and education, but their contributions are effecting very real, necessary, and actionable change both locally and on a national scale."

Dr. Ala Stanford

Being Black, Brown, or poor are not established pre-existing medical conditions, yet they are known determinants of increased health risks and reduced life expectancy for minorities in Philadelphia and throughout the United States. When Stanford, a board-certified adult and pediatric surgeon born and raised in Philadelphia, saw coronavirus statistics disproportionately affecting Black and African American residents, she saw more than numbers and percentage points. Stanford saw the faces of her family, friends, and neighbors whose skin color alone placed them at heightened risk of becoming infected with and dying from COVID-19.

"Just talking about the problem doesn't solve it – there needs to be action," said Stanford.

In less than 48 hours, Stanford rented a van, stocked it with testing supplies, and drove to her church's parking lot to offer free COVID-19 testing to anyone willing to wait in line. That first mobile testing unit became the beginning of the Black Doctors COVID-19 Consortium (BDCC). After founding the non-profit BDCC, Stanford's rapid and organized approach to narrowing the gap in coronavirus testing accessibility and availability for people of color grabbed local and national attention as an example of the power of one person to effect change. The BDCC expanded its services when vaccines became available, and more than 75,000 residents of Philadelphia's minority neighborhoods have received free testing and vaccinations through BDCC.

"Almost immediately, the BDCC established itself as a force for good," said Cohen. "Dr. Stanford is helping to build trust among communities whose disenfranchisement has been normalized for decades, and she's created a new model of care that can be replicated. Maybe even more significantly, she has shined a spotlight on the ravages of health care inequities in Philadelphia and nationally."

Stanford added, "When staring at a challenge like the vast division in our communities that favors the health and wellbeing of white, financially stable patients over everyone else, it can seem almost insurmountable. The pandemic created the opportunity to bring clear focus and direction to start chipping away at the barriers to healthcare one neighbor, one test, one vaccination at time."

Stanford has practiced medicine for 20 years and has volunteered her surgical expertise on multiple mission trips to Haiti. In addition to BDCC she also founded her private medical practice, R.E.A.L. Concierge Medicine, Co., and It Takes Philly, Inc., a 501c3 non-profit organization. She is the recipient of multiple awards and recognitions, including the *Philadelphia Business Journal* "Top 40 Under 40 Award," *The Philadelphia Tribune* "Top 10 Under 40," The City of Philadelphia "Next Generation of Women Leadership Award," Philadelphia Maneto Award, W.H.Y.Y.'s Philadelphia Magis Award, and is a University of Pennsylvania Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics Senior Fellow. Stanford grew up in Northeast Philadelphia and Germantown and earned her undergraduate and medical degrees from Penn State University.

Brian L. Roberts

Driving change, sustainable action, and lasting reform are the motivations behind Brian Roberts' business and philanthropic leadership. As the Chairman and CEO of Comcast Corporation, Roberts has long championed the growth of the company in Philadelphia and is passionate about supporting and empowering the local community. That focus and commitment only intensified at the onset of the pandemic when Comcast accelerated its decade-long commitment to digital equity.

Roberts has led Comcast's efforts to help close the digital divide, a 10-year priority that took on special importance during the pandemic. As schools were forced to close and students required digital access to participate in remote learning opportunities, Comcast quickly ramped up its efforts to connect as many low-income Americans to the Internet as possible. The company immediately offered two months of free service through its Internet Essentials program – the largest and most comprehensive broadband adoption program in the U.S. – and extended the duration of the offer several times throughout the pandemic. Since its inception, the program has connected a cumulative total of more than 10 million low-income customers to home Internet – many of whom live in Philadelphia.

In addition, Comcast worked with the City and School District of Philadelphia, as well as other civic leaders and institutions to support the City's PHLConnectED program – creating a holistic solution to provide no cost Internet service as well as digital skills training and support for students and their families while schools were closed. The company also announced the launch of Comcast Lift Zones – safe spaces at community centers where students can access free, high-capacity WiFi – and have opened more than 50 Lift Zones in Philadelphia to-date. Personally, the Roberts family provided the School District of Philadelphia with a \$5 million gift for free laptops for Philadelphia school children – helping to make the move to an all-virtual platform tenable.

"Working to provide the normalcy and continuity of education during such an uncertain time was important to me personally and professionally," said Roberts. "As a media and technology company, we felt a unique responsibility to help ensure students had the access and resources needed to continue their education as the world went remote and schools shifted to online learning models."

Roberts also led a broader response by Comcast to the pandemic. The company worked tirelessly to keep employees safe; ensured network performance and reliability for customers; and supported small businesses through the creation of [Comcast RISE](#). In addition to the company's COVID-19 response, the Roberts family made a donation to the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania to establish the Roberts Family Professorship in Vaccine Research and the Katalin Karikó Fellowship Fund in Vaccine Development, providing a foundation for discoveries in vaccine-based treatments, cures, and prevention strategies for an array of diseases.

Comcast also responded to the racial and social injustice brought to the forefront in late spring 2020, leveraging the company's collective resources and core business expertise to help advance racial equity and drive sustainable change. Last year, Roberts announced Comcast's multi-year plan to allocate \$100 million to fight injustice and inequality against any race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, or ability. The plan includes grants to organizations working to eradicate racial and social injustice and inequality.

"Comcast continues to set an example for what it means to be a good corporate citizen," said Cohen. "While the pandemic led to extraordinary steps and commitments in 2020, Brian and Comcast are also being recognized for their overall business

leadership and their longstanding commitment to our city through the creation of thousands of jobs and major philanthropic investments in hundreds of Philadelphia nonprofits."

Roberts has been instrumental in Comcast's growth from a small business to a global media and technology leader generating \$104 billion in annual revenue. The recipient of numerous business and industry honors, Roberts was recognized by *Barron's* as one of the "World's Best CEOs," lauded "Businessperson of the Year" by *Fortune*, and named one of America's top CEOs by *Institutional Investor* magazine for the 16th time. He received the Humanitarian Award from the Simon Wiesenthal Center, the Pennsylvania Society's Gold Medal for Distinguished Achievement Award, and the Legend and Leadership Award from the Yale School of Management's Chief Executive Leadership Institute. Roberts is a member of the Business Roundtable and served on President Obama's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness.

###

About the Philadelphia Award

Founded by editor, philanthropist, community leader, and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Edward W. Bok in 1921, the annual Philadelphia Award recognizes citizens of the Philadelphia region who acted and served on behalf of the best interests of the community in the previous year. Since its inception, the Philadelphia Award has recognized the achievements of more than 80 distinguished individuals, including industrialists, educators, lawyers, political figures, scientists, physicians, members of the clergy, social activists, philosophers, musicians, artists, architects, and writers.

Visit www.philadelphiaaward.org or @Philaaward on Instagram to learn more.