The Best That Humankind Can Offer

An Interview with James R. Borynack,
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Wally Findlay Galleries International, Inc.,
and Chair of the Board of Governors, National Hospice Foundation

James Borynack and CBS reporter Bob Schieffer, Master of Ceremonies, at the 2008 National Hospice Gala, Washington, D.C.

James R. Borynack

EDITORS' NOTE *Eighteen years before acquiring Wally Findlay Galleries International, Inc., in 1998, James Borynack purchased Wally Findlay Galleries in New York, having already been its Director and Senior Vice President. His relationship with the company began in 1972, when he was hired as a salesman after having served as a partner at De Noyer, a boutique specializing in European high-fashion imports. He is also associated with various government-related positions, including Cultural Attaché and Ambassador for Republicans Abroad International. In addition, he served as North American President of the auction house Phillips Son & Neale and worked for RE/MAX of New York in franchise sales and marketing. He is an alumnus of New York's Parsons School for Design. Borynack served as Chair of the board of trustees of the National Hospice Foundation before assuming his current role there.*

COMPANY BRIEF *As art dealers serving individuals, institutions, and corporate collectors, Wally Findlay Galleries International, Inc. (www.wallyfindlay.com), was founded in 1870 in Kansas City. With galleries in New York, Barcelona, Los Angeles and affiliates in London, Paris, and Monte Carlo, in addition to its flagship premises in Palm Beach, Florida, Wally Findlay Galleries specializes in Impressionist and Postimpressionist masters and is considered one of the leading authorities of paintings of the School of Rouen (France). The gallery currently represents more than 60 contemporary artists worldwide creating more than 60 exhibitions annually within their gallery network.*

The National Hospice Foundation (www.nationalhospicefoundation.org) was established in 1992 as an independent charitable foundation to support initiatives that inform the American public, promote community dialogue, support research and innovation, and enhance the ability of hospice providers to deliver information and services to their communities.

Would you provide an overview of the National Hospice Foundation and the critical work that the foundation provides?

The National Hospice Foundation [NHF] was founded in 1992 by leaders of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization [NHPCO]. NHF supports NHPCO's quality and research initiatives, hospice and palliative care provider education activities, consumer engagement and caregiver services, and global hospice partnerships. Ultimately, we envision a world where everyone facing serious illness, death, and grief will experience the best that humankind can offer.

NHF is part of a family of affiliated organizations, including NHPCO, which share space in the National Center for Care at the End of Life in Alexandria, Virginia. We moved into this space in December 2008 and the opportunities and visibility we expect to gain are exciting.

While NHF's primary role is fundraising, the organizations all work together to promote access to hospice and palliative care for all who need it. We also work to ensure the highest quality of care for seriously ill individuals and their families here in the United States as well as in our special focus area in Africa.

My passion for improving care and caring for those at the end of life's journey will continue long after I have completed my term as an NHF trustee. I think those who have been privileged to work on behalf of hospice and palliative care find that this is a calling that stays with us.

Would you highlight the key programs the foundation is focused on?

One of the programs I am most proud of is NHF's work to advance pediatric palliative care. Many people may be surprised to know that only 10 to 20 percent of dying children receive hospice care, and an equally low number of young people with serious illnesses receive palliative care services.

With support from NHF, the first set of clinically-based pediatric palliative care standards are being released to the field this April. This is the first set of national standards that address the care most appropriate for dying children and their families.

It can be hard to think about, but 53,000 children die each year in the U.S. and more than 400,000 are living with a chronic, life-threatening condition. When you consider the families and loved ones that each of these young lives touches, it points to a great need for improving care for seriously ill and dying children in this country. Additionally, the work we do here benefits the global understanding of pediatric palliative care. The development and publication of pediatric palliative care standards is one very important step, but now the task of putting this knowledge into practice begins, and for that, we need to continue to support this work.

Another exciting area NHF is focused on is supporting workplace outreach designed to help family caregivers handle work/life responsibilities. NHF received a quarter million dollar grant from the Jacob and Valeria Langeloth Foundation and this grant is supporting an 18-month pilot project. Employers have a responsibility to support their staff and colleagues who are coping with a serious illness, caring for a loved one, or grieving a loss.

A program that has grown significantly during my time as Chair of the NHF board has been our Run to Remember [RTR] program. Run to Remember is NHF's training and fundraising program for runners and walkers dedicated to advancing the cause of hospice at the local and national level. Each RTR participant runs or walks in honor of someone they have lost in a race of their choosing: it can be a 5K, 10K, 10-miler, half-marathon, or marathon. It's "any race at any pace."

What are the key challenges for National Hospice Foundation for the coming year?

We need to keep working with NHPCO to ensure that the excellent work that has already been accomplished through the creation of the pediatric palliative care standards, actually becomes common practice in the health care community.

Later this year, we will also be working on the initial stages of a capital campaign that will allow us to make the National Center for Care at the End of Life our permanent home. This is an exciting step for NHF and our affiliate organizations.

Ensuring that the necessary support is provided to projects educating the public through the wonderful Caring Connections program is also something we'll be focused on this year. Caring Connections just completed a multi-year grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and NHF will make sure that we don't lose momentum in public engagement and education efforts.

Of course, one of the ongoing challenges is to increase the number of donors and supporters who understand that caring for patients and families at the end of life is something that cannot be forgotten or put off for future generations. Most of us will, one day, need the services that hospice and palliative care providers offer. ●