

# 70<sup>th</sup> Annual Humanitarian Tribute

## 2017 Humanitarian of the Year

### *Dr. Yahya M. Basha*



Yahya Basha came to US in 1972 to study radiology and settled in Detroit. He opened his own clinic after facing discrimination at the major hospitals. He did so on the advice of his Jewish colleagues. At first, everyone thought he was crazy to open an independent radiology clinic—how could he compete with the hospital? So he created a business plan wherein he loaded his radiology equipment into a fleet of cars and sent the technology to local doctor offices. This way, doctors wouldn't have to refer patients out. This model was so successful that soon other businesses copied his model and the hospitals were asking him for advice.

Today, Basha diagnostics is still known for their cutting edge techniques like the open MRI and for operating outside typical business hours to serve patients better.

I am one of 11 children. I brought most of them here and they have their spouses and children. Now we are more than 100 people, and we have 22 doctors in the family.

If I'm alone, I'm weak. When you are part of a community, you see what's weak, what's wrong, what's good about the community. You start to work to improve humanity, and you start with the closest people to you—your family, neighborhood, the people you share heritage with.

My dad's father died when he was four, his mom when he was 13. All the time he used to speak about feeling lonely. He worked very hard from the age of 13, supporting himself. He used to describe how hungry he was as a child.

Even though he started very poor, he had a candy factory. I used to see the happiness in the eyes of the kids taking candies. It made me feel so good that my dad made a lot of kids happy.

All that developed empathy in me but also a sense of insecurity; about how fragile we are. Without being linked to other human beings, life can be totally wasted and destroyed for no good cause. My dad taught me to value hard work, education, and charity.

You know, the other value I want my children and grandchildren to hold is loyalty to this country. I know we have a lot of heritage. We inherited our culture, religion, names, language, and memories from the old country. But I want them to feel that wherever you are, you belong to the people surrounding you.