

The MAGNIFICENT Seven

True stars who shine



Pictured Left to Right:

Barbara Kirsch, Meliza Gomez, Ruby Johnson, Lula Azorey, Suzette Caldwell, Sally McMillan

Nouha Zacca (Pictured next to Bio)



★ **Nouha Zacca** ★ The War in 1914 caused a famine in Lebanon, but Nouha's heritage worked diligently to plant the land. By using the mountain springs, the crops flourished and fed the people of their homeland. These grandparents made an indelible mark; a life-style of sacrifice that included making time for family prayers and Scripture reading. With roots in Presbyterianism and Congregationalism, Nouha's father served as a Lay Pastor and held prayer meetings in their home. He was greatly loved by Christians, Muslims and Sheiks. During Nouha's education in a British-Lebanese school and obtaining a degree in Economics at the American University, reflecting upon Scripture remained a priority. Years later, Nouha recalls needing a miracle, "I clung to my father's guidance – if I have faith the size of a mustard seed, I can move mountains. By God's grace, I had complete peace." She speaks of the love and wonderful memories made raising three daughters and now has great fun with their young grandson. St. Jude's Children's Hospital, the Stephen's Ministry and The Virtuosi of Houston Young Artists Chamber Orchestra have been a few of her volunteer endeavors in hopes to give back as her beloved family modeled. Nouha continues working side-by-side with her dear husband, Nadim Zacca, M.D. at Houston Methodist and humbly says, "I am very blessed to pray with patients and assist them with their health concerns." *Magnificent!*

★ **Barbara Monroe Kirsch** ★ "If you ask God – what am I here for? – you can bet you will have your questions answered following amazing pathways! I give my right hand to God who leads me in the journey of life." A native Houstonian, Barbara's grandfather, Humble oilman Dan T. Monroe, and father, Texaco oilman Dan B. Monroe instilled a love for building community. As a Lifetime member of The Blue Bird Circle, it is her joy to support Texas Children's Hospital with the LOVE Unit, Lena's Observation Venue for Epilepsy, named after her mother, Lena Monroe. Barbara serves as a Trustee on the Boards of The Institute of Spirituality and Health, and The Retina Research Foundation. Her vision for research, prevention and restoring individuals back to health is also evident while supporting the Reconstructive Surgery works of Drs. Jeffrey Friedman and Michael Klebuc, or Houston Methodist's Institute for Technology, Innovation & Education (MITIE), Executive Director Dr. Barbara Bass, in honor of Dan T. and Dan B. Monroe Family. "I love to open doors for today's brilliant youth to affect our world in positive and spiritual ways." As a teen, Barbara was confirmed at St. Martin's Episcopal Church with the blessing of her parents, who belonged to another church – unconditional love. "With adventure, travel and being surrounded by amazing family and friends, I thank God for always greeting me with a glorious vision as if to say – Barbara, you may take my message and help others open their hearts to receive a new strength, a higher calling within." There is no greater path to feel safe and alive as with God leading your way." *Magnificent!*

★ **Nilda Meliza Gómez** ★ Meliza cherishes her first voice and piano lessons with her own mother and grandmother! Influenced by an ecumenical family of pastors and musicians, she remembers clinging to her mother on a church chancel stage at an early age. Her family modeled how a posture of worship could be carried from church into everyday life, through the good and the bad. This rich beginning set the tone, "this is the heart space I pursue daily – serving and praising God in every aspect of my life." While studying vocal performance at the University of North Texas, opportunities seemed to offer a promising career in classical arts – "Then God made a move! I remember thinking, yes. Just, yes! Lord, wherever it pleases You for me to be, I will go." Meliza's ministry began at a Spanish language church plant in Spring Branch and later, she was called to be the Director of Contemporary Worship at Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church. "God has fulfilled his promises to me!" Many will share, Meliza has humbly taken his promise and built a multifaceted repertoire of worship leading, songwriting and music education for children. She manages Kids' camps and Intercultural programs – additional reasons she gives glory to God. "One thing I've learned as a life-long worshipper – pursue God's heart with a posture of surrender. In my doubt and in my pain, I will sing to the God that has taken me out of the depths and into His light. In all things, worthy is the Lamb." *Magnificent!*

★ **Ruby Ann Johnson** ★ Sitting on the third row with her grandfather every Sunday, Ruby's foundation of faith was unforgettable. In the baptismal pool of that church, Ruby was baptized at age 8 and loves that "8" represents a new beginning. From that day, "God has kept me," Ruby says, attributing her love for people and forgiveness to years of studying Scripture and a deep conversion of knowing God at age twenty-seven. She learned the importance of listening and doing her work "as unto God," and passionately believes, "My energy, joy and strength come from the Lord!" Under the tutelage of spiritual mentors Debra Degar, Doug Stringer, Mary Ann Goldwater and Suzette Caldwell, Ruby became devoted to Intercessory Prayer for family, friends and the hundreds of people that ask for her wise counsel and prayers. Sunday worship services are enhanced as Ruby opens with prayer inspired by the Holy Spirit. Her heart draws others into worship and assisting with serving Communion to the people is a "heavenly experience." Ruby is always busy mentoring and helping young women. "Where is my light from? I give glory to God. I believe he gives it back so we may honor one another and have a life-style of honoring God together." *Magnificent!*

★ **Lula Azorey** ★ Lourdes Patricia Azorey de Ferrero, "Lula," began a love for reading the Bible as a child in Havana, Cuba, her dear homeland. This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it! – one of the songs she loved singing in Spanish with her grandmother. "My grandmother was like a mother because my dear mother had to work so hard every day of the week. This grandmother taught me about God and took me to be baptized even though it was with great risk. Even my parents were not allowed to attend church at that time in Cuba's history." At the age of 17, she had completed two years of Interior Design School when safe passage to escape Cuba became available, changing her life forever. God provided a friend and Lula and her father were able to fly to Venezuela where she ultimately met and married José Ferrero. Lula offers, "I'm so proud to be connected to the word 'Magnificence,' because the surprise reminds me – every time I have ever asked God for help, He helps me! Our family prays together every night and every blessing has made us stronger." Upon immediately entering ARKA Living, Lula and José's art and furniture store, one can immediately see Lula's inspired art and appreciation for artisans from the many countries they have lived. José shares, "For Lula, God is everything as you will see, her actions match her faith. She doesn't 'walk backwards' away from difficulties. If anyone is hurting, Lula is there. She has a strong sense of justice to help those who are weak." *Magnificent!*

★ **Suzette Caldwell** ★ Serving as a pastor, prophetess and powerful prayer warrior, Suzette's mother has always influenced her life. As a child, Suzette watched her mother spend hours on her knees, often praying through the night until dawn! A fond memory for Suzette is hearing her mother asking God to bless her and her sister; to choose their husbands; and to give them the mind and heart of Christ to serve others. With this great example bestowed by her mother, Suzette has prayed with thousands of individuals from all walks of life including U. S. Presidents. Using the Lord's Prayer as the model, Suzette continues to witness the manifestations of prayer, seeing God's miracles in the hearts and lives of people! Sharing meaningful milestones in her faithfulness to this calling, Suzette offers, "It has been a tremendous joy to actualize the vision of The Prayer Institute as we participate in local, national and international events." These have included The Greater Houston Prayer Breakfast; The Global Day of Prayer; and The International Global Alliance World Conference in Sangju, South Korea. Even when disasters hit the community-at-large, Suzette has responded by leading chaplaincy teams to pray for Hurricane Katrina victims at the George R. Brown Convention Center in 2005 and facilitated national prayer calls during Hurricane Harvey in 2017. "My mother told me to never put God in a box. Believe in the power of prayer and expect God's promises and plans to manifest in your life. There is nothing too difficult for Him." *Magnificent!*

★ **Sally McMillan** ★ Sally reflects on her career as an award-winning journalist and news anchor, and recalls a key decision in 1996 when she chose to change "assignments" to focus on her family, not realizing at the time – God had new assignments for her and her husband, Ron. During the ensuing 22 years, the spare rooms of their home have rarely been empty as God has availed Sally with the privilege of caring for friends and family who come to Houston for advanced medical treatment. Sally shares, "I feel deeply honored to utilize my experience in asking questions and taking notes as I walk with these loved ones during arduous journeys of facing and coping with tremendously complicated diagnoses including heart disease, liver disease, organ transplantation, strokes and rehabilitation processes, brain surgery and cancer." Her career path certainly helped, and yet Sally will share, "My faith was instilled as a child. Since, it is Christ's advocacy for me that inspires my advocacy for others and walk difficult paths together. I have literally experienced the peace of Christ while in the valley of the shadow of death." Today, Sally's greatest joy is watching her sons embrace the same legacy of faith and service so richly entrusted to her. *Magnificent!*