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After challenging year, restaurateur eyes California expansion

In the past year, he was in a motorcycle accident and took over three failing restaurants.

JACK WITTHAUS, 8A



COVER STORY

TMC TO CONTINUE GRAND VISION UNDER NEW LEADER

Bill McKeon was named president and CEO of the Texas Medical Center on April 13. He has some big ideas on where the campus will go next. 14A



CHRIS CURRY/HBJ

DEAL OF THE WEEK



ConocoPhillips makes second major asset sale

Just two weeks after the Houston-based upstream company announced plans to sell its Canadian assets, the company revealed another multibillion-dollar divestiture.

OLIVIA PULSINELLI, 4A

LEGAL



Two high-profile lawyers team up

Chris Bell and Ben Rose — who both ran for public office in Houston — have teamed up to launch a new litigation law firm. JOE MARTIN, 12A

CELEBRATING HOUSTON'S TOP PROJECTS

THE 2017 LANDMARK AWARDS

SECTION B



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

EDNA MEYER-NELSON

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CELEBRATING HOUSTON'S TOP REAL ESTATE PROJECTS

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LANDMARK AWARDS
PLUS: HONORING THE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT,
EDNA MEYER-NELSON 78



Edna Meyer-Nelson



LANDMARK AWARDS

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

EDNA
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NELSON

BY CARA SMITH
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Edna Meyer-Nelson is many things: a developer, investor, mentor, volunteer and board member on several of the city's most prominent organizations.

But she may best be known for her charisma and her frank approach to business dealings.

It's easy to get a taste of Meyer-Nelson's charisma in everyday conversation. She often shares anecdotes about her early days in business, her impressive guitar collection or her eye for fine art, all in her signature Southern drawl. Her knack for relationships has helped The Richland Cos., which Meyer-Nelson co-founded in 1993, grow into one of Houston's largest woman-owned businesses and commercial property owners and management firms.

"We as women are now out there, and we're getting ahead," Meyer-Nelson said. "We have leveled the playing field."

Her company's portfolio includes 35 properties in four states, representing more than 2 million square feet valued at around \$250 million.

Laura Ward, CEO, president and executive director of Houston Children's Charity, is a longtime friend of Meyer-Nelson. The two were introduced by a mutual friend around 20 years ago, Ward said. Over the years, Ward has had a front-row seat to Meyer-Nelson's forward-thinking approach to business and real estate investments.

"Edna has taught me a lot," Ward said. "She always says, 'You have to get up to the plate and bat. They aren't always going to be home runs, but you have to pick up the bat and you have to try.'"

Meyer-Nelson is a longtime Houstonian; she can recount childhood stories of going downtown with her family during Christmas at the request of Jesse H. Jones and his wife. She grew up in the Aldine area and worked in the banking industry, even declining a base salary her first year on the job as a loan officer in Houston to prove she'd generate enough commission to make up the difference. (She did.)

"People ask me if I had some tough times entering this man's world," Meyer-Nelson said. "I started in banking and worked my way up. That was challenging."

Meyer-Nelson spent nearly 20 years at several Houston-area financial institutions before launching The Richland Cos. with her longtime business partner Suzanne Klein.

Meyer-Nelson serves on a number of boards, including the Houston Police Foundation and the executive advisory board of the graduate real estate program at UH's C.T. Bauer College of Business. Meyer-Nelson also sits on the Houston Children's Charity board and served as president of the charity around a decade ago.

Her deep background in finance has helped shape her into a pragmatic investor, Ward said.

"Her sense of finance is crazy," Ward said. "She puts the pencil to the paper on every deal she makes 100 times before she signs."

*"We as women
are now out
there, and we're
getting ahead.
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field."*



LANDMARK AWARDS

HEADQUARTERS MOVE

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY

FINALIST

W.D. VON GONTEN & CO.

W.D. Von Gonten & Co. successfully moved into a completely transformed headquarter after consolidating its Houston office space and lab from College Station.

While the location near Interstate 10 and Beltway 8 was convenient, the building had no windows and issues with the column structure, slab reinforcement, ventilation requirement and safety features for the lab. With help from Ziegler Cooper, walls were knocked down and the perimeter of the office, break room and conference rooms on the second floor were replaced with glass. Not only did this bring natural light into the office, but it offered a clear view of the lab on the first floor.



DEALMAKERS

Developer: Hicks Venture

Architect: Ziegler Cooper

General contractor: O'Donnell Snider Construction Inc.

Brokerage: Savills Studley

MEP: Wylie Associates

Interior design: Ziegler Cooper

73,000

Square footage

\$8.6M

Dollar value of project



EDNA MEYER-NELSON
Founder, President and
Chief Executive Officer,
The Richard Companies

CONGRATULATIONS

Edna Meyer-Nelson on your
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The Richland employees **CONGRATULATE**

our incredible leader, Edna Meyer-Nelson on receiving The 2017 Landmark Lifetime Achievement Award. We are so very proud to celebrate you as the first woman to receive this distinction!



We also applaud all of The 2017 Landmark Award honorees and winners.



The Richland Companies' Houston Headquarters, 550 Post Oak Boulevard

LANDMARK AWARDS

LAND DEAL

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY

WINNER »**SUGAR LAND CENTRAL UNIT PRISON PROPERTY**

The city of Sugar Land bought the former Central Unit prison site, where it plans to build a public safety training center and possibly a business park. The city bought the 259-acre site from the state of Texas. The prison closed in 2011.

Additionally, the Sugar Land Regional Airport will acquire 95 acres for western access and aviation purposes. The remaining 21 acres consist of undeveloped wetland property at the northeast corner of the intersection of Highway 6 and U.S. Highway 90-A.

**DEALMAKERS**

Buyer: City of Sugar Land
Seller: Texas General Land Office, on behalf of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice

259 acres

Size of deal

\$6M

Dollar value of land purchase

FINALIST**UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS LAND DEAL**

The University of Texas bought more than 300 acres near the Texas Medical Center. Originally, UT planned to break ground in 2018 on a 315-acre research campus, but in March the system announced it was canceling the plans to develop the land.

Despite that, the deal involved several complicated transactions with different entities to close.

Chancellor William McRaven said UT backed out of the deal because he was concerned it was "overshadowing the extraordinary work underway on the 14 campuses of the UT System," according to a March 1 press release from the system.

**DEALMAKERS**

Developer: University of Texas
Broker: Avison Young
Attorney: Jackson Walker LLP

\$215M

Dollar value of land purchase

**CONGRATULATIONS****Edna Meyer-Nelson**

2017 Landmark Lifetime Achievement Award

Our family is so proud of your many accomplishments.

With love,



Suzanne Klein

Jacquelyn, Matt, Mark, Alec Brown
and Dr. Michael Trambert

Eric, Jennie, Darrow and Noah Klein



Michelle Kirsch