

# MySweetCharity

AN ONGOING CONVERSATION FOR THE GOOD OF DALLAS

## An Evening Of “Thought-Provoking Cocktails And Conversations” Proved To Be Just That Thanks To Dr. Michael Rugg

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It was billed as an evening of “Thought-provoking Cocktails and Conversations.” And that’s exactly what it was, when about 60 people gathered at Museum Tower on Monday, December 15, to hear a talk about Alzheimer’s Disease by Dr. **Michael Rugg**, director of [The Center for Vital Longevity](#) at the University of Texas at Dallas.



Barbara Daseke and Steve and Linda Ivy\*



Laree Hulshoff\*

More specifically, Rugg’s talk was called “Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementia: Current Research and Future Prospects.” Looking out at the assembled guests, who included the likes of **Linda and Steve Ivy** and **Pat and Charles McEvoy**, Rugg joked, “Laree asked me to talk on this. In fact, she gave me the title.”

Rugg was referring to **Laree Hulshoff**, who co-hosted the evening with **Ben Fischer** for the Aging Mind Foundation, in order to gin up interest in the foundation’s upcoming fundraiser, “Living With Bob: A Salute to Robert A. Wilson.” The Feb. 21 event at The Joule, which is being co-chaired by Hulshoff, **Barbara Daseke** and **Barbara Buzzell**, will honor ex-KERA executive **Bob Wilson**. Bob’s son, actor **Owen Wilson**, is scheduled to appear at the tribute benefiting the Center for Vital Longevity.

At the Museum Tower gathering, Rugg—a leading researcher in cognitive neuroscience and human memory—offered a brief history of Alzheimer’s. He pointed out that although Alzheimer’s wasn’t “discovered” until 1906 by

Bavarian psychiatrist Alois Alzheimer, people have always suffered from the disease, which involves the loss of the brain’s mental capacity with advancing age.

It’s a more pressing issue these days, Rugg said, because “we are an aging society.” Today 5.2 million Americans have Alzheimer’s, he said, and 9.4 million are expected to suffer from the disease by 2035.

Interestingly, just 5 percent of Alzheimer’s patients are “destined” to get it, Rugg said, while risk factors including obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure figure in 95 percent of the cases. Although nothing can be done currently to slow Alzheimer’s, he went on, researchers are working to change that by focusing on lifestyle patterns and conducting drug trials.

What about 10 years from now? By then, Rugg said, closing on a hopeful note, researchers should be able to determine who is most at risk for Alzheimer’s. And



Michael Rugg\*

drug treatments should be able by then to slow, if not halt, the disease’s advance.

\* Photo credit: Steve Foxall