Good morning! Welcome to the UT Tyler 2014 Patriot of the Year Luncheon. Thank you for joining us as we celebrate Suddenlink’s dedication to the success of this university and all of East Texas.

The longtime commitment of Suddenlink to The University of Texas at Tyler has made a substantial difference in the lives of thousands of students through the years. This company’s support of the University’s cable and high-speed data needs; their sponsorship of the UT Tyler’s Suddenlink Patriot Million Dollar Hole-in-One event; and the company’s generosity in assisting with the recent upgrades to our softball field and giving that field a name have truly made this institution a better place.

We are honored to be recognizing Suddenlink and its leaders and employees today for their service and friendship—and for contributing more than $1 million to this university.
We were proud to host the 2014 DIII NCAA Softball World Series at Suddenlink Field in May. That happened, in part, because of the foresight, dedication and generosity of Suddenlink.

Last year, we were able to make some key improvements to our already impressive field in Bob Irwin Ballpark. With Suddenlink’s most recent commitment, we expanded our press box, added a video screen to the scoreboard, added more seats and installed a New-Tek Tricaster Studio.

That studio allows us to have some of the highest-quality online broadcasts and in-game video production in all of NCAA Division III athletics. Suddenlink also has agreed to work with us to make broadcasts of several of our sports available “on-demand” to its customers.

Those improvements have not only secured our field’s position as the best facility in Division III softball, but we now rival most Division I institutions as well. This facility is truly one of the best in the nation, and we are proud to name it Suddenlink Field in recognition of the company’s great support.
Those added and improved video capabilities mean that means more people than ever can watch this amazing team, which has taken home numerous conference championships and played in the NCAA World Series three times. We are proud of what they have accomplished and glad to be able to give them such a facility to call home field.

I would especially like to thank Mark Edwards, Suddenlink’s Vice President for Marketing for the Tyler region, for all his hard work for this university. I’d also like to thank Todd Cruthird, former Senior Vice President for Operations for this area. The work of these two individuals—and other top Suddenlink leaders, including Chairman and CEO Jerry Kent—was essential in the completion of the softball field project.

Although the softball field naming commitment triggered today’s event, the “old hands” at UT Tyler know that Suddenlink’s support has been ongoing for many years. As the event title-sponsor for the UT Tyler Suddenlink Patriot Million Dollar Hole-in-One, this wonderful communications company has helped our volunteer group, the Patriots, raise more than $2 million in endowed scholarship funds since
about 2001. Because of Suddenlink and the Patriots, over 500 students have earned their degrees with substantial scholarship help they provided.

I would like to acknowledge any Patriots volunteers who are here—members of this very important group that put on the Suddenlink Million Dollar Hole-in-One scholarship fundraiser every year.

You know, this relationship between Suddenlink and UT Tyler is even wider and deeper than what we’ve already discussed. I remember calling the company once with a plea to put cable in our new freshman dorm, Ornelas Hall. For some reason it wasn’t going to get done through the normal process and I asked if they could make it happen in just a few weeks. Suddenlink said, “Yes, of course.” They came to our rescue.

Of course, Suddenlink in Tyler, at least, goes farther back in our history. Some in this room, like Lou Ornelas, built TCA Cable, which later became a major part of Suddenlink. From the University’s point of view, this new company and the
wonderful company that became a part of it have been a godsend for UT Tyler.

Because of Suddenlink, this University is much stronger. Because of Suddenlink, more than 500 hundred highly qualified East Texas university students have earned their degrees.

We are honored to have such a corporate friend.

I am glad to see companies such as Suddenlink serving as leaders in this community and providing inspiration for the upcoming generation. The Suddenlink corporate family makes a real difference in Tyler and around East Texas.

The Suddenlink Corporation as a whole contributed 16,000 hours of community service in 2013. That equates to almost an entire workweek for every single Suddenlink employee. Those sorts of numbers show unusual dedication to community, and we are honored to be one of the causes supported by local and regional Suddenlink employees.
So it is with great pleasure that I ask Mr. David Gillis, Senior Vice President for Suddenlink’s Southwest Region, to come forward and receive the 2014 Patriot of the Year Award.