

The Newslady

Robinson runs one of nation's finest



Steen Miles

Columnist

In case you missed it, *U.S. News and World Report* recently named the Sadie G. Mays Health and Rehabilitation Center of Atlanta one of the best nursing homes in the United States.

CEO **Charles Robinson** of DeKalb and his staff are to be commended for this superior recognition. Among Georgia's 359 nursing homes only 38 were rated five stars. Three nursing homes in Atlanta were rated five stars and Sadie G. Mays was the best of the lot. That is an awesome achievement.

The rankings were based on data from the federal government's Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), which sets the standards for all nursing homes. They rated 16,000 facilities in the

United States and the District of Columbia in three areas: health inspections, nursing staffing and medical care. Sadie G. Mays received superior marks in all three categories.

The center has been in operation more than 60 years. It was first opened in 1947 as Happy Haven, serving the health needs of poor and homeless African Americans. **Sadie G. Mays**, wife of the noted educator **Dr. Benjamin E. Mays** served as Happy Haven's first president. Dr. Mays once said that his wife, Sadie, as she was affectionately called, had a special concern for the young, aged, disadvantaged and the poor.

When Mrs. Mays fell ill in the summer of 1969 she was admitted to Happy Haven. When she subsequently passed away a few months later, Happy Haven's board of directors voted to rename the facility in her honor.

Today, while three out of four nursing homes in Georgia are run by for-profit chains, Sadie G. Mays is a thriving nonprofit, 206-bed facility, providing comprehensive nursing and rehabilitative services for short- and long-term patients. It is situated

on 15 private acres in downtown Atlanta.

Charles Robinson has been at the helm for the past 22 years and has shepherded the facility to new heights in nursing home care. With more than 200 employees, the center is a major employer of medical professionals in Atlanta. A massive remodeling project was completed last year, giving the facility new state-of-the-art equipment and a bright, cheery, modern look.

So often we hear horror stories about nursing home abuse, patients who are neglected and even abused physically and sexually. Loved ones are put in nursing homes because they have physical and/or mental limitations that we can't handle. They are particularly vulnerable and often not able to protect themselves or effectively communicate to others when they are victimized. Placing a loved one in a home is typically an emotional decision fraught with guilt. Even more reason why a distinction like the one achieved by Sadie May is so noteworthy.

We are a rapidly aging nation

and we are living longer, meaning that the population of licensed nursing home facilities continues to grow with more than 1.5 million people currently living in them. It is certainly reassuring to know that there are facilities like Sadie G. Mays, run by competent caring individuals like Charles Robinson and his staff who are providing superior care to our elderly, frail and infirmed.

So in case you missed this great news on our local radio and television stations, it was important to point it out in this space. What an awesome achievement! Kudos again to CEO Charles Robinson and the staff of the Sadie G. Mays Health and Rehabilitation Center.

The legacy of Sadie G. Mays, a woman who exemplified a tender and unrelenting determination to help others, is carried on by Charles Robinson Jr., a DeKalb County man who shares her passion to care for the "least of these."

Steen Miles, The Newslady, is a retired journalist and former Georgia state senator. Contact Steen Miles at Steen@dekalbchamp.com.

David Koch's crass act

One of the crudest arms of his vast and secretive political network is called Americans for Prosperity.

by Jim Hightower
Columnist



David Koch, the right-wing multimillionaire, likes to pose as a class act. He's thrown around several million bucks, for example, to get a wing of Manhattan's Lincoln Center named for him and to buy a seat on the board of WGBH, Boston's prestigious public television station.

These purchases make nice wallpaper, but they can't cover up the ugliness at the core of Koch's heart. He has poured a fortune (and his very soul) into the creation of dozens of faux-grassroots political attack groups and corporate fronts to advance his self-serving,

plutocratic vision of America. Far from a class act, the Koch operation is as crass as they come.

One of the crudest arms of his vast and secretive political network is called Americans for Prosperity (AFP). The network runs astroturf campaigns to knock down the prosperity of working families and lift up the power and prosperity of corporate elites—like the Koch family.

AFP's Michigan branch recently showed what it's made of in a campaign to kill funding for a new international bridge between Detroit and Canada. Building this bridge would create jobs and ease traffic snarls, but it would compete with a corporate-owned toll bridge—and the Kochs virulently oppose all things public.

To stir-up public opposition,

Americans for Prosperity went into a hard-hit Detroit neighborhood and plastered people's homes with official-looking flyers that declared in bold type: "Eviction Notice." The bogus flyers told homeowners that the state transportation agency was prepared to seize their homes to make way for the new bridge. "It was meant to startle people," said AFP's clueless and classless state director **Scott Hagerstrom**, who was perversely proud of the panic his lie had caused in this distressed community.

Such sensitivity is what has made the Koch name a four-letter word all across America.

*Jim Hightower is a radio commentator, writer, and public speaker. He's also editor of the populist newsletter, *The Hightower Lowdown*.*

