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**MDA's 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Night of Hope Gala benefitting ALS Research announces the Hope Award Honoree: Ed Rapp**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

ATLANTA, Ga. (April 2017) — The Muscular Dystrophy Association's 12th Annual Night of Hope Gala championing ALS Research will take place on October 27, 2017. On this spectacular evening, approximately 600 patrons will come together at the InterContinental Buckhead Hotel to support the journey of those living with ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. Each year, corporate sponsors and individual donors assist in the major undertaking to bring awareness to this tragic illness and to fund various research initiatives, including the local MDA Care Center at Emory Healthcare.

In 2010, the Hope Award was created to honor Steve Ennis, former chairman of the board of Coca-Cola Bottling Works of Tullahoma. Steve was diagnosed with ALS in July 2005 and unfortunately lost his battle with the disease in January 2012. His strength, determination and hope have remained a cornerstone of this event and its supporters. Each year, it is an honor to recognize an individual who has dedicated their time and resources to help eradicate this fatal disease.

This year, the Night of Hope Gala Committee is pleased to honor Mr. Ed Rapp, former Group President of Caterpillar Inc., with the Steve Ennis Hope Award, for his dedication to make a difference in the challenging world of ALS. After receiving his ALS diagnosis in November 2015, Mr. Rapp announced his plans to retire after a 37-year career with Caterpillar and turned his attention to supporting those in search of a cure and bringing better assistive technology to those suffering from the disease. In addition to launching [Stay Strong vs. ALS](#), Mr. Rapp serves in a leadership role on several initiatives focused on ALS.

Mr. Rapp's continued fight against ALS and his dedication and determination to invest in a better life for those with ALS makes him a commendable honoree and the reason MDA is proud to honor him as this year's recipient of the Steve Ennis Hope Award.

Please visit the event website or Facebook page to stay connected [www.mdanightofhope.org](http://www.mdanightofhope.org), [facebook.com/mdanightofhopeforals](https://www.facebook.com/mdanightofhopeforals). For more information on the event, please contact Samantha Shida or Angela Simmons at 770-621-9800 or [slink@mdausa.org](mailto:slink@mdausa.org)



**About the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) & ALS**

The Muscular Dystrophy Association is a voluntary national health agency dedicated to the eradication of 43 neuromuscular diseases that affect more than 1 million Americans. The MDA is a dedicated partnership between health care professionals, scientists, and concerned citizens, which provides help and hope to families facing the challenges of living with neuromuscular diseases. Programs available through the MDA are funded almost entirely by the generosity of individual public contributors; the Association receives no government funding.

To learn more about MDA's ALS Division, visit [www.als-mda.org](http://www.als-mda.org) or for more information about the Night of Hope Gala, visit [www.mdanightofhope.org](http://www.mdanightofhope.org).