The CEO Roundtable on Cancer has a storied fifteen-year history that proudly traces its origins to President George HW Bush who believed that corporate executives should have a forum in which to exercise their leadership to enhance cancer prevention and foster research on behalf of cancer patients.

When the President called upon Bob Ingram to become its founding chairman, he charged the CEO Roundtable's Members to be "bold and venturesome."

From that stellar start in May 2001 under Bob's baton, the CEO Roundtable established the CEO Cancer Gold Standard™, its flagship Workplace Wellness product that is both evidence-based and aspirational.

Following those first six years of Bob's founding chairmanship, the President asked Bill Weldon to succeed Bob in 2007. Under Bill's leadership, the Gold Standard began to explore its health-related outcomes, discovering that, in addition to cancer prevention and early detection, the Gold Standard also had healthy outcomes in the area of weight reduction that impacted the incidence of diabetes and possibly stroke. In addition, a subset of the CEO Members who led companies devoted to the Life Sciences (e.g., research intensive pharmaceutical and biotech companies) were asked to form a task force that tackled projects so "bold and venturesome" that no single company could hope to accomplish them alone. This task force was called the Life Sciences Consortium, and these CEOs and their respective corporate colleagues formed a unique collaboration … among otherwise competitors.

Then, four years ago, the President asked Chris Viehbacher to receive the chairman's gavel from Bill, and the CEO Roundtable’s fabled leadership lineage continued.
Elsewhere this book chronicals Chris' hallmark accomplishments as our chairman ... they boldly speak for themselves. As important as each of these accomplishments are, I wish to share the honor ... and joy ... it has been to work closely with him during the past four years. And I do mean "closely" for there was never a week during which we did not link -- no matter the time zone or the continent -- as he shared his global vision for the CEO Roundtable and then helped to shape the strategy that would match up to the President's high bar of "bold and venturesome" excellence.

Chris introduced the Gold Standard to state governments with Oklahoma becoming the first of the fifty states under Governor Mary Fallin to earn that prized recognition. He challenged our Gold Standard's co-chairs, Judy O’Hagan (Sanofi) and Fik Isaac (J&J), to encourage The Ohio State University to "Go for the Gold" and, after three years of work, OSU won the Gold Standard ... and a gridiron National Championship, all in the same year (2015).

And then there was Chris' bold stroke to join the President by encouraging China's central and municipal governments to embrace the life-lengthening, life-celebrating Gold Standard. What emerged, thanks to the President and Chris, is the CEO Roundtable on Cancer-China, whose ranks are being filled with multinational and domestic corporations. Especially important for China, the CEO Roundtable-China has already become a partner with China's CDC and its Ministry of Health, as well as with the
municipal governments of Shanghai and Pudong. These vital government agencies have heralded the Gold Standard-China as integral to the country's new "Healthy Cities" initiatives.

Reflecting on Bill Weldon's legacy with the creation of the Life Sciences Consortium (LSC), Chris believed that the time has come to boldly commit to the sharing of cancer clinical trial data. Now that's "bold and venturesome"! Chris challenged our LSC co-chairmen, Greg Curt (AstraZeneca) and Mace Rothenberg (Pfizer), to resolve the manifold impediments that traditionally bound all of these data in the reliquaries of data warehouses. Chris knew that required overcoming the inertia of tradition, so he formally committed Sanofi to providing anonymized, patient-level data sets to a platform that would cordially and easily welcome researchers from around the globe. He set the precedent, and then he personally encouraged other pharma and biotech CEOs to challenge their respective colleagues to do likewise... because it was simply the right thing to do. Chris, leading by example, also allocated vital human and financial resources that provided the LSC with the needed propellant.

The LSC created its Project Data Sphere®, LLC initiative in vital partnership with Jim Goodnight and a legion of his brilliant SAS colleagues, and the often daily pro bono legal counsel of Phil Porter from the great firm of Hogan Lovells. Now twenty months old, this bold initiative has welcomed more than 1,200 researches from 44 countries. It has successfully conducted a crowdsourcing experiment called the Prostate Cancer DREAM Challenge™ in which 599 solvers from around the world have addressed two questions that are fundamental to a more perfect understanding of the cell biology of prostate cancer. New discoveries have already been published in peer-reviewed medical journals … and countless new insights and hypotheses are being authored for future publications.

Whether it was the Gold Standard, the CEO Roundtable-China or Project Data Sphere, LLC, Chris' beacon has always lighted a path encouraging collaborations with and among companies, academic institutions, as well as important agencies of government including the FDA and the National Cancer Institute.

These highlights illustrate the breadth and depth of Chris' chairmanship and emphasize that he was there every step of the way. His leadership by example and his cheerleadership of the CEO Roundtable’s staff and volunteers in the US, Europe and China, spurred on these signature achievements ... and made the four years of his inspired and inspiring leadership figuratively (and literally for some of us) fly by!

You may ask how such progress could be made with limited resources ... and that's the most remarkable of Chris' many leadership traits. You see, Chris has this mystical ability to tell you that no matter how daunting the challenge or how foreboding the obstacles, that he believes in you. He has faith in your ability and he buttresses that faith with supportive resources and continual encouragement. And when the challenges loom largest, he reminds us that cancer patients daily face concerns and fears that are orders of magnitude greater ... and that these patients look to us for a renewal of life's elixir: HOPE.
“Bold and venturesome” ... the President was prescient when he appointed Bob Ingram and then Bill Weldon and then Chris Viehbacher ... and now we all join the President in welcoming Bob Bradway as the CEO Roundtable’s fourth chairman.

‘Tis the President’s Legacy: A Legendary Lineage of Leaders.

Chris, it has been such an honor working with you as my chairman. Your CEO Roundtable on Cancer is forever better because of you ... and I'm a better man, as well.

God love you!

Martin J. Murphy
Founding Chief Executive Officer
CEO Roundtable on Cancer