

The Philosophical Society of Texas

EXPLORING THE MYSTERIES OF THE BRAIN



188TH ANNIVERSARY MEETING

**ANNUAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 6-8, 2026
HOUSTON, TEXAS**

THE PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF TEXAS
188TH ANNIVERSARY MEETING

EXPLORING THE MYSTERIES OF THE BRAIN

PROGRAM AND SCHEDULE OF EVENTS
THE THOMPSON HOTEL AND THE HOBBY CENTER

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6TH

10:00 AM–7:00 PM	Registration Desk Open	Thompson Hotel 5 th -floor foyer
12:15–2:45 PM	Optional <i>Tour of Bayou Bend Collection and Gardens</i> with Bonnie Campbell Shuttle departs from the hotel at 12:15 PM	
12:30–3:00 PM	Optional <i>Tour of The Menil Collection</i> with Rebecca Rabinow Shuttle departs from the hotel at 12:30 PM	
12:30–3:00 PM	Optional <i>Tour of Glenwood Cemetery</i> with Chase Untermeyer Shuttle departs from the hotel at 12:30 PM	
1:00–3:00 PM	Optional <i>Visit to The Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas Houston Branch</i> with Paul W. Hobby Attendees walk from valet stand at 1:00 PM	
3:15–5:15 PM	<i>In Waves and War</i> (film screening)	Vesper Sessions Ballroom
5:30–6:00 PM	<i>Brain Repair Through Psychedelics</i> William Broyles, Jr., <i>moderator</i> Adam Brock Amber and Marcus Capone	Vesper Sessions Ballroom
7:00–10:00 PM	<i>Dinner and New Member Induction</i> <i>Welcome and Opening Remarks</i> Paul W. Hobby, <i>president</i> <i>Induction of New Members</i> Paul W. Hobby and Ann B. Stern, <i>2026 program chair</i> <i>Dinner Speaker</i> William Broyles, Jr.	Vesper Meals Ballroom

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7TH

7:00 AM–7:00 PM	Registration Desk Open	5 th -Floor Foyer
7:00–8:15 AM	<i>Come and Go Buffet Breakfast</i>	Vesper Meals Ballroom
7:30–8:15 AM	Special Elective <i>Philosophical Society History Session</i> Kay Bailey Hutchison and Lee F. Jackson	Vesper Meals Ballroom

8:15 AM	Welcome and Opening Remarks Paul W. Hobby and Ann B. Stern	Vesper Sessions Ballroom
8:30–10:15 AM	Session 1: Tech and the Brain: Brain Computer Interfaces Impacting Mental Health Jacob Robinson	Vesper Sessions Ballroom
9:45–10:15 AM	Break	
10:15–11:30 AM	Session 2: Brain Capital and Public Policy David Satterfield, <i>introductions</i> Amy Dittmar, <i>moderator</i> Harris Eyre David Gow	Vesper Sessions Ballroom
11:30 AM–Noon	Break	
Noon–1:30 PM	2026 Kempner Family Book Prizes Luncheon Welcome Ann B. Stern Tribute to Harris L. (Shrub) Kempner, Jr. Randall Kempner Awarding of Book Prizes Bryan A. Garner, Book Prize Committee Chair	Vesper Meals Ballroom
1:30–1:45 PM	Break	
1:45–3:00 PM	Session 3: Genetics, Dementia, and Brain Health Huda Zoghbi, <i>moderator</i> Louise McCullough Sudha Seshadri Joshua Shulman	Vesper Sessions Ballroom
3:00–3:45 PM	Brea	
3:45–5:00 PM	Session 4: Window into the Creative Mind Anthony Brandt and Jose L. Contreras-Vidal University of Houston BRAIN Center Chelsea de Souza, <i>pianist</i>	Vesper Meals Ballroom
5:00 PM	Announcements Paul W. Hobby	
7:00–10:00 PM	Cocktail Reception, Dinner, and Program Music by Divisi Strings Welcome and Prognostications Paul W. Hobby Dinner Speaker: Your Brain and the Physical Environment Thomas Woltz	The Hobby Center

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8TH

7:00 AM–1:00 PM	Registration Desk Open	5 th -Floor Foyer
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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8TH, cont.

7:30–8:30 AM	<i>Come and Go Buffet Breakfast</i>	Vesper Meals Ballroom
8:30–10:00 AM	<i>Daybreak Chat: Consciousness Beyond the Brain</i> Eben Alexander	Vesper Sessions Ballroom
10:00–10:15 AM	Break	
10:15–11:00 AM	<i>Special Elective: Sound Meditation</i> Eben Alexander	Vesper Sessions Ballroom
11:15 AM	<i>Society Business Meeting and Lunch</i> Paul W. Hobby, <i>presiding</i>	Vesper Meals Ballroom
1:00 PM	<i>Passing of the Gavel and Adjournment</i> Bryan A. Garner, <i>2026–2027 president</i>	

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The University of Houston BRAIN Center is supported by The National Science Foundation (NSF) IUCRC BRAIN Award #2137255, NSF Movement, Music, and Brain Health AccelNet award #2412731, and the University of Houston Cullen College of Engineering.

2026 HOST COMMITTEE

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	Rebecca Rabinow	

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON THE SPEAKERS

(in alphabetical order by last name)

Eben Alexander III was an academic neurosurgeon for over 25 years, including 15 years at the Brigham & Women’s Hospital, Children’s Hospital, and Harvard Medical School in Boston. Once staunchly committed to the materialist world view, his scientific belief system was altered by his 2008 transcendental near-death experience (NDE), an odyssey into another realm during a week-long coma. His medical case and recovery were validated in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*. Since his NDE, Dr. Alexander has been reconciling his rich spiritual experience with quantum physics, cosmology, and the philosophy of mind. A pioneering scientist and modern thought leader, Dr. Alexander speaks internationally on the primacy of consciousness in the universe and its role in wellness, healing, and recovery. He has been featured in hundreds of television, radio, print, and podcast interviews. His books are available in more than 40 countries and include *Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon's Journey into the Afterlife* and *The Map of Heaven: How Science, Religion, and Ordinary People Are Proving the Afterlife*.

Adam J. Brock currently serves as the chief operating officer (COO) of Eagle LNG Partners (Eagle), an LNG producer and distributor in the Southeastern United States and the Caribbean. Prior to Eagle, he served as president and COO of Circon Energy LLC, a Caribbean renewable fuels developer. Mr. Brock’s first role after leaving the US Navy (Navy) in 2013 was as a director in International & New Ventures and subsequently Investor Relations for Freeport-McMoRan Oil & Gas. Prior to his civilian career, Mr. Brock spent approximately 12 years on active duty with the Navy from January 2002–September 2013 as a Naval Special Warfare (SEAL) Officer. During that time, Mr. Brock did multiple deployments throughout the world while serving in a variety of positions. Prior to his service, Mr. Brock attended the University of Kansas where he received a B.A. in political science in August 1998 followed by The University of Texas where he received a J.D. in December 2001 immediately prior to his Navy service.

Anthony Brandt is professor of composition and theory at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music and artistic director of the new music ensemble Musiq̃a. His catalogue includes four chamber operas, orchestral, chamber, vocal, theater, dance, and television scores. Recent honors and commissions include MacDowell (2023) and Copland House (2024) fellowships, works for Performing Arts Houston, Opera in the Heights, KINETIC, and members of the Louisiana Philharmonic. “Meeting of Minds,” his pioneering collaboration with NobleMotion Dance and the University of Houston BRAIN Center, was awarded Chamber Music America’s 2025 Interdisciplinary Collaboration of the Year Award. Dr. Brandt and neuroscientist David Eagleman have co-authored *The Runaway Species: How Human Creativity Remakes the World*, which has been published in fourteen countries. He founded and directs the Shepherd School’s Music, Mind and Body Lab and is currently a co-investigator in several studies involving music, health, and creativity. Recordings of his music are available on the Albany, Crystal, and Navona Live labels.

William Broyles, Jr. is the founding editor of *Texas Monthly*, having previously served as editor-in-chief of *Newsweek* in the 1980s. Broyles authored *Brothers In Arms* about his return to Viet Nam ten years after the war. His TV series and screenplays include *China Beach*, *Cast Away*, *Polar Express*, *Unfaithful*, *Jarhead* and *Apollo 13*, for which he received a Writers Guild award for Best Screenplay and an Academy Award nomination. He is a member of the Texas Film Hall of Fame. Bill was born in Baytown, Texas, graduated from Rice and Oxford Universities, and is a distinguished alumnus of Rice. He served as an infantry lieutenant in the Marine Corps in Viet Nam, was awarded the Bronze Star, and the Marine Corps Foundation Film Award was named in his honor. He was active in the Civil Rights and anti-war movements and has taught English at The University of Texas at Austin and philosophy at the U.S. Naval Academy. He is lately a spiritual and psychedelic explorer and is working on a memoir.

Marcus and Amber Capone met in 1997, shortly before Marcus graduated as a Navy SEAL, and one month before the 9/11 attacks. Marcus' service would sometimes keep him away from home for up to 300 days per year. After 13 years and seven tours, the transition away from the SEAL teams became very challenging. Following years of escalating hardships, misdiagnoses, and failed avenues of healing, Amber was able to arrange for Marcus to leave the U.S. in 2017 to undergo a plant medicine experience; an intervention the couple attributes to saving his life, as well as their family. In an effort to share this healing, Marcus formed VETS in 2019, a nonprofit organization that provides resources, research, and advocacy for U.S. veterans seeking healing through psychedelics. VETS has raised funding for over 1,000 Special Operations veterans to receive this treatment and provided robust support services to aid in their ongoing recovery. Marcus and Amber are committed to fighting for veterans and their families, with the ultimate goal of making these therapies available within the borders of the United States for all who need them.

Jose 'Pepe' L Contreras-Vidal is Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen Distinguished Professor and Director of the U.S. National Science Foundation Industry-University Cooperative Research Center for Building Reliable Advances and Innovations in Neurotechnology (IUCRC BRAIN) at the University of Houston. He is an elected Fellow of the IEEE and AIMBE for his pioneering contributions to the development of brain-machine interfaces that control wearable exoskeletons for rehabilitation and for mapping art-evoked brain activity. His art-science research investigates the neural basis of human creativity and advances the understanding of neural mechanisms by which arts impact brain health and behavior. His art-science team received the Chamber Music America's 2025 Interdisciplinary Collaboration of the Year for "Meeting of Minds", which was performed at the United Nations' 2024 "AI for Good" Summit in Geneva, Switzerland. His research has appeared in *The Economist*, *Der Spiegel*, *Nature*, and others. His career development was highlighted by the journal *Science*.

Indian pianist **Chelsea de Souza** is a Steinway Young Artist internationally acclaimed for her dynamic artistry and thought-provoking recital programming. A captivating performer with "an alluring stage presence" (*The Hindu*), the four-time All-India Piano Competition winner weaves together influences from Western and Indian classical traditions with jazz and improvisation in her

versatile, genre-defying artistry. She is a Texas Touring Artist and also serves as the Mitchell Center Scholar in Residence in Moores School of Music at the University of Houston, teaching classes in improvisation and music of the Indian diaspora and curating interdisciplinary performances. Chelsea is the co-founder and artistic director of the Houston Music Festival, which reimagines chamber music through interdisciplinary collaboration.

Amy Dittmar is the Howard R. Hughes Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs at Rice University. She joined Rice from the University of Michigan, where she held several senior administrative roles, including acting provost and executive vice president for academic affairs, senior vice provost, and vice provost for academic and budgetary affairs. During her tenure, Dr. Dittmar played a central role in launching the Go Blue Guarantee, one of the nation's first free-tuition programs for lower-income students at a public university. She also led development of an innovative classroom building focused on engaged learning, advanced a more holistic approach to student mental health and well-being. Previously, Dittmar served as senior associate dean for graduate programs at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business. She earned her Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina and is a widely published scholar in corporate finance, governance, and gender economics.

Harris Eyre is a senior fellow at Rice University and The University of Texas Medical Branch, and senior advisor at McKinsey & Company. Harris is credited for pioneering the brain economy transition across sectors and industries, positioning "brain capital" as an asset that integrates brain health and brain skills to support societal resilience and inclusive growth. He co-led the OECD Neuroscience-Inspired Policy Initiative, and supported the development of the Global Brain Capital Dashboard, published via The Brookings Institution. He is co-lead of the Brain & Society Initiative of the Rice Brain Institute, lead of the Brain Economy Program, faculty scholar at the Baker Institute for Public Policy, and adjunct with Rice's Neuro Engineering Initiative and Psychological Sciences. Eyre is an alumnus of the Forbes 30 Under 30 and the Fulbright Scholar program. He has garnered recognition with the EB1A Green Card, an honor typically reserved for Nobel and Pulitzer Prize winners. He has authored over 200 papers and chapters in outlets such as Nature Medicine, The Brookings Institution, and was the lead editor of the book *Convergence Brain Health* (Oxford Press).

David Gow is the CEO of the Center for Houston's Future (CHF), a local think tank that addresses the long-term well-being of the greater Houston region. Gow joined CHF, which is celebrating its 25-year anniversary, in the fall of 2024. The Center has recently launched a new strategic project on brain health, a holistic initiative focused on life-long brain health to spur economic growth and enhance human flourishing. Gow is also the founder and chair of Gow Media, a multiplatform media company, with assets that include ESPN Radio in Houston, CultureMap, InnovationMap, SportsMap and Energycapitalhtx.com. He also serves as chair of Multi-Sensor Artificial Intelligence ("MSAI"), a publicly traded company he formed through a SPAC acquisition. Gow is a board member of Goose Capital, a prestigious Houston-based angel group that invests in early-stage ventures. In 2024 the

Texas Venture forum named Gow the Texas Investor of the Year, highlighting his successful SPAC merger. His educational background includes a master's degree from Harvard University.

Kay Bailey Hutchison is a distinguished American public servant whose career spans more than four decades of leadership in law, diplomacy, and national security. She served as a United States Senator from 1993 to 2013, becoming the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate from Texas. She served on influential committees including Armed Services, Commerce, and Appropriations, and was a strong advocate for NASA, the military, and infrastructure investment. From 2017 to 2021, Hutchison served as the United States Ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), representing the U.S. during a critical period for transatlantic security. Earlier in her career, Hutchison was Texas State Treasurer and a member of the Texas House of Representatives. A graduate of the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Texas School of Law, she remains an influential voice on foreign policy, national defense, and public leadership. Kay was inducted into the Philosophical Society in 1996 and served as president in 2018-19.

Lee F. Jackson has been an active member of the Philosophical Society since he was inducted in 2003. He is the former chancellor of the University of North Texas System (2002–2017). Jackson was the State of Texas' longest-serving chancellor when he announced his retirement in March, 2017. Jackson previously served as Dallas County judge from 1987 to 2001. Prior to that, he represented Dallas County in the Texas House of Representatives from 1976 to 1986. Jackson was lauded for his work in public by *D Magazine*, which named him Dallas' Best Public Official in 1996 and a Legislative All-Star in 1981. He holds degrees from Duke University and SMU.

Louise McCullough is the Roy M. and Phyllis Gough Huffington Distinguished Chair and Professor of Neurology at McGovern Medical School at UTHealth. She is a physician-scientist and a practicing vascular neurologist with clinical expertise in sex/gender disparities, the microbiome, aging, and acute stroke treatments. A renowned investigator, she is recognized for her work in cerebral vascular disease and is known for her research identifying sex differences in cell death pathways during stroke. Working closely with the Society for Women's Health Research and the Office of Research on Women's Health, she was instrumental in the National Institute of Health's requirement to include female animals in basic and translational studies. Among Dr. McCullough's honors and awards are the prestigious National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) Javits Neuroscience Investigator Award, the NINDS Landis Award for Outstanding Mentorship, the Inaugural American Heart Association (AHA) Outstanding Stroke Research Mentor Award, the AHA Merit Award and the AHA Thomas Willis Lecture Award.

Jochen Reiser, MD, PhD, became president of The University of Texas Medical Branch in August 2023. He also serves as CEO of the UTMB Health System, is a professor in the John Sealy School of Medicine and is the John D. Stobo, MD Distinguished Chair. He is a physician-scientist and executive with a strong interest in higher learning, improving health and quality of life in Texas and beyond. Dr. Reiser is a member of the world's oldest National Academy of Sciences, Leopoldina, and a prominent research leader in the field of kidney disease, with a heavy focus on

molecular biology, genetics and immunology. His scientific discoveries have opened new lines of inquiry and significantly advanced new treatment options for renal diseases. Dr. Reiser earned his MD and PhD degrees (summa cum laude) from the University of Heidelberg in Germany. He completed postdoctoral and residency training at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City. Prior to joining UTMB Health, Dr. Reiser had served in faculty and leadership roles at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, the University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine, and Harvard Medical School in Boston.

Jacob Robinson is the co-founder and CEO of Motif Neurotech, a company developing a therapeutic brain computer interface (BCI) to treat and track mental illness. He is a professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Rice University and holds a Ph.D. in Applied Physics from Cornell, having completed his postdoc at Harvard. Prior to founding Motif, Jacob led a research group at Rice University for 12 years, publishing over 60 peer-reviewed papers in journals including *Nature and Science*. Although now leading Motif full-time, Jacob remains a professor overseeing research at Rice University. Since its founding in 2020 Motif has established a manufacturing line and begun safety testing of its pea-sized implant called the DOT. The device is designed to be implanted in the bone over the brain to measure and regulate mental and cognitive states beginning treatment resistant depression.

David M. Satterfield has over four decades of diplomatic service and policy and management leadership experience in the United States, the Near East, and Europe. He has served as assistant secretary of state, National Security Council staff director, ambassador to Lebanon and Turkey, and chargé d'affaires in Iraq and Egypt. In October, 2023, President Biden appointed him White House Special Envoy for Middle East Humanitarian Issues to lead US diplomacy in addressing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. In April, 2024, he stepped down from this role and continues to serve as a consultant to the Department of State. Currently, Ambassador Satterfield serves as director of Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy. The Baker Institute's more than 100 expert fellows and research associates focus on a range of public policy issues of importance to Texas, the nation, and the world. The Baker Institute is ranked as one of only two Centers of Excellence among all academically affiliated institutions in the United States.

Joshua M. Shulman is professor of neurology, neuroscience, and molecular and human genetics at Baylor College of Medicine; co-director of the Jan and Dan Duncan Neurological Research Institute at Texas Children's Hospital; and director of the Baylor Center for Alzheimer's and Neurodegenerative Diseases. He received his A.B. in biochemical sciences from Harvard College, and his Ph.D. in genetics from Cambridge University. He subsequently studied at Harvard Medical School, where he received his M.D. and an M.M.Sc. in clinical investigation. Dr. Shulman completed his neurology residency and fellowship training in the Harvard/Partners Program at Brigham & Women's Hospital and Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. Dr. Shulman's translational research program has focused on the genetics and pathogenesis of neurodegenerative disorders, including Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. He received a career award for medical

scientists from the Burroughs Wellcome Fund and the Derek Denny-Brown Young Neurological Scholar Award from the American Neurological Association.

Thomas Woltz, senior principal of Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects (NBW), leads his firm in the artful creation and revitalization of public landscapes, working at the intersection of culture and ecology for the sustainability of the public realm. Through a collaborative and research-based approach, NBW's designs reveal lost or erased histories in the landscape. The work of NBW now stretches across thirty states and twelve countries. In 2011, Thomas was inducted into the American Society of Landscape Architects Council of Fellows, among the highest honors achieved in the profession, and was named the Design Innovator of the Year by the *Wall Street Journal Magazine*. He has been recognized as one of the most creative people in business by Fast Company, received the Land for People Award by the Trust for Public Land, and was a 2025 Frederic Church Award honoree. Thomas currently serves as co-chair of the board of directors for The Cultural Landscape Foundation.

Huda Zoghbi is a Distinguished Service Professor at Baylor College of Medicine, an Investigator with the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, and founding Director of the Jan and Dan Duncan Neurological Research Institute at Texas Children's Hospital. Dr. Zoghbi graduated from the American University of Beirut (AUB) and received her medical degree from Meharry Medical College. She joined Baylor College of Medicine for her residency and subsequently obtained postdoctoral research training in molecular genetics. Dr. Zoghbi's expertise ranges from neurodevelopment to neurodegeneration. Her mechanistic studies highlighted the importance of MeCP2 levels for normal brain function. She has been elected to the National Academy of Medicine, the National Academy of Sciences, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Zoghbi's honors include the Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences; the Canada Gairdner International Prize; the Lundbeck Foundation's 2020 Brain Prize; and the Kavli Prize in Neuroscience

University of Houston BRAIN Center (Building Reliable Advances and Innovation in Neurotechnology) is a multidisciplinary research hub dedicated to advancing safe, effective, and accessible neurotechnologies that improve human health and quality of life. As part of a National Science Foundation Industry–University Cooperative Research Center (IUCRC), the BRAIN Center collaborates with academic, clinical, industry, and regulatory partners to accelerate the development, translation, and adoption of innovative neurotechnology solutions. Its work spans neural sensing and stimulation, human–machine interaction, neurorehabilitation, and device validation, with a strong emphasis on real-world impact and workforce development. The BRAIN Center's neuroengineering team for the Annual Meeting are PhD students **Maxine Annel Pacheco Ramirez, Aime J. Aguilar Herrera, Yoshua E. Lima Carmona, and Lianne Sanchez Rodriguez**. Each contribute to interdisciplinary research projects, collaborative partnerships, and student leadership initiatives. Together, these students support the BRAIN Center's mission to train the next generation of neuroengineers while advancing cutting-edge research that bridges engineering, neuroscience, and clinical application.

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THE PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF TEXAS: FOR THE COLLECTION AND DIFFUSION OF KNOWLEDGE *was founded December 5, 1837, in the Capitol of the Republic of Texas at Houston by SAM HOUSTON, MIRABEAU B. LAMAR, ASHBEL SMITH, THOMAS J. RUSK, WILLIAM H. WHARTON, JOSEPH ROWE, ANGUS McNEILL, AUGUSTUS C. ALLEN, GEORGE W. BONNELL, JOSEPH BAKER, PATRICK C. JACK, W. FAIRFAX GRAY, JOHN A. WHARTON, DAVID S. KAUFMAN, JAMES COLLINSWORTH, ANSON JONES, LITTLETON FOWLER, A. C. HORTON, I. W. BURTON, EDWARD T. BRANCH, HENRY SMITH, HUGH McLEOD, THOMAS JEFFERSON CHAMBERS, R. A. IRION, DAVID G. BURNET, and JOHN BIRDSALL.*

The Society was incorporated as a nonprofit, educational institution on January 18, 1936, by GEORGE WAVERLY BRIGGS, JAMES QUAYLE DEALEY, HERBERT PICKENS GAMBRELL, SAMUEL WOOD GEISER, LUCIUS MIRABEAU LAMAR III, UMPHREY LEE, CHARLES SHIRLEY POTTS, WILLIAM ALEXANDER RHEA, IRA KENDRICK STEPHENS, AND WILLIAM EMBREY WRATHER. On December 5, 1936, formal reorganization was completed.