

Nancy Brinker

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Ambassador Nancy Goodman Brinker



30th [Chief of Protocol of the United States](#)

In office

September 14, 2007 – January 20, 2009

President [George W. Bush](#)

Preceded by [Donald Ensenat](#)

Succeeded by [Capricia Penavic Marshall](#)

Born December 6, 1946 (age 64)

	<u>Peoria, Illinois</u>
Political party	<u>Republican</u>
<u>Alma mater</u>	<u>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign</u> <u>B.A.</u>

Nancy Goodman Brinker (born December 6, 1946, in [Peoria, Illinois](#)) is the founder and CEO of [Susan G. Komen for the Cure](#), an organization named after her only sister, Susan, who died from breast cancer in 1980 at age 36.^[1] Brinker was also [United States Ambassador to Hungary](#) from 2001 to 2003 and [Chief of Protocol of the United States](#) from 2007 to the end of the [George W. Bush administration](#). Brinker, a breast cancer survivor, uses her experience to heighten understanding of the disease. She speaks publicly on the importance of patient's rights and medical advancements in breast cancer research and treatment.^{[2][3]} She is currently serving as the [World Health Organization](#)'s Goodwill Ambassador for Cancer Control.^[4] Brinker is the author of the [New York Times](#) bestselling book *Promise Me - How a Sister's Love Launched the Global Movement to End Breast Cancer*, released on September 14, 2010.

Brinker has helped build Komen by fostering a coalition of relationships within the business community, government, and volunteer sectors in the United States.^[5] For her work on breast cancer research, *Time* magazine named Brinker to its 2008 list of the 100 most influential people in the world.^[6] Calling her "a catalyst to ease suffering in the world," President [Barack Obama](#) honored Brinker with the [Presidential Medal of Freedom](#), the nation's highest civilian honor on August 12, 2009.^{[7][8]}

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Susan G. Komen for the Cure

In 1982, Brinker established [Susan G. Komen for the Cure](#), after a promise to her dying sister, Susan G. Komen, that she would do everything in her power to end breast cancer. Since its inception, the nonprofit has raised over \$1.5 billion^[9] for research, education and health services,^[10] making it the largest breast cancer charity in the world.^[11] Komen has more than 75,000 volunteers nationwide, 122 affiliates in the United States (47 of 50 states), and 3 affiliates in other countries. The organization has resulted in the development of many new treatment options and a higher quality of life overall for breast cancer patients and long-term survivors.^{[12][13]} Brinker served as founding chairman of the organization, supervising all aspects of initial growth.^[14] On December 2, 2009, Brinker was appointed [CEO](#).^[11] She also pioneered [cause marketing](#), allowing millions to participate in the fight against breast cancer through businesses that share Komen's commitment to end the disease.^[15] Susan G. Komen for the Cure received [Charity Navigator](#)'s highest rating, four stars.^[16]

Government service

World Health Organization Goodwill Ambassador

Brinker is currently serving as the [World Health Organization](#)'s Goodwill Ambassador for Cancer Control. She was appointed by WHO Director-General [Margaret Chan](#) on May 26, 2009. She is the organization's public face for its fight against to raise awareness and strengthen programs in poorer countries on behalf of the [United Nations](#) agency.^[17] She advocated for strengthening global action for cancer prevention and control in the context of the Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases endorsed by the [World Health Assembly](#) in May 2008. Her message emphasized the need for low- and middle-income countries to strengthen comprehensive and evidence-based cancer control policies and programs.^[18] also to learn more go to

Chief of Protocol

On June 18, 2007, President [George W. Bush](#) nominated Brinker to be [Chief of Protocol of the United States](#) and to have the rank of ambassador and assistant under-secretary of state. Brinker was sworn in to the post on September 14, 2007. Her term lasted until January 20, 2009.

In this role, Brinker advised, assisted and supported the president, the vice president and the secretary of state on official matters of diplomatic procedure. She accompanied the president on official visits abroad and served as the president's personal representative and liaison to foreign ambassadors in Washington. The Office of the Chief of Protocol is responsible for activities including the planning, hosting, logistics, and officiating at ceremonial events for visiting chiefs of state and heads of government. On April 15, 2008, Ambassador Brinker was the first

American to greet [Pope Benedict XVI](#) upon his arrival at [Andrews Air Force Base](#) as part of her official duties.

The office also manages [Blair House](#), the president's guesthouse. On October 7, 2008, Brinker hosted a symposium on "Breast Cancer Global Awareness" at the Blair House. First Lady [Laura Bush](#) joined the participants and for the first time ever, the White House was illuminated in pink for the occasion.^[19]

During her term as chief of protocol, Ambassador Brinker expanded the role of the office through outreach programs intended to foster better relationships with the Diplomatic Corps. The effort, known as Diplomatic Partnerships^[20] involved over 60 events, including "Experience America", where the Diplomatic Corps traveled throughout the United States to meet with American business and civic leaders.^{[21][22]}

Ambassador to Hungary

Brinker served as [United States Ambassador to Hungary](#) from September 2001 to 2003 during the administration of President George W. Bush.^[23] A political appointee,^[24] she advanced a broad range of U.S. security and economic interests.^[25] Specific successes include expanded security cooperation, development of a closure strategy for the Hungarian Fund, resolving commerce transparency issues, and for the first time, holding a conference on the trafficking and exploitation of workers that Health Ministers from the neighboring Balkan States attended. She also raised awareness about breast cancer among Hungarian women by leading a march over the historic Chain Bridge in Budapest. The bridge was illuminated in pink for the occasion.^[26]

While ambassador, Brinker began to collect Hungarian art. Today, her collection spans 100 years, from just before the Austro-Hungarian Empire to the present and has been on display at several museums around the United States. The collection is one of the largest outside of Hungary.^{[27][28][29][30]} The Nancy G. Brinker Collection extends and complements the acknowledged masters of Hungarian modernism and has introduced the American audience to original artists of more modest reputation.^[31]

Hungarian President [Ferenc Mádl](#) decorated Brinker with the Order of Merit, Medium Class, Cross Adorned with Star, for her work in advancing bilateral relations and in recognition of her charity activities.^{[32][33]}

Other government service

- On December 24, 2008, President Bush appointed her to the Board of Trustees of the [John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts](#) for a six-year term.^[34]
- In 2000, she served on the National Steering Committee for the National Dialogue on Cancer.
- Vice President [Dan Quayle](#) invited her to chair a subcommittee monitoring research, progress and development in the fight against breast cancer.
- In 1990, President [George H. W. Bush](#) appointed her to chair the [President's Cancer Panel](#) and to monitor the progress of the National Cancer Program.

- In 1986, President [Ronald Reagan](#) appointed her to the National Cancer Advisory Board.

Business career

In 1968, Brinker began a business and marketing career by entering the executive training program at [Neiman Marcus](#) in [Dallas, Texas](#).

In 1994, Brinker founded In Your Corner, Inc., a business venture designed to meet the retail consumer need for reliable health and wellness products and information. In Your Corner, Inc. was sold to [AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals](#) in 1998.^{[35][36]}

She has served as a director of several publicly held corporations including [Manpower](#), Inc., [United Rentals](#), Inc., U.S. Oncology, Inc., Netmarket, Inc., and the Meditrust Corporation, among others.

She has testified before the United States Democratic Policy Committee's Congressional Breast Cancer Forum and participated in the International Women's Forum.^[37]

Board service

In recent years, Brinker has served on the boards of FasterCures and the LHC Group. Prior to assuming her position as ambassador to Hungary, she served on the boards of [Manpower, Inc.](#) and U.S. Oncology. She is also affiliated with several non-profit organizations and sits on the boards of [New York University Medical School](#), the [Harvard](#) Center for Cancer Prevention Advisory Board, the [Palm Beach](#) Civic Association, and the [Palm Beach](#) Fellowship of Christians and Jews. Brinker also served on the national advisory boards of the Women's Health Resource Center, [Women's Health Initiative](#), the National Coalition of Cancer Survivorship and the [National Cancer Institute](#). She is a former board member of such not-for-profit organizations as the National Jewish Coalition Board of Governors, [New York University's](#) Medical School Foundation, National Surgical Adjuvant Breast Project, Protocol & Diplomacy International - Protocol Officers Association (PDI-POA)^[38] and the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund.^[39]

Education

Brinker graduated in 1968 from the [University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign](#).

Awards

Through her career as a businesswoman, consultant, healthcare advocate and philanthropist, Nancy Brinker has received numerous national awards and titles, including:

- [Presidential Medal of Freedom](#) August 12, 2009, awarded by President [Barack Obama](#)^{[7][40]}
- [Time magazine](#), 100 Most Influential People in the World^[6]
- Ladies' Home Journal's 100 Most Important Women of the 20th Century^[41]

- Biography Magazine's The 25 Most Powerful Women in America^[41]
- [Anti-Defamation League](#) Americanism Award^[42]
- The [Ladies' Home Journal](#)'s Top 10 Champions of Women's Health^[43]
- 2009 Porter Prize^[44]
- 2005 Mary Woodard Lasker Public Service Award in Support of Medical Research^[41]
- The Jefferson Award for Greatest Public Service by a Private Citizen^[45]
- 2007 Trumpet Award^[46]
- 2007 Castle Connolly National Health Leadership Award^[47]
- The Texas Governor's Award for Outstanding National Service
- 2007 Pro Cultura Hungarica Medal^[48]
- American Association for Cancer Research Centennial Medal for Distinguished Public Service in 2007^[49]
- 2007 IARC Medal of Honour^[50]
- The American Society of Breast Disease 2006^[51]
- Global Pathfinder Award^[51]
- 2004 Service to America Leadership Award presented by the National Association of Broadcasters Educational Foundation^[52]
- The Champions of Excellence Award presented by the [Centers for Disease Control](#)^[41]
- ASCO Special Recognition Award^[53]
- Cancer Research and Treatment Fund, Inc. Cancer Survivors Hall of Fame^[2]
- Modern Healthcare 2007 Health Care Hall of Fame^[54]
- The Sword of Ignatius Loyola Award from [Saint Louis University](#)^[55]
- The Healthcare Humanitarian Award presented by the Global Conference Institute
- [Toastmasters International](#) Top Five Speakers for 2001 Award
- The Sisters Network 2001 Lifetime Achievement Award
- The 2000 Cino del Duca Award, the James Ewing Layman Award from the Society of Surgical Oncology
- The 1999 Caring Award
- The Albert Einstein's Sarnoff Volunteer Award^[56]
- The first [Salomon Smith Barney](#) Extraordinary Achievement Award
- The Champion of Prevention Award by the National Foundation for the [Centers for Disease Control](#)^[57]
- 1995 University of Illinois Alumni Achievement Award^[58]
- Inducted into the Cancer Research and Treatment Fund, Inc. Cancer Survivors Hall of Fame^[2]

Publications

Brinker has co-authored four books:

- *Promise Me: How a Sister's Love Launched the Global Movement to End Breast Cancer* - September 14, 2010
- *The Race is Run One Step at a Time*, co-authored with Catherine McEvilly Harris
- *1000 Questions About Women's Health*, co-authored with Jane C. Chihal
- *Winning the Race : Taking Charge of Breast Cancer*, co-authored with Chriss Anne Winston

Brinker wrote the forewords for:

- *Tamoxifen for the Treatment and Prevention of Breast Cancer* by V. Craig Jordan
- *Tamoxifen: A Guide for Clinicians and Patients* by V. Craig Jordan

Personal

She is a daughter of Marvin L. Goodman, a commercial real-estate developer in [Peoria, Illinois](#), and his wife, Eleanor Goodman (née Newman).^[59]

Nancy Goodman married, as her first husband, Robert Leitstein, an executive at Neiman Marcus; they divorced in 1978.^{[59][60]} They had one son, Eric Blake Leitstein (born October 13, 1975),^[61] who is now known as Eric Brinker.^[59]

In 1981, Nancy Goodman wed [Norman E. Brinker](#), a pioneer of the casual dining industry^[62] and founder of [Brinker International](#), which provided access to capital and influence which enabled her role in public service.^{[63][64]} Norman Brinker provided funds and methodology for building the Komen foundation. The couple were major contributors to [George W. Bush](#)'s first presidential campaign.^{[65][66]} They divorced in 2003^[citation needed], but Norman Brinker remained a board member of Komen for the Cure, having served on its board since its founding in 1982 until his death in 2009.^[67]

Brinker was an avid polo player.^[68]

See also

- Susan G. Komen [Race for the Cure](#)
- Susan G. Komen [Breast Cancer 3-Day](#)

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