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William Austin Follows in the Footsteps of Helen Keller, Danny Kaye, Audrey Hepburn, and Prince Philip

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Starkey Hearing Foundation Head to be Honored as "Humanitarian of the Year" by Variety International the Children's Charity

(Los Angeles, May 8, 2006) – William Austin, dynamic head of the STARKEY HEARING FOUNDATION and called one of the greatest philanthropists in the world, will be honored by Variety International the Children's Charity with this year's "Humanitarian of the Year" Award, it was announced by Variety International Chairman, Monty Hall and International Ambassador, Marilyn Hall. This prestigious award, which formerly honored Ms. Keller, Mr. Kaye, Ms. Hepburn, Prince Philip, and Princess Anne among others, will be presented to Austin on May 31, 2006 at a Black-Tie Gala at Bally's Hotel in Las Vegas.



The Award is especially timely as May is "Better Hearing Month" in America. Austin is a unique individual whose self-proclaimed, life-long mission is "to fix the broken ears" of the world. As he says, "the reward is in the faces and smiles of each person as we help them hear again. We truly live through what we give—we live on into the future through our gifts back into our community and to humanity." His Starkey Hearing Foundation gives away tens of thousands of hearing aids to those in need each and

every year by going on self-financed missions to third world countries. Bill Austin personally fit his 150,000th child with free hearing aids this week.

Austin has received numerous awards over the years including the *National Caring Institute Award*, *Ellis Island Award*, and the *Vision Award* among others, for his outstanding charitable work.

Austin also owns and operates Starkey Laboratories. The U.S.-based hearing aid manufacturer is the largest in North America and employs over 4,000 internationally with an estimated revenue of \$420 million.

His encounters with celebrities alone could fill a book. He has personally fitted four presidents with hearing aids: President Ronald Reagan as well as three other former Presidents. He has also provided hearing assistance to renowned people including Ernest Borgnine, Paul Newman, Kirk Douglas, Walter Cronkite, Sidney Sheldon, Karl Malden and Buzz Aldrin, among many others.

Variety the Children's Charity is dedicated to promoting and protecting the health and well-being of children around the world. Through their network of 52 chapters in 14 countries, Variety reaches into communities across the globe to offer financial assistance and services to children and organizations that serve children with special needs. Through hard work, thoughtful stewardship, and single-minded focus on the needs of the young, Variety strives to make a lasting difference in the lives of children, their families, our communities and the world...one need at a time.

For more information about Starkey, [visit www.Starkey.com](http://www.Starkey.com)