



## St. Mary's Courageous Leaders Gala celebrates Coach Mark Richt

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Athens, Ga.** – St. Mary's Foundation hosted a joyful and inspiring evening at the 2026 Celebration of Courageous Leaders Gala on March 28, honoring legendary coach, mentor, and community leader Mark Richt for his enduring faith, character, and leadership.

Richt served as the University of Georgia head football coach from 2001 to 2015 before returning to coach at his alma mater, the University of Miami, from 2016-2018. In retirement, he and his family have donated generously to numerous charitable causes.

"Coach Richt exemplifies the values this celebration represents—faith, integrity, and service to others," said St. Mary's President and CEO Stonish Pierce. "We are proud to honor a leader whose impact continues to inspire our community."

"The Gala brought together community members, partners, and supporters in a powerful show of generosity and shared commitment to compassionate care," said St. Mary's Chief Development Officer Jennifer Messer. "Thanks to the extraordinary support of attendees and sponsors, the evening raised more than \$350,000, directly benefiting St. Mary's mission to deliver High Level Care, Higher Level Caring across the region."

Funds raised during the Celebration of Courageous Leaders Gala will allow St. Mary's to further enhance the compassionate, patient-centered care provided to individuals and families during some of life's most vulnerable moments, Messer said. These resources will help ensure patients experience comfort, hope, and healing when they need it most.

"St. Mary's extends its deepest gratitude to all sponsors, donors, and community partners whose generosity made the evening such a success," she added. "Their partnership plays a vital role in advancing St. Mary's mission and strengthening the care available to those we serve."

### About St. Mary's Health Care System

St. Mary's Health Care System, a member of Trinity Health, is a three-hospital, nonprofit, faith-based health ministry whose mission is to be a compassionate and transforming healing presence in the communities it serves. St. Mary's is a certified chest pain center, a gold-plus hospital for stroke care, and has a special focus on neurosciences, cardiac care, general medicine/general surgery, orthopedics, primary care, robotic surgery and women's and children's health.

For more information about St. Mary's Health Care System or future Foundation events, please visit [www.stmarys-health.org/](http://www.stmarys-health.org/).

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Courageous Leaders Gala Emcee Russ Tanner sports a classic t-shirt as Coach Mark Richt (seated) looks on. Photo courtesy Wingate Downs Photography



St. Mary's President and CEO Stonish Pierce speaks as Coach Mark Richt (seated, left) and emcee Russ Tanner look on. Photo courtesy Wingate Downs Photography