

## **Opening of Janssen's European Distribution Center**

Official Opening of Janssen's European Distribution Center

Ambassador Howard Gutman

October 3, 2012

Mr. Prime Minister

Minister Marcourt

Mr. Heyman, Mr. Magloff, Ms. Griffiths,

My good friend Ajit--

For Michelle and me – and by the way, today marks our 31st anniversary – It is a true honor and a privilege to be here today for so many reasons.

We have now been in Belgium for over three years, which makes me the second longest serving U.S. Ambassador to Belgium in 31 years.

And in that time, we have seen many true Ambassadors building the Belgium American relationship. Kim Clijsters with her tennis racket, Toots Thielman with his Harmonica, InBev with Stella, Prince Phillippe with his trade mission, the Prime Minister with his two recent chats with President Obama urging the President to visit if he were re-elected, Delhaize with Food Lion, and many more.

But clearly, Johnson and Johnson and Janssens Pharmaceuticals are among those at the top of the list as ambassadors in building and rebuilding the bridge between Belgium and the United States, while it builds a better future for Belgian workers, U.S. workers and consumers around the globe.

And whereas Michelle and I have been working on rebuilding the Belgian-American relationship since 2009, they have been doing it since 1961.

Could there be two better representatives to come together? Paul Janssens was not just a genius and a world leader but he has been voted by Belgium as the second most important Belgian ever. And the first guy – Father Damian – became a Saint while we have been here, so that is a pretty tall order. Could divine intervention be far away from La Louvière?

And Johnson & Johnson has been one of the most admired U.S. companies for 126 years.

And at a time when the Belgian-American relationship has been rebuilding faster than any in the world since it hit measured lows in the mid 2000's – this year according to the last Gallup Poll of all the nations in the world, Belgium finished first in the world with the highest increase in favorability towards U.S. leadership – a 15% gain in a single year and now more than 2-1 favorable;

And at a time of recovery from our joint economic crisis where a job created is worth more than any words of admiration and friendship from an Ambassador,

The Johnson & Johnson, Janssens Pharmaceutical Partnership, the Belgian American partnership forming this wonderful company continues to sparkle as beautifully as this new building.

So to the Johnson & Johnson family, thanks for all you do; thanks for all you will continue to do; and best of luck with this new facility and with all of your operations.

Thanks so much and all the best.