What is claimed is:

~~1. A filtration device comprising a housing having an inlet and an outlet spaced from said inlet, and a plurality of membranes including at least an upstream membrane and at least a downstream membrane, wherein each said membrane has substantially the same rating, and wherein said upstream membrane has a first predetermined performance characteristic selected such that said filtration device has a second predetermined performance characteristic regardless of the performance characteristics of said downstream membrane.~~

~~2. The filtration device of claim 1, wherein said performance characteristic is capacity.~~

~~3. The filtration device of claim 1, wherein said performance characteristic is permeability.~~

~~4. The filtration device of claim 1, wherein said performance characteristic is retention.~~

~~5.~~ 1. A method of reducing filter-to-filter performance variability in a multi-layered filtration device including an upstream filter membrane and a downstream filter membrane,

wherein each said membrane has substantially the same pore size rating, comprising:

a. selecting a target performance characteristic value selected from the group consisting of capacity, permeability and retention for said device;

b. determining the values of the same performance characteristic as said target performance characteristic of a plurality of different membrane batches;

c. selecting as said upstream membrane a membrane from said plurality of different membrane batches having a first performance characteristic value or range of values;

d. selecting as said downstream membrane a membrane from said plurality of different membrane batches having a second performance characteristic value or range of values; wherein said first performance characteristic value or range of values is higher than said second performance characteristic value or range of values and is selected such that said target performance characteristic value is achieved.

~~6.~~ 2. The method of claim ~~5~~1, wherein said performance characteristic is capacity.

~~7.~~ 3. The method of claim ~~5~~1, wherein said performance characteristic is retention.

~~8.~~ 4. The method of claim ~~5~~1, wherein said performance characteristic is permeability.

~~9.~~ 5. The method of claim ~~5~~1, wherein said first performance characteristic is the highest performance characteristic of all membranes within said plurality of membrane batches.

~~10.~~ 6. The method of claim ~~9~~5, wherein said second performance characteristic is the lowest performance characteristic of all membrane within said plurality of membrane batches.

~~11.~~ 7. The method of claim ~~5~~1, wherein said first performance characteristic is the second highest performance characteristic of all membranes within said plurality of membrane batches.

~~12.~~ 8. The method of claim ~~11~~7, wherein said second performance characteristic is the second lowest performance characteristic of all membrane within said plurality of membrane batches.

~~13. A multi-layered membrane filter device made from at least two membrane layers, said layers~~

having at least one higher and one lower capacity rating, said device having a capacity greater than the average of the capacity ratings of the membranes used to make the device, and less than or equal to the higher capacity membrane.

14. A population of multi-layered membrane filter devices made from at least two membrane layers, said layers having at least one. higher and one lower capacity rating, said devices having an population average capacity greater than the average of the capacity ratings of the membranes used to make the device, and less than or equal to the highest capacity membrane.

15. A filtration device comprising a housing having an inlet and an outlet spaced from said inlet, and a plurality of membranes including at least an upstream membrane and at least a downstream membrane, wherein each said membrane is selected from a population of membranes having a capacity such that the capacities of said population define a distribution, and wherein said upstream membrane has a capacity at about the median of said distribution, and said at least one downstream membrane has a capacity at

either the high end or low end of said distribution.

16. The filtration device of claim 15, wherein said capacity distribution of said population of membranes is a Gaussian distribution.

17. The device of claim 15, wherein there are at least three membranes.

18. The device of claim 17, wherein the membrane between said upstream and downstream membranes has a capacity at either the high end or the low end of said distribution.

19. The device of claim 15, wherein there are at least four membranes.

20. A filtration device comprising a housing having an inlet and an outlet spaced from said inlet, and a plurality of membranes including at least an upstream membrane and at least a downstream membrane, wherein each said membrane is selected from a population of membranes having a capacity such that the capacities of said population define a distribution, and wherein said upstream membrane has a capacity at the high end of said distribution, and said at least one

~~downstream membrane has a capacity at the low end of said distribution...~~

~~21. The filtration device of claim 20, wherein said capacity distribution of said population of membranes is a Gaussian distribution.~~

~~22. The device of claim 20, wherein there are at least three membranes.~~

~~23. The device of claim 20, wherein there are at least four membranes.~~

~~24. The filtration device of. claim 20, wherein said high end of said distribution is at least as high as the median of said distribution.~~

~~25. The filtration device of claim 20, wherein said low end of said distribution is at least as low as the median of said distribution.~~

~~26. A filtration device comprising a housing having an inlet and an outlet spaced from said inlet, and a plurality of membranes including at least an upstream membrane and at least a downstream membrane, wherein each said membrane is selected from a population of membranes having a capacity such that the capacities of said population define a distribution, and wherein said upstream membrane has a capacity higher than~~

~~the median capacity of said distribution by a certain amount, and said at least one downstream membrane has a capacity lower than the median capacity of said distribution by about said same certain amount.~~

~~27.~~ 9. A method of reducing filter-to-filter performance variability in a multi-layered filtration device including an upstream filter membrane and a downstream filter membrane, wherein each said membrane has substantially the same pore size rating, comprising:

a. selecting a target performance characteristic value selected from the group consisting of capacity, permeability and retention for said device;

b. determining the values of the same performance characteristic as said target performance characteristic of a plurality of different membrane batches;

c. selecting as said upstream membrane a membrane from said plurality of different membrane batches having a first performance characteristic value or range of values;

d. selecting as said downstream membrane a membrane from said plurality of different membrane batches having a second performance characteristic value or range of values; wherein said first performance characteristic value or range of values is lower than said second performance characteristic value or range of values and is selected such that said target performance characteristic value is achieved.

~~28.~~ 10. The method of claim ~~27~~9, wherein said performance characteristic is capacity.

~~29.~~ 11. The method of claim ~~27~~9, wherein said performance characteristic is retention.

~~30.~~ 12. The method of claim ~~27~~9, wherein said performance characteristic is permeability.