



For Immediate Release

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Everyone a Winner at Paying It Forward Legacy Gala

Over 380 guests supported *Paying It Forward* benefiting the Linda Lorelle Scholarship Fund on September 30 at the Royal Sonesta Hotel. The stars of the evening were the 10 High School Finalists for scholarships who were center stage as they each held up a pennant of the higher education institution they hope to attend. Greeted by applause, they thought they had to wait until another time to find out if they would get a scholarship. As a result of the success of the night, it was announced they will all get a \$10,000 college scholarship. Thunderous applause and cheers greeted the announcement made by Co- Founder **Linda Lorelle**. She and her husband **Lou Gregory** founded the Linda Lorelle Scholarship Fund in 1991 and it has been a lifeline to higher education for students who might not otherwise have an opportunity. Many of those same students, now in their 40s, 30s and 20s, are educators, attorneys, journalists, engineers, doctors, musicians, actors, entrepreneurs, designers and more, and many were in attendance to support the mission that led to their success. **Lorelle** and **Gregory** made the official handoff to the next generation as their daughter **Lindsey Gregory** and **Board President Carlos Lewis** stepped forward as the new leaders of the scholarship fund.

The reception with a silent auction and raffle items kept the guests entertained with beautiful décor by ArtAttack, florals donated by H-E-B and stunning staging effects by Stage Directions. Emcee **Khambrel Marshall** held a standing ovation to greet Linda and Lou to kickoff the event. **Reverend Mary Gracely**, another longtime supporter, stepped in to share the invocation which was then followed by the remarkable stories of success of the many scholars over the last 30 years. **Shawna Thomas**, a former scholarship recipient, who is now Executive Producer of CBS Mornings, flew in from New York just to make remarks at the dinner. The appeal and live auction were led by **Johnny Bravo**. The live auction included a great Houston Texans package donated by new head coach **DeMeco Ryans**, a behind the scenes visit to CBS Mornings in New York with Shawna, an electric bike donated by **Porsche River Oaks** and a trip to the exclusive Mexico resort, Vidanta. It all contributed to a successful evening with over \$310,000 raised. All the Chairs **Winell & Doug Herron**, **Edna Meyer-Nelson** and **Adam Newar & Amy Rozzell**, and Honorary Chairs **Philamena & Arthur Baird**, **Debbie & Roger Clemens**, **Tissy & Rusty Hardin**, **Eileen & Kase Lawal** and **Laura Moore & Don Sanders** were applauding the success. The Bairds, Clemens and Sanders were unable to join the evening and sent their best wishes for a great night. Awards were given to longtime supporters **Bev Taylor** and **Dick Hendee** who were with Linda and Lou at the start of the organization.

The night concluded with cheers for the new leadership, the winning scholars, and the hope for students of the future who will benefit from the support and encouragement of the Linda Lorelle Scholarship Fund 2.0.

Seen in the crowd: Edna Meyer- Nelson, Jody Merritt, Bill Baldwin and Fady Armanious, Stephanie Tsuru, Tissy and Rusty Hardin, Dr. Mae Jemison, Jamila Ryans, Maria Moncada Alaoui and Omar Alaoui, Michael Hocter, Stan Marek, Leisa Holland Bowman, Sandra Porter, Fran Lichtenstein, Frances Castaneda Dyess and John Dyess, Sharon Owens, Dr. Melanie Johnson, Lindsay Buck, Larry Buck, Karene Hendee and T.H. Sheikha/Tamador AL-Thani, Consul General of the State of Qatar.

For more information on Linda Lorelle Scholarship Fund visit lindalorelle.org

Photos by Jacob Power