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American Celebration Raises Record \$2 Million for Scholarships

Hollywood Legend Debbie Reynolds Receives Lifetime Achievement in the Arts Award; Larry and Kristina Dodge Honored as Corporate Citizens of the Year

ORANGE, Calif. – The 25th anniversary edition of Chapman University’s annual American Celebration gala, held Saturday night, Nov. 4, topped \$2 million for the first time in its history, lifting the event’s 25-year grand total past \$10 million and outdoing last year’s record total of \$1.3 million. The black-tie gala, which featured a student-performed Broadway revue and a salute to Hollywood legend Debbie Reynolds, grossed \$2,043,515, event organizers announced. After expenses, the net amount raised, which goes to the Chapman student scholarship fund, should be approximately \$1.8 million, said S. Paul Musco, who chaired the gala along with his wife Marybelle.

Special guest Reynolds, who received the Chapman Lifetime Achievement in the Arts Award during the stage show in Memorial Hall, said she was gratified and overwhelmed by the honor. “These amazing students and the talent we just saw on stage are absolutely wonderful,” said the 74-year-old actress to the gala audience of nearly 900 people.

Lawrence and Kristina Dodge, whose \$20 million gift in 2004 established Chapman’s Dodge College of Film and Media Arts, were honored with the Corporate Citizens of the Year Award. In an eloquent acceptance speech, Kristina Dodge hailed the core values of Chapman University, saying that if they were put into practice, they would “enable our nation to realize any and all of our lofty individual and collective ambitions.”

The student performers’ memorable stage show was a retrospective of favorite scenes from the past 25 years of American Celebrations, including fully costumed and choreographed scenes from such Broadway hits as “The Lion King,” “Crazy for You” and “Les Misérables” (the latter featuring a dazzling solo by internationally acclaimed operatic tenor John Nuzzo, a Chapman graduate who received this year’s Alumni Achievement in the Arts Award). President Doti joined a chorus line of red, white and blue cowgirls for the deft white-glove choreography of “Our Favorite Son” from “Will Rogers Follies.”

After the show, guests mingled in the festival tent just outside Memorial Hall, where they enjoyed the black-and-silver Art Deco surroundings and a celebratory dinner of beef filets, autumn vegetables in phyllo “purses,” and a special 25th-anniversary chocolate dessert with poached pears. Oscar nominee Shohreh Aghdashloo (“House of Sand and Fog”) was the genteel emcee.

Silent and live auctions during the gala brought in a total of nearly \$200,000, including a Robert Wan Tahitian black pearl necklace that sold for \$75,000; a MINI Cooper that went for \$30,000; a Queen Mary 2 cruise that sold for \$20,000; and a dinner for 12 with President Jim Doti and

Chapman professor Marvin Meyer, author of the bestseller “The Gospel of Judas,” that sold for \$8,000.

Attendees included the Hon. George and Julia Argyros, Judi Garfi-Partridge, David and Donna Janes, Mark Chapin Johnson and Barbara Johnson, Jim and Patti Edwards III, Mark and Vikki Murphy, Joann and Russ Leatherby, Zee Allred, Randall and Suki McCardle, Arlene and Roger Craig, Leslie and Lawrence Cancellieri, Doug and Lynn Freeman, Don and Dorothy Kennedy, the Hon. Loretta Sanchez, the Hon. Milan and Milena Panic, Jim and Kelly Mazzo, Libby Pankey, Ralph Tomlinson, Harry and Diane Rinker, Paul Makarechian, Paul and Daranne Folino, Steve and Stacy Physioc, Don and Deedee Sodaro, Wylie and Bette Aitken, Jim and Nancy Baldwin, Richard and Patti Schmid, Erin and Gary Lastinger, Raj and Marta Bhathal, Twyla and Chuck Martin, Sue and Ralph Stern, David and Mary Louise Ward, Kris and Linda Elftmann, Bridget Ambriz, and Doy and Dee Henley.