

**AUDREY'S SOCIETY WHIRL**



New York Police and Fire Widows' & Children's Benefit Fund chairman Daniel J. "Rusty" Staub and Stephen J. Dannhauser, chairman of Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP and president and CEO of the Benefit Fund, led a tribute to New York City's fallen First Responders at the highly lauded organization's 24th annual gala recently held in the Grand Ballroom of the New York Hilton Hotel & Towers.

Themed "Celebrating Those Who Answer The Call," the black tie event paid tribute to four living Mayors of New York City: Michael R. Bloomberg (2002-Present); Rudolph W. Giuliani (1994-2001); David N. Dinkins (1990-1993); and Edward I. Koch (1978-1989).

"It was such a distinct privi-

# Police & Fire Widows' Children's Benefit Fund honors Mayor Dinkins

ment. The Fab Four were recognized for their steadfast support of the Benefit Fund throughout the years of the Benefit Fund and NYC's First Responders. This was the first time that all four mayors were recognized together by a single cause.

"It is an honor to be the first organization to host the past four mayors of New York City," said Rusty Staub returning as Master of Ceremonies. "As legendary leaders in each of their own right, we are grateful for their support to those who have bravely served our city."

More than 800 black tie dinner guests from the worlds of law enforcement, business and entertainment turned out for the Benefit Fund gala. The commemorative celebration raised approximately \$1.M to provide families of First Responders who have been killed in the line of duty with annual financial assistance.

Former Mayor Dinkins, who served as the 106<sup>th</sup> Mayor of the City of New York is credited with "Safe Streets, Safe City: Cops and Kids," the model criminal



Former mayors David N. Dinkins, Edward I. Koch and Michael Bloomberg

memories of the fallen, to thank their survivors for their sacrifices, and to pledge our best efforts to ensure brighter days to come," said a jovial Dinkins, who reminded the audience of how Rudy was instrumental in his pre-

ments, but for turning his extreme cultural influence into positive meaningful action, we are delighted to honor Russell," said Dannhauser.

In addition, Dannhauser presented John P. Gallagher, former vice president of the New York Police and Fire Widows' and Children's Benefit Fund, with the coveted J. Patrick "Paddy" Burns award. Gallagher's widow Katie and the rest of the Gallagher family accepted the award on his behalf.

New York Rangers fan favorite and Hockey Hall of Famer Mark Messier, last year's gala honoree, was truly touched by the work of this magnificent organization and graced this year's event in the role of one of the Benefit Fund's newest board members. Also returning this year was George Whipple of NY1 News as celebrity auctioneer.

Celebrating the launch of the "Answer the Call" marketing campaign, the dinner featured the unveiling of the Fund's new Public Service Announcement voiced by actor Harrison Ford and videos detailing the moving stories told by two of the funds beneficiaries, Rita Williams and Eileen Bellew.

The Benefit Fund was created in 1985 by former New York Mets player Rusty Staub and Paddy

Burns, who was then the vice president of the New York Patrolmen's Benevolent Association. Since its inception, the foundation has distributed over \$114 million to the families of New York City police and fire personnel who have been killed in the line of duty.

The Benefit Fund gives financial assistance to grieving families immediately after they lose their loved one and the Benefit Fund's goal is to raise enough funds to provide meaningful annual distributions to its beneficiaries for the remainder of their lives.

Initially created to assist families of New York City fire fighters and police officers, the Benefit Fund now includes the families of Emergency Medical Services and Port Authority officers as well.

The event filled with pomp, pageantry and pleasantries was co-chaired by Kevin Parker, global head of asset management, Deutsche Asset Management; David G. Tisch, managing member, LSV Advisors LLC; and William Von Mueffling, president & CIO, Cantillon Capital Management LLC.

Everyone involved with this year's event extends kudos to Linda M. Giammona, director of development for the Benefit Fund, for another amazing gala (answerthecall.blog.org); and to media magnet Rubenstein Associates.



Stephen and Beth Dannhauser with Danny Simmons

lege to be part of a moment in history with all four of our living mayors," said Dannhauser who opened the program with a special tribute to Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta, who had just announced his retire-

justice plan for reducing crime and expanding opportunities for the children of New York City, and established the Beacon schools.

"Good evening and thank you all for being here to honor the

mature return to civilian life that garnered a load of laughs.

During his touching remarks, the mayor made reference to his friend, Police Detective Steven McDonald, paralyzed by an on-duty shooting in 1983 and to the selfless work of the First Responders.

"They fought a good fight, they finished their course, and they kept the faith. They left us with more than memories - they left us a rich legacy of doing for others. It is said that service to others is the rent we pay for our space on earth. They all departed us paid in full. Let them not look down and find any of us in arrears" he said.

In another luminous highlight, Dannhauser presented pioneering Hip Hop entrepreneur and humanitarian Russell Simmons with an award for his extensive philanthropic endeavors.

"Russell Simmons has been instrumental in bringing hip-hop to every facet of business and media over the past thirty years, so for not resting on his achieve-



Rita Williams, widow of NYPD Detective Keith Williams & Eileen Bellew, widow of NYFD Lieutenant John Bellew



Dinner chair David Tisch and Russell Simmons

(Photos by Ron Jordan Natoli)