

The Whitney E. Houston Legacy Foundation Celebrated Her 30th Anniversary of Her Historical Visit to South Africa

UNITED STATES, August 13, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Whitney E. Houston Legacy Foundation and Primary Wave Music presented the 3rd Annual Gala, celebrating the 30th Anniversary of her historical visit to South Africa on Friday, August 9th, 2024, at the St. Regis Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia, which also marks Whitney's three historic post-apartheid visits and performances following Nelson Mandela's historic election win as the then President of the new South Africa. The event was hosted by Kevin Frazier of Entertainment Tonight and Pat Houston, president of the Whitney E. Houston Legacy Foundation, along with Jonathan Slocumb as MC.

Whitney was the first major recording artist to perform in the newly unified, post-apartheid nation. She performed at Kings Park Stadium in Durban (November 8, 1994), Ellis Park Stadium also known as Emirates Airline Park in Johannesburg (November 12, 1994), which was filmed for the HBO Special, and the final performance was held at Green Point Stadium in Cape Town (November 19, 1994).

The gala opened with a video message from Honorary Chair and Chief Creative Officer Clive Davis of Sony Music Entertainment, who spoke about Whitney's historic trip to South Africa thirty years ago during the beginning of the post-apartheid era with the then newly elected President Nelson Mandela. Davis also shared Whitney's cultural significance and impact on the world of music and entertainment early in her career and her memorable performance of "Home," by the then 19-year-old on The Merv Griffin show, 41 years ago.

With Musical Director, Kelvin Broughton, the gala's performers included the unforgettable four-time Grammy Award-winning recording artist Yolanda Adams, the incredibly gifted vocalist



Whitney Houston performed 30 years ago at Kings Park Stadium in Durban, South Africa on November 8, 1994.

performed Richard Smallwood's signature classic, "I Love The Lord," which Whitney performed at each one of her concerts and "Home," written by Broadway composer, the legendary Charlie Smalls, which is one of Adams' favorite songs performed by Whitney. Both of Adams' anointed performances received two standing ovations and left the audience wanting more. "Home" was also dedicated to South African's special guest, Mirriam Solani Mazibuko, the director of the Orlando Children's Home in South Africa, who was the representative of this year's charity grant. Thirty years ago, Whitney extended a generous financial donation to them through her foundation.

A few months ago in June 2024, Pat Houston and key representatives of The Whitney E. Houston Legacy Foundation, along with board member Dr. Jacqueline Mohair, visited several places in Johannesburg that Whitney visited in 1994, including the Orlando Children's Home in Soweto. While there, the foundation team spent time with the children and young adult residents, and they performed a song. Pat Houston also made the presentation to Mazibuko, who is the charity grant representative.

In return, Mazibuko and her daughter were invited to attend this year's gala by Pat Houston. She

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Whitney loved children. Her experience in South Africa and meeting Nelson Mandela changed and reshaped her life and furthered her commitment to continue her work with children and young adults.”

Pat Houston, President of The Whitney E. Houston Legacy Foundation

and her daughter travelled to Atlanta and Mazibuko shared her story about the lifelong work and mission of the Orlando Children's Home. She also shared memories of a young Whitney, and her beauty, her grace, her regalness, her extraordinary talent and her promise to return to the homeland. Mazibuko shared that Whitney promised her that she would return to South Africa.

Thirty years later, that promise was fulfilled, when Pat Houston and the foundation team returned to South Africa to visit Mazibuko and the young adults of the Orlando Children Home, not only to represent the foundation, but to also represent the Houston Family.

“Whitney would have wanted us to return to South Africa to represent her and commemorate



Whitney Houston with Nelson Mandela during her historical visit to South Africa in 1994. (Photo Courtesy of The Estate of Whitney E. Houston).

this special time in history, says Pat Houston. "Whitney had many significant milestones and historic moments in her life and career, but her love for children, her love for South Africa and its people, and getting to know and spend valuable time with Nelson Mandela and his family meant everything to her. Nelson Mandela and that experience in South Africa changed and reshaped her life and furthered her commitment to continue her work with children and young adults. Whitney was a great example of the Bible scripture, Luke 12:48, 'To whom much is given, much will be required.'"

Pat Houston concludes, "I know we made Whitney proud. We helped to serve the foundation's mission and purpose in the global community. And the tree Whitney planted thirty years ago at the Nelson Mandela home, which is now named the Nelson Mandela Museum, is a reminder to us and a symbol to continue the work in her name and legacy."

Whitney's brother and longtime duet partner and background singer Gary Houston also performed a medley of Stevie Wonder's classic songs, "Do I Do," and "Love's in Need of Love Today" and the finale performance of "We Can Touch The World" with Pat Houston and the Sauce background singers.

Additional performances included Gregory Sams and Denisia, the recent winners of The Whitney E. Houston Legacy Foundation's Cover Song Competition. Sams performed "Miracle" and Denisia performed her New Orleans-styled reimagined version of "I Wanna Dance with Somebody (Who Loves Me)." Both received The Whitney E. Houston Legacy Foundation 2024 Voice Awards.



Yolanda Adams Performs at The Whitney E. Houston 3rd Annual Legacy Gala



Dionne Warwick, Pat Houston, and Mirriam Solani Mazibuko at The Whitney E. Houston Legacy Foundation Gala

The annual fundraiser also included scholarships for college students studying the arts at historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). This year's recipients were Donovan McClain and Saniah Wharton of Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland.

Both, the silent and online auction were outstanding and some of the items are still featured on Charity Buzz and included a variety of one-of-a-kind curated packages from travel excursions to Whitney Houston tour

costumes to artwork to signed sporting memorabilia to a variety of entertainment packages: Two of Whitney Houston's stage costumes, the Gold Gown with Turban and the Purple three-piece pant suit ensemble from the South Africa One Love Tour by South African designer Marc Bouwer; a travel excursion with Bermuda Tourism Authority, titled "The Greatest Love All: A Bermuda Celebration;" premium courtside tickets for Opening Night of the US Open; original artwork of Whitney Houston, "One Moment In Time" (Ernest Watson), and "Whitney Wears The Crown" (Tommy Marlon). Other original art pieces included the Barack Obama Portrait (Ernest Watson), and the work of various South African artists "The Serenade" (Isaac Hlatswayo), the signed "Mamelodie East, Magaliesburg" (Grand Maghandlela), the signed "African Nam" (Billy Molokeng), and the signed "Umama" (Peter Moyo), and the Whitney Houston Limited-Edition Poster (Craig Drake).

Sporting memorabilia from former pro ballers in the NBA and NFL included Dr. Julius Erving's autographed basketball and Converse Sneakers, Magic Johnson's signed basketball, Harvey Lee Armstrong and Marcus Allen's signed NFL football, and Marcus Allen's signed NFL football.

Other music and entertainment packages included Bruce Springsteen's signed Fender Telecaster Electric Guitar, Narada Michael Walden's signed drumsticks, Ricky Minor's Each One, Teach One, a two-hour, one-on-one Zoom mentoring session on music production; and the Society of Voice Arts and Science package, "So You Wanna Be a Voiceover Actor" by Joan Baker and Rudy Gaskins; Whitney Houston's exclusive and commemorative music plaques from Sony Music South Africa and Sony Music Entertainment's exclusive RIAA plaque with more than 220 million records sold worldwide; the Best of Broadway packages including four Tony Award-winning and nominated musicals, The Lion King, The Outsiders, MJ: The Musical, and The Notebook; a pair of tickets to see Chicago and Earth, Wind & Fire's Heart and Soul Tour, along with a meet-and-greet with Earth, Wind & Fire; a pair of tickets to attend Smokey Robinson's VIP concert; Whitney Houston Music Gift Basket, presented by Perryscope Productions; Putumayo World Music CD Collection;



Pat and Gary Houston at The Whitney E. Houston Legacy Foundation Gala

Sony Music Entertainment Artists Gift Basket; Sony Music Entertainment's Sony HT-A7000 Soundbar; Stax Records: The Limited Edition boxset; and Aretha Cool: The Intimate Portraits book (The Limited Edition).

The lifestyle packages included The Art of Cake, designed by Dr. Lincoln Alexander, who specifically designed a cake to celebrate and commemorate Whitney Houston's 61st birthday and he also provided gift boxes to talent, Morningbirds Restaurant's gourmet five-course dinner for two, A Taste of South Africa package with special curated items, and a Naturopathica Gift basket.

The Whitney E. Houston Legacy Foundation, we would like to give a special thank you to the auction and gifting sponsors for their generous support and dedication including Bermuda Tourism Authority, Bespoke Theatricals, Bruce Springsteen, Concord/Stax, Craig Drake, Debra Martin Chase, Disney Theatrical Group, Earth Wind & Fire/Chicago/Tony Bulluck, Ernest Watson, Flour House Cakes & Co., House of Knipschildt Artisan Chocolates, Keffa Coffee, KYVAN Foods, Marc Bouwer, MARION P Home Collection, Matthew Jordan Smith, Morningbirds Restaurant, Narada Michael Walden, Naturopathica, Perryscope Productions, Perspectives Mosaic Gallery, Primary Wave Music, Putmayo World Music, Rickey Minor, Smokey Robinson, Sony Music Entertainment, Sony Music South Africa, Shaped by Houston, Stephen Goulbourne, Steven Ciccone, The Estate of Whitney E. Houston, The Society of Voices Arts and Sciences, Theater Matters, Tommy Lane, U.S. Open/Michael Fiur Productions, and WEN® By Chaz Dean.

In 2020, The Estate of Whitney E. Houston formed The Whitney E. Houston Legacy Foundation to continue the mission and important work by the late global superstar, whose lifelong commitment to today's youth through program initiatives and services that reflect the values and needs of our young people. The Foundation also serves as a source of empowerment to help rebuild, repair, and restore the self-esteem of our youth and assist them in living productive lives.

Whitney Houston's global charitable work was initially established in 1989 as the Whitney Houston Foundation for Children, the organization provided much-needed resources to homeless children, build inner city parks and playgrounds, and provided college scholarships. Known for its world-renowned charitable initiatives and partnerships, the Foundation partnered with the Children's Defense Fund, Childhood Diabetes, The Rain Forest Foundation, Hale House, Special Olympics, United Negro College Fund, St. Jude Children's Research, and Whitney's historic South Africa concerts, which a portion of the proceeds benefited local South African children's charities.

In 1997, Houston's elementary school was renamed The Whitney E. Houston Academy for Performing & Creative Arts. Originally opened in 1873, the Franklin School, is now the oldest building in the East Orange, New Jersey school district.

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