

2017 RDA GALA **LAUNCH**
 CELEBRATING **LINDA SYLVAN**

More than 850 guests came together on Saturday, November 11, at the Hilton Americas to attend Launch, the thirty-first annual Rice Design Alliance gala. Honoring Linda Sylvan, retired Executive Director of the Rice Design Alliance, the evening raised critical support for the Rice Design Alliance's 2018 educational programs and publications, celebrated 45 years as the community engagement program of Rice Architecture, and introduced our organization's new Executive Director, Maria Nicanor.

Co-chaired by Mikki Hebl and David Harvey and Lynn and Ty Kelly, Launch brought together professionals in the architecture, engineering, construction, and design industries; as well as Rice alumni, developers, artists, philanthropists, and others. A special segment of the crowd included many Rice Design Alliance Hometown Tour participants, who have traveled with Linda from San Antonio to Japan. Underwriters of Launch included the following: Cardno; DPR Construction and Stantec; D.E. Harvey Builders; Louisa Stude Sarofim; and Walter P Moore.

Guests arrived ready to bid on more than 100 auction items, which included trips to New Orleans, Hawaii, and Mexico; furniture and jewelry, local architecture experiences, wine, and even a kid's ride-on Tesla. The wonderful auction was chaired by Barbara Amelio and Laurie Scott.

The environment and graphics designed by Randall Walker, Craig Minor, and Cheryl Beckett added to the fun as huge balloons held up paper airplanes and cutouts of Linda decorated each centerpiece. Bright florals by Bergner and Johnson Design added to the energy and beauty of the environment. Entertainment by Yvonne Washington and the Mix kept the crowd dancing until midnight.

A program, presided over by current Rice Design Alliance President Kristi Grizzle, honored Linda's history with the Rice Design Alliance, through a video that told about her many accomplishments at the organization. The video featured comments by Rice Architecture Professor Carlos Jiménez, Rice Design Alliance President-Elect Juliè Gauthier, and former Rice Design Alliance Board members Christof Spieler and Nicola Springer. Houston City Council member David Robinson presented Linda with a city proclamation of November 11 as Linda Sylvan Day.

The program was capped with the introduction by Dean Sarah Whiting of Maria Nicanor, the incoming Executive Director of the Rice Design Alliance. Also in attendance was Angie Chen, who during Maria's transition to Houston is expertly serving as interim director. Launch was the perfect place and time to welcome her to Houston.

The Rice Design Alliance provides community engagement for Rice Architecture and Rice University, offering lectures, tours, educational events, and publications that promote a vigorous discussion about the built environment in Houston. Gala proceeds provide operating support for RDA's programs and publications. Since 1989, the RDA gala has recognized individuals and institutions that have made exceptional contributions to architecture and design in Houston and in Texas, including Gerald D. Hines, Raymond Brochstein, Bobby and Phoebe Tudor, Stephen Klineberg, Uptown Houston, and Ric Campo.



1. Ty and Lynn Kelly
 2. Phoebe and Bobby Tudor
 3. Danny and Mayra Gaitan
 4. Kristi Grizzle
 5. LeMel Humes and Suzanne Deal Booth
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7. Deborah Brochstein, Sarah Whiting and Maria Nicanor
 8. Larry and Charlotte Whaley
 9. David Harvey and Mikki Hebl
 10. Laurie and Steve Mechler
 11. Dilip and Sucheta Choudhuri

12. Laurie Scott and Barbara Amelio
 13. David Robinson and Linda Sylvan
 14. Phil and Cheryl Beckett
 15. Juliè Gauthier and Dallas Felder
 16. Craig and Suzy Minor
 17. Viviana Geron, Mariel Geron and Marie Lynn Miranda

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