



## Stockton Benefit Gala Raises Over \$440,000

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**Atlantic City** – Over 720 guests helped raise more than \$440,000 at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Stockton College Scholarship Benefit Gala held Saturday, April 27 at Revel.

The Gala proceeds are part of the Stockton College Foundation's fund-raising efforts aimed at reaching an additional \$2 million goal for scholarships.

"Tonight, I am pleased to tell you that we have raised \$950,000 towards our \$2 million Let's Do More! scholarship goal," President Herman J. Saatkamp told the Gala guests. "And the total comprehensive campaign has raised in excess of \$22 million."

The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey's Benefit Gala itself has raised \$5 million for scholarships in the past 10 years. All the proceeds from the Gala support scholarships.

The college's first comprehensive fund-raising campaign reached its initial goal of \$20 million, targeted in June 2014, in 2012. That inspired President Saatkamp to issue a challenge at last year's Gala: "Let's do more."

And so the Stockton charitable community did.

As of Saturday night, preliminary figures show a total of \$22 million raised by the comprehensive campaign, with \$8.4 million of that for scholarships. Funds raised in the comprehensive campaign also support academic programs, student programs and facilities.

"With 14 months remaining in the campaign, I am confident that with your help and the help of many others we can meet, even exceed our stretch goals," President Saatkamp said. "Thank you for all you do for Stockton and our students."

Some 20 scholarship recipients took part in the program Saturday, held for the first time at Revel. "They are giving back and showing appreciation for the scholarships they received," said President Saatkamp.

Emily Heerema, a candidate for a Master's of Science in Occupational Therapy, was among several recipients whose stories were highlighted in a video about how proceeds from the Gala helped fund their education. Heerema credited donors with helping her to achieve her goals.

"The day I started graduate school, my mother (Patricia Heerema) was diagnosed with breast cancer," Heerema said. "Throughout all this she has inspired me to keep going. She's been fighting and is now recovered. Because of the scholarship donors, I am able to continue with graduate school and to become an occupational therapist."

Heerema, who comes from Bricktown, Ocean County, brought her mother to the Gala.

President Saatkamp pointed out Heerema, along with Irvin Moreno Rodriguez and Robert Cerner, who told their stories in the video.

"The students you just saw are an impressive representation of the scholarship recipients you are helping to support by joining us tonight," President Saatkamp said. "They are here to thank you personally, and we would like to acknowledge them for their fine work."

Dr. Philip Ellmore, Stockton's chief development officer and executive director of the College Foundation, thanked guests for making a difference.

"We are especially grateful to Stockton Foundation Chair Tony Coppola and tonight's Gala Co-Chairs John Schultz and Gary Hill," Ellmore said. "I would also like to thank our hosts, Revel and our honorary Chair, Dirk Schavemaker, senior vice president of resort operations at Revel."

Revel provided a surprise entertainer: rocker Eddie Money. The singer-songwriter and saxophonist is known for hits including "Take Me Home Tonight" and "Two Tickets to Paradise," which recently landed him a Geico commercial. Money performed an acoustic set, leading off with his hit, "Baby Hold On to Me."

Guests also enjoyed music and dancing to "Don't Call Me Francis," a popular Philadelphia-South Jersey dance band for the past 20 years, and Stockton's own Faculty Band.

During the silent auction, chaired by Lisa Johnson, of Lisa Johnson Communications, guests enjoyed cocktails, wine and hors d'oeuvres.

Rick Dovey, a 1975 Stockton graduate, president of the Atlantic County Utilities Authority and member of the Foundation board, remembered the college's early days.

“Back then, the president’s office was in a log cabin. Stockton has come a long way,” he said.

“It’s exciting to see the whole Atlantic County charitable community come together to support Stockton,” said his wife, Mary Dovey, a teacher in Egg Harbor City schools.

Johanna Johnson, secretary of the College Foundation and the coordinator of curriculum for the Atlantic County Institute of Technology, said, “I’ve been very happy with the progressiveness of Stockton. It leaves a very large footprint in the region and I’m very glad that it does. A lot of my teachers are Stockton graduates and our students benefit.”

In addition to the scholarship recipient volunteers, 30 students from the Hospitality and Tourism Management program assisted Gala organizers, getting hands-on experience in their chosen field of study.

Top sponsors for the event include Revel Entertainment, Avalon Carpet, Tile and Flooring, IBEW Local 351, The Press of Atlantic City, Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa, Burris Construction Company, Chartwells, Cooper Levenson, Credit Suisse Securities, Follett Higher Education Group, Horizon Eye Care, NBC 40, Dr. Jo Frances Stow, Atlantic County Utilities Authority (ACUA), AtlantiCare, Azeez Foundation, Caesars Entertainment, Cape Resorts Group, Ciccone, Gotthold & Koseff CPAs, Tony and Fran Coppola, DLA Piper and the Honorable William L. Gormley, Fox Rothschild LLP, Just Four Wheels, H. Paxson & Michelle Keates, Kramer Beverage Company, Liberty Mutual, Marathon Engineering & Environmental Services, Inc., Metropolitan Business & Citizens Association (MBCA), Nelbud Services Group, Inc., Dean and Zoe Pappas, Pennoni Associates, Inc., Pepsi Beverage Company, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, Quantum Capital Management, L.L.C, Ravenswood Winery, Resorts Casino Hotel, Shore Medical Center, SOSH Architects, South Jersey Industries, Steve & Cookie’s By the Bay, Stockton Seaview Hotel & Golf Club, Tropicana Casino and Resort, Trump Entertainment Resorts, U.A. Local Union 322 and the Yoh Foundation.

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