



## **Record-Setting *Romance of the Mission* Gala Honored Portolá Riders and Featured Spectacular Concert by Performer David Burnham**

**San Juan Capistrano, Calif. (September 15, 2014)** – Mission Preservation

Foundation's *Romance of the Mission* benefit gala was attended by a record 480 guests and set another record with net proceeds at an estimated \$260,000. Highlights included a stunning concert by Broadway star David Burnham in the ruins of the Great Stone Church and a ceremony honoring El Viaje de Portolá for their extensive support of Mission Preservation efforts. All proceeds will further the preservation of historic Mission San Juan Capistrano including phase two of the historic Sala building conservation.

After social hour in the Mission's beautiful front gardens, Mission San Juan Capistrano Executive Director Mechelle Lawrence Adams was joined by Mission Preservation Board President George O'Connell to welcome guests and recognize El Viaje de Portolá represented by El Presidente Tony Gregory.

During her opening remarks Lawrence Adams said, "Tonight we gather to take part in an evening of elegance and purpose of raising awareness and funds to protect and preserve this California landmark. We celebrate 11 years since our first concert in the ruins of the Great Stone Church. Back then hosting an event like this evening was a dream and a risk and today it is a tradition."

Burnham's concert was both moving and energetic featuring a variety of Broadway hits and classics including a moving rendition an event tradition, *When the Swallows Come Back to Capistrano*.

While leaving the concert, attendees experienced a 237-year bell ringing tradition by official Mission bell ringer Nathan Banda. Guests then walked through the historic

Resurgam displaying the Forster's family saddle before entering Mission San Juan's Main Courtyard exquisitely set for a gourmet plated four-course candlelight dinner masterfully prepared and served by The Ritz-Carlton, Laguna Niguel with wine pairings by Fetzer Vineyards.

Gala committee members were recognized by Don Dorkowski while George O'Connell offered a toast to all past benefit gala honorees. Mission Board Preservation Foundation members Madeline Swinden and Steven Szenasi drew the opportunity drawing winners for a Ritz-Carlton, Laguna Niguel get-a-way, Montana Sporting Club experience and an 18 kt white gold bracelet donated by Roberto Coin Boutique, Fashion Island. Reverend Monsignor J. Michael McKiernan led the invocation prior to dinner.

Other supporters and sponsors included Microsemi, O'Connell Family Foundation, EJ Tracy, The Cvengros Family, Joan Irvine Smith & Athalie R. Clarke Foundation, The Sukut Family Foundation, the Schreiber Family and Tracy Industries, Inc.

Candlelit tables featured floral arrangements by Floral Occasions of San Juan Capistrano and each guest received a set of embossed leather coasters.

For more information about the benefit gala or Mission Preservation Foundation, contact Barb Beier at 949.234.1323 or visit [www.missionsjc.com](http://www.missionsjc.com).

### **About Mission San Juan Capistrano**

Known as the "Jewel of the Missions," Mission San Juan Capistrano is a historic landmark and museum that boasts of quality permanent exhibits featuring original artifacts as well as traveling and temporary exhibits on a wide variety of topics.

The Mission is also Orange County's only Mission and is a site of ongoing faith, education, preservation, and cultural event programming. The site includes such original buildings as the Serra Chapel, Great Stone Church, and the original padres' quarters of the South Wing.

The Mission was founded on November 1, 1776 by Padre Junipero Serra as the seventh in the chain of the twenty-one California missions established by Spain. Over 50,000 fourth grade students visit the Mission as part of their field trip learning about Early California history.

Mission San Juan Capistrano is owned by the Diocese of Orange. Its fundraising entity, the Mission Preservation Foundation, is comprised of business and community leaders committed to ensuring the long term preservation and viability of Orange County's only Mission. The Mission receives no funding from either the Church or the State of California and must charge admission funds as a means of providing continued public access.

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