

Mariah Carey, Jeffrey Katzenberg Honor Brett Ratner at Silver Circle Gala



Brett Ratner and Mariah Carey at the Silver Circle Gala 2016

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Philip David Morton

Screenwriter, Journalist, Producer

Monday Evening the Beverly Hilton Hotel's grand ballroom was the venue for the Silver Circle Gala, benefitting the famous free Venice Family Clinic which has been in operation since 1947 and serves over 24,000 needy families, children and teens every year.

This year the clinic honored Producer and Director Brett Ratner, known for the Rush Hour films, X Men Last Stand and Tower Heist, and presented him with the Humanitarian Award, following in the footsteps of previous recipients and Hollywood luminaries including CBS President Les Moonves and filmmaker Judd Apatow. Mariah Carey, Anthony Michael Hall, Claire Fiorlani, Brian Grazer as well as Warner Brothers CEO Kevin Tsujihara and Sue Kroll, President of Warner Brothers worldwide distribution were in attendance and Larry King was the master of ceremonies.

Supported generously by the

philanthropy of Los Angeles as well as the Hollywood establishment, the star-studded event felt at home in the same ballroom that the Golden Globes had occupied only a few weeks ago. Blind auction bidding and other donations during the evening raised \$1.55 million dollars for the clinic that night.

CEO of Dreamworks Jeff Katzenberg took the stage to present the award to Ratner in a speech showing his admiration and friendship while poking fun. "Brett is renowned for many things," said Katzenberg. "His attention span is not one, so hang in there Brett and I'll try to make this quick," After the laughter died down Katzenberg extolled Ratner's virtues.

I talked to 12 of his closest friends, and the same words came back to describe him: generous, charitable, always ready to give his time, or himself. With Brett you can always find a house full of people, probably because being around him just makes you happy. And he's most amazing with his family. His grandmother still lives with him.

Venice Family Clinic CEO, Elizabeth Bensen Forer, spoke of how the clinic started with two doctors in a borrowed dental clinic 45 years ago. One of those doctors, Dr. Meyer Davidson, was there that night and received a round of applause. Today they have 10 clinics that provide health, dental, eye and abuse counseling serving the poor, the unemployed and uninsured. She reminded the packed ballroom that Los Angeles has more homeless people than anywhere else in the county.

She extolled the leadership of William Flumenbaum of The Capital Group Companies, the second winner of the night, with the Irma Colen Leadership Award for his work and involvement with the clinic. Flumenbaum,



Brett Ratner and William Flumenbaum

who's worked with the clinic for 20 years, thanked them for the honor, and "20 years of work, marked by real growth. My mother was a volunteer as long as I can remember, and I'm grateful for this award."

When Brett Ratner accepted his award, he thanked Katzenberg for his mentorship in Hollywood. He kept the moment light mentioning how he himself had been one of the producers of the Revenant, and could now reveal the truth that Katzenberg was actually the one in the bear suit for the famous attack on Leonardo DeCaprio.

But his reflections quickly turned serious, mentioning how Katzenberg always talked about his own Mentor Kirk Douglas. And how Douglas always talked about giving back and how meaningful that had been to him.

I grew up in one small house and my roommate was my great grandmother. Until I was 13. And I had to help dress her in her girdle every day, where she also kept her cash. We lived with my grandparents as well. So when I moved to Hollywood, and I was on my own, I felt that something was missing, and I realized that it was my family. And I brought them to live with me. But my dad hadn't been with us. And I later found out he was homeless and didn't have a place like this clinic. So working with them, is 'bashert', which is Yiddish for 'meant to be.' My great grandmother said everything in life is 'bashert'. It's a word used about life and how things work out.

Ratner also spoke about his grandfather, and how he inspired him.

I go to the doctor anytime I feel sick, but that's because I'm a hypochondriac. But when I saw the clinic, and the work they do, it made me think of my grandfather who I saw giving back to the veteran's administration for so many years. So tonight I want to dedicate this award to Dr. Mario Presman, my grandfather.

Before closing, Ratner brought Maria Carey up on stage with him. She was not there to sing, as she was on ordered vocal rest preparing for an upcoming show in Las Vegas, but Ratner auctioned off VIP tickets to that Vegas Show along with backstage passes, and transportation on a private jet. As Mariah laughed and encouraged him, that bid alone went for \$20,000.

The evening culminated in an astonishing performance by Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons, who at 81 is still in excellent voice and rocked the ballroom with a string of his hits across the decades while the audience cheered in delight.

The event was presented by UCLA Health and the UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine.



Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons