



Auction Results

RAISING FUNDS BY RAISING HANDS®



By Candace Jordan

The **Friends of Conservation Ball** really upped the ante at this year's beautiful gala, held in the magnificent Winter Garden of the Harold Washington Library on Friday, October 12th. **Reute Butler** (FOC President and Ball Chairman), resplendent in a red gown, was smiling from ear to ear for the entire evening where more than 300 black-tie clad guests were on hand to support this worthwhile charity that is changing lives the world over.

Chicago Dowel Company's handsome **Paul Iacono** was entranced when he attended his first event for the FOC last year. And, believe me, this is one guy you want to impress. His list of formidable friends and his philanthropic bent helped fill the room to bursting and Reute was so thrilled to have him onboard as a co-chair. Established in 1982, the FOC helps prevent wildlife and habitat degradation in the **Masai Mara**, one of the most ecologically important regions of the world. Their longtime royal patron, **HRH The Prince of Wales**, sent a moving letter that was included in the Tribute Book (another Iacono touch) for the event: "It gives me enormous pleasure to offer my congratulations to the FOC on this the 30th anniversary of your founding. Since your early interventions to help save black rhinos from extinction in the Masai Mara, threats to our precious wildlife have increased inexorably, everywhere, too often outstripping the pace of conservation action. Yet time and again you have demonstrated that it is possible for dedicated people with clear vision to make a difference, stemming the loss of wildlife and critical habitat and through landmark projects, reversing the declines of some acutely endangered species. As your Patron now for more years than I care to

remember, I can only pay tribute to the role played by the FOC in one of the greatest causes imaginable – preventing the destruction of the natural world.” Amen to that, Prince Charles!

The evening began with a VIP meet-and-greet with former “*Wild Kingdom*” host, the fabulous and much-loved **Jim Fowler**, who is another long-time supporter and FOC director. In addition to his lovely wife, Jim brought along some of his furry, feathered and scaly friends: There were adorable leopard cubs, an 8-foot-long python that Reute has known since it was tiny, several joeys and more. CNN’s glamorous **Zoraida Sambolin** returned to emcee this lovefest that began with Reute and her mother, **Jorie Butler Kent** (FOC Founder and International Chairman), onstage describing what this organization means to them. There wasn’t a dry eye in the house when Reute hugged her elegant mother and said, “You are an inspiration” following a moving video presentation produced by **Manuela Hung**.

Everyone who attended was happy to help in some way: Caterer **George Jewell** donated a private dinner during the live auction portion, **Paul Iacono** bought a great trip (courtesy of **Abercrombie & Kent**, who had donated a lot of exclusive, eye-popping travel packages) and auctioneer **David Goodman – one of the best in the business – kept the paddles in the air as he helped raise money for this wonderful cause.** A *Heads or Tails Game* had glam guest **Mamie Walton** in the running almost to the very end for an iPad. It was a perfectly produced event from beginning to end and we were so thrilled to be there.

One of my favorite parts of this event is watching the delighted smiles on the faces of guests as they took advantage of the opportunity to handle these wild, adorable creatures, all captured on film by fabulous photographer/friend **Mila Samokhina**. FOC 2012 Co-Chairmen (besides Paul) included **Kip Helverson, Rachael Phillippe, Holly Rothschild, Joan Wegner** and **Wendy Wood-Prince**; **Michael Butler, John and Jutta Maue-Kay, Geoffrey J.W. Kent** and **Kay** and **Fred Krehbiel** were honorary co-chairmen and **Tara** and **Charles Wegner** were also committee co-chairmen and benefactors. As we all know, it takes a village to put on an event this size so special thanks to **Langham Hotels** (especially you, **Rebecca Werner!**), **Anantara Resorts, Kent Wine Cellar & Trust, Leela Palace Hotels, Patagonia Sur, Sanctuary’s Gorilla Forest Camp, Sea Cloud Cruises, Suenos, The Balmoral Hotel, The Royal Scotsman** and **W Santiago**

among countless others who donated time, services or auction items. Your contributions helped so many!

If you would like to learn more about the amazing work of the FOC or would like to donate, please visit www.friendsofconservation.org. (Fab fotos, of course, by **Mila Samokhina**. View more [here!](#))



Connie Dickey, Cindy Burns and friend



Kenny Williams and Zoraïda Sambolin



Azeeza Khan and friend



With Wine Channel TV's Jess Altieri



Rob LoPrete and David Germaine



Hazel and Warren Barr



Sean Eshagy and Mamie Walton



Photo by Mike Smedley
FRIENDS OF CONSERVATION
Elizabeth Brodsky, Reute & friends with a Burmese python