



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**New York City Mission Society Honors Legendary Actress  
and Singer Diahann Carroll, entrepreneur Don Peebles, at  
Annual “Champions for Children” Benefit**

**– Jean Shafiroff and Katrina Peebles Serve as 2017 Gala Co-Chairs; Kathy Sledge  
of Sister Sledge among performers; Special Awards to Lifetime Members of  
Board of Directors –**



*Pictured left to right: Diahann Carroll, Jean Shafiroff, Katrina Peebles, Don Peebles and Elsie McCabe Thompson.  
(Photo Credit: Annie Watt)*

**New York, N.Y.** – On Wednesday, April 5, 2017, more than 340 people attended the New York City Mission Society’s annual Champions for Children Gala, raising a half million dollars to help youth and families in the city’s most underserved communities break the cycle of poverty and achieve success.

Co-chaired by Jean Shafiroff and Katrina Peebles, the benefit honored legendary actress and

singer Diahann Carroll and entrepreneur Don Peebles, as well as recognized lifetime members of the Mission Society's Board of Directors.

"This was such an unbelievable evening, our most exciting Champions for Children event on record," said Mission Society President Elsie McCabe Thompson. "We were privileged to have such distinguished and legendary honorees, all committed to improving the lives of the children, young adults and families who we serve."

The Gala, held at the Mandarin Oriental in Columbus Circle, featured dinner, music, and dancing. WABC News Anchor Bill Ritter, a longtime supporter of the Mission Society, emceed the event. Performing were Kathy Sledge, the legendary voice of Sister Sledge; acclaimed singer Alex Donner and his Orchestra, and students enrolled in the Mission Society's free afterschool music education program, GRIOT.

The Mission Society recognized the ongoing and vital support of lifetime members of its Board of Directors: actress and philanthropist Dina Merrill Hartley, whose family has supported the Mission Society for four generations, and Lloyd W. Brown, II.

Among the notable guests at the event were the legendary Cicely Tyson, Gayle King, former New York City Mayor David Dinkins, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr., and designer B Michael.

In addition to Gala Co-Chairs Jean Shafiroff and Katrina Peebles, this year's Gala Committee includes Tommie Pegues (Gala Vice Chair), Peggy and John Bader, and Leah and Stanley Rumbough. Benefit Committee Members are: Alston & Bird, LLP, American Securities Foundation, Flo Anthony, Elaine Bernanke Appelle, Kim Bingham, Sophia Bishop, Jerry Bonura, Geoffrey Bradfield, Henry Buhl, Victor de Souza, Lee Fryd, Penny Grant, Jo'Vion (J.D.) Greer, Shannon Hales, Michelle Herbert, Missy Kilroy & Jay Moorhead, Barbara and Francis Kairson, Jr., Margo Langenberg, Brian Monroe, Riki Kane Larimer, Dustin Lujan, Lauren & James Peterson, Kim Renk & Greg Dyer, Natalie S. Ross, Helen Shelton, and Brooke and Derek Steinhiser.

The Mission Society presented the legendary Diahann Carroll with its Champions for Children Award. Born in Harlem, Ms. Carroll is an award-winning and trailblazing actress, successful entrepreneur, and devoted humanitarian. One of America's major performing talents, she has starred on stage, screen, and television. In addition to winning Tony and Golden Globe awards, Ms. Carroll has been nominated for Emmys, Grammys, and an Oscar over her long and prestigious career. She also has devoted considerable time to support causes that are important to her. She served as an ambassador and national spokesperson for Lifetime Television's breast cancer awareness campaign, and has been recognized for raising awareness about HIV and AIDS.

Ms. Carroll was the first black actress in television history to star in her own series, *Julia*, on NBC, which soared to the top of the Nielsen ratings and received an Emmy nomination. Her television credits include *Dynasty*, *A Different World*, *Soul Food*, *Strong Medicine*, and *Whoopi*. Her recent appearances include *White Collar* on the USA Network and a role in the film *Peeples*.

Equally stunning on stage, Ms. Carroll has received acclaim for her performances in *Sunset Boulevard*, *Bubbling Brown Sugar*, and *House of Flowers*, and won a Tony Award for her performance in Richard Rodgers' *No Strings*. Her film work includes *Claudine*, *Carmen Jones*,

*Paris Blues, Porgy & Bess, Hurry Sundown, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, and Eve's Bayou.* In 2010, she filmed her stage show, "The Lady-The Music-The Legend" for PBS TV, and her one-woman show at Feinstein's regularly sold out.

Recognized as one of the most successful entrepreneurs in the nation, R. Donahue (Don) Peebles is Founder, Chairman, and CEO of The Peebles Corporation, one of the country's few national privately held real estate investment and development companies with portfolio of projects in New York, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Boston, and Miami Beach. Mr. Peebles also is a top-selling author of *The Peebles Principles* and *The Peebles Path to Real Estate Wealth*. He a regular guest on CNN, CNBC, and FOX, as well as a highly sought-after speaker.

Mr. Peebles is an avid supporter of mentoring to expose youth to the value of entrepreneurship. He serves as Chairman of the Board of the Congressional Black Caucus, is on the Board of Directors of the YMCA of Greater New York, is a member of Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos A. Giménez's Business Roundtable, was a two-time former member of President Barack Obama's National Finance Committee, and former Chairman of the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau.

#### **About the New York City Mission Society**

The New York City Mission Society has been on the frontlines of the war on poverty for more than 200 years. Today, our progressive portfolio of educational, workforce development, cultural enrichment, and community-building programs make a positive, long-term impact on the City's most underserved communities by promoting academic achievement, and providing career opportunities and cultural enrichment. Each year, we serve more than 12,000 children and families throughout New York City with our programs, supportive services, and community events. Learn more at <http://www.nycmissionsociety.org>.

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