

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



**7th ANNUAL T.J. MARTELL FOUNDATION NASHVILLE
HONORS GALA HOSTED BY CHARLES ESTEN CELEBRATES
AMAZING LEADERS**

Star-studded event honored: Steve and Judy Turner, Dr. Jeffrey Balser, Bill & Billy Ray Hearn, Ken Levitan and Becca Stevens

Unique and unforgettable performances by Vince Gill, Matthew West, Lady Antebellum, Emmylou Harris, Rodney Crowell and Alison Krauss featuring Marcus and Levi Hummon

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (March 31, 2015) -- The T.J. Martell Foundation for Leukemia, Cancer and AIDS Research honored **Steve and Judy Turner with The Spirit of Nashville Award; Dr. Jeffrey Balser, Medical Research Advancement Award; Bill and Billy Ray Hearn, Frances Preston Lifetime Music Industry Achievement Award; Ken Levitan, Tony Martell Outstanding Entertainment Achievement Award and Becca Stevens, Lifetime Humanitarian Award** last night at the 7th Annual Nashville Honors Gala, held at the Omni Hotel in downtown. The gala raised nearly \$500,000 and has raised close to 3 million dollars since its inception in 2009. Governor Bill Haslam and First Lady Crissy Haslam and Nashville Mayor Karl Dean joined the sold-out event to honor these individuals whom have made indelible marks on the community.

Vince Gill kicked off the night with a performance and presented the Turner's the "Spirit of Nashville Award." Matthew West honored Billy Ray and Bill Hearn with a performance for their "Frances Preston Lifetime Music Industry Achievement Award," and the award was presented by music industry legend Jimmy Bowen. Vanderbilt's Dr. Jeffrey Balser received the "Medical Achievement Award" with a performance by Lady Antebellum and Rascal Flatts' Joe Don Rooney and Jay DeMarcus presented him with this honor.

After a brief and very successful live auction hosted by Storme Warren, Emmylou Harris and Rodney Crowell took the stage in honor of her longtime manager and friend Ken Levitan. Irving Azoff was scheduled to present the "Tony Martell Outstanding Entertainment Achievement Award" to his friend, but was absent due to travel complication. Steve Buchanan in turn, presented.

Rounding out the unforgettable evening of performances and honors was Alison Krauss featuring Marcus and Levi Hummon, husband and son of the "Lifetime Humanitarian Award" honoree Rev. Becca Stevens. First Lady Crissy Haslam presented Stevens her award.

Other notable attendees included Amy Grant, Peter Frampton, John Hiatt, Chris Young, former Tennessee Titan Keith Bullock and numerous Nashville and Tennessee politicians and philanthropic trailblazers.

T.J. Martell's Tinti Moffat, Exec Director, southern region, says, "Tonight was a night to remember. The honors, the special performances and the humbling speeches are what make this night of fundraising for T.J. Martell so profound and exciting. We live in a community that thrives on lifting each other up and tonight was very evident that the respect runs deep in Nashville. Together, we have helped provide funds to aid in much needed research."

The memorable and inspiring event was produced by High Five Productions in conjunction with Morris Light & Sound, MOO-TV and Premiere Global Productions.

DOWNLOAD IMAGES OF THE EVENING HERE:

http://assignments.gettyimages.com/mm/nicePath/gyipa_public?nav=pr270262417

About the T.J. Martell Foundation:

The T.J. Martell Foundation is the music industry's largest foundation that funds innovative medical research focused on finding cures for leukemia, cancer and AIDS. Music industry executive Tony Martell and his colleagues, in loving memory of his son, T.J., who died of leukemia, founded the T.J. Martell Foundation in 1975. The Foundation has provided more than \$270 million for research at top hospitals in the United States. The Foundation sources and supports early-stage research projects aimed at developing more effective clinical treatments for patients which otherwise might not be funded. In Nashville, the T.J. Martell Foundation funds the Frances Williams Preston laboratories at the Vanderbilt- Ingram Cancer Center. For additional information, visit www.TJMartell.org.

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