

Harry Ransom Center Celebrates its 60th Anniversary

By Molly Kendrick

The World of Wonders Gala marked the 60th anniversary of the Harry Ransom Center. Famous names — including actress Kate O’Toole, journalist Sally Quinn, and writer Matthew Weiner — spoke at the gala about why they entrusted the Ransom Center with their collections.

Before dinner, guests browsed the collection and its recent additions. Mannequins dressed in Mad Men costumes radiated three-martini lunch authenticity. Shuffling through the gallery, guests saw pieces from iconic performances, including the hat that Scarlet O’Hara wore as part of her famous curtain ensemble, and a sword that Peter O’Toole brandished during his landmark role in Hamlet.

Actress and University of Texas professor Franchelle Stewart Dorn served as the Master of Ceremonies. She said of the Ransom Collection, “Where else could Scarlett O’Hara and Don Draper meet?”

Sally Quinn and Matthew Weiner served as the evening’s chairs. Sally Quinn is the wife of the late Washington Post editor Ben Bradlee. Quinn donated Bradlee’s personal papers, while Weiner contributed his Mad Men collection.

Why should collections like this matter to the public? According to Weiner, “You have to make sure people take care of culture.” The Ransom Center has no shortage of people who care deeply for the culture they have on display. Dawn Black serves on the Ransom Center Advisory Council, and says of the collection, “There is not a public university in the world that has a collection like what you’ll find at the Ransom Center.”

During cocktail hour, guests placed bids on original artwork, a Tribeca Film Festival package, and an overnight stay and wine tasting at Booth Bella Oaks Vineyard. When it was time for dinner, swishing gowns followed a marching band down



Dusty Black, Taylor Russell, Jason Masterson, Dawn Black, Scoot McNairy, Regan Smith, Michael Black, Matt Beahm (on side), Ford Black (crouching)

a path from the Ransom Center to a spacious tent next to the Tower.

During dinner, Kate O’Toole discussed the struggle of deciding how to share her father’s archive with the world, and how important it is to give to a trusted collector. She answered the question, “Why here? Why Texas?” After her father died, Kate had the overwhelming task of going through her father’s “stuff.” Her friend Eva Griffith told her she wasn’t handling mere “stuff,” but an archive of one of the 21st century’s greatest actors. Griffith is a theater historian who received a fellowship from the Ransom Center, and the daughter of Peter O’Toole’s best friend. She offered “unimpeachable bonafides for the Harry Ransom Center.”

Sally Quinn spoke to the crowd about her late husband’s integrity, and pursuit of the unvarnished truth. “These are frightening and dangerous times for those in the business of journalism. And we have the Ransom Center to thank for being

a repository of my husband’s papers, and so many others, which will serve as a constant reminder to everyone of how important these values are.” Steven Spielberg is making a movie about her husband and the Pentagon Papers, which will

generate more questions about Bradlee’s work. When it does, the Ransom Center will be there to provide answers.



Luke Borders, Justin and Samantha Halloran, Amanda Rivera, Taylor and Shawn Bose



Franchelle Stewart Dorn



Kate O’Toole

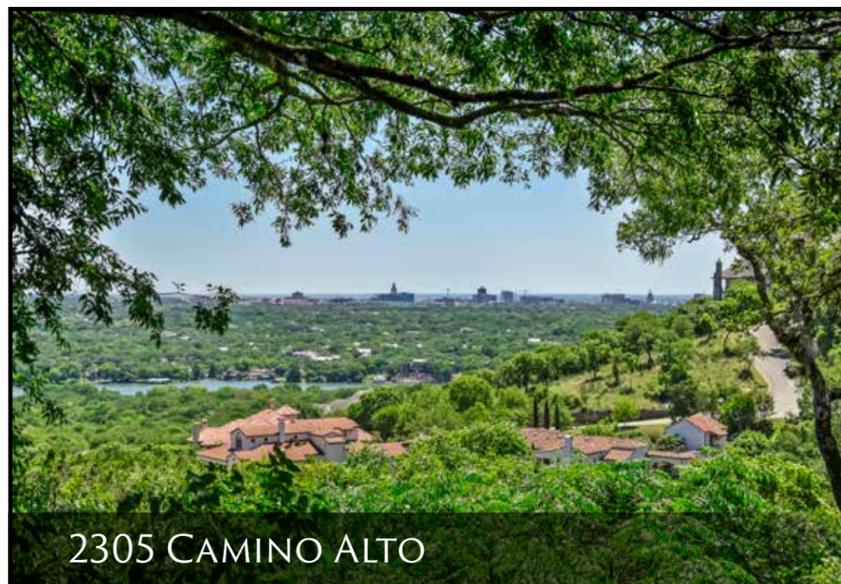


Billy Collins, Nancy Scanlan, Rose Steyron, John Watson

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Kifany and Matt Beahm



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