

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hetrick-Martin's Multi-Level Celebration Draws Kiki Community's Best

Star-Studded Emery Awards Ball Raises Nearly \$1M for the LGBTQIA+ Youth Organization

New York, NY, November 18, 2022 – Hetrick-Martin Institute (HMI) held its annual fundraiser, the Emery Awards Ball on Wednesday night at Terminal 5 in New York City. This year's awards ceremony honored New York Governor Kathy Hochul, television personality, actress and author, Ts Madison, and dancer, choreographer, and former HMI youth member, Leiomy Maldonado of HBOMax's *Legendary*. Leiomy was unable to be there in person, so the award was accepted on her behalf by Jonovia Chase, a well-known and respected member of the ballroom community, who also was one of the event's lead organizers and is a former youth member as well.

HMI named Nike, Inc. this year's Corporate Honoree for bringing visibility to the ballroom community and for their steadfast support of LGBTQIA+ people, particularly transgender. Brendon Mason received the award on behalf of Nike, presented to him by 2021 HMI Emery Award Honoree, Dominique Jackson, model/actress well-known for her role in the FX network series, *Pose*. Mason remarked upon receiving the award, "At Nike, we believe in diversity, equity and inclusion for all. We believe in the power of sport and its ability to change lives for the better, and we're honored to be working alongside Hetrick-Martin Institute to continue to create truly safe spaces for everyone." Mason also spotlighted the brand and its relationship with honoree, Leiomy Maldonado.

Notable guest appearances included singer/songwriter Miss Lawrence, formerly of Bravo's *Real Housewives of Atlanta*, who served as a ballroom showcase judge and presenter, and tv personality and runway coach best known for his role on *America's Next Top Model*, Miss J Alexander, one of last year's ballroom judges. NY State Senator Brad Hoylman and NY Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright Several were also in attendance to support the youth organization.

Renowned auctioneer, Robbie Gordy and tv personality, Bevy Smith together hosted a live auction and paddle raise, which helped contribute to the nearly \$1 million raised for the non-profit LGBTQIA+ youth organization.

HMI Chief Executive Officer, Joe Pressley recognized Hetrick-Martin's program staff, who participated in a "Grand March" on the runway stage in appreciation for the work they do to ensure queer youth have a safe space and program services available to them all year long.

Attendees spread out across Terminal 5's three floors were invited to cheer on the five houses—Haus of Christian Dior, House of Mattel, House of Telfar, Haus of Vera Wang, and Haus of Versace—competing in a ballroom showcase. The Emery Awards Ball opened with a performance by one of last year's competing houses, the House of Juicy Couture, Season 3 winners of HBOMax's *Legendary*.

International hip-hop artist and powerhouse of bounce music, Big Freedia closed the evening of non-stop entertainment with a phenomenal performance that had the audience immediately on their feet and on stage by her third song. Pressley observed, "The event was a proud achievement for HMI. The energy in the room among the diverse make-up of guests, performers and honorees was infectious and inspiring—exemplary of the atmosphere we aim to provide for our young people."

ABOUT HETRICK-MARTIN INSTITUTE

Hetrick-Martin Institute (HMI) is proud to be the nation's oldest and largest organization helping gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) youth between the ages of 13 and 24 to reach their full potential. Through a comprehensive package of direct services and referrals, the organization fosters healthy youth development. HMI's staff promotes excellence in the delivery of youth services and uses its expertise to create innovative programs that other organizations may use as models. HMI serves a diverse community, the vast majority of whom identify as Black or people of color. The youth organization is dedicated to building its approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels, throughout its operations and functions. Learn more at hmi.org.

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