

Contact: Vivian Shapiro

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

"NIGHT OF A THOUSAND GOWNS" TO BE HELD MARCH 28 IN NEW YORK CITY

National Charity Ball to Honor Imperial Court System

Goal is 3000 Attendance, \$500,000 for AIDS Funding and Gay Civil Rights

NEW YORK -- The Imperial Court System of North America will be honored at "Night of a Thousand Gowns," a tribute to the pioneering role of drag in the lesbian and gay communities, Saturday, March 27, in the Grand Ballroom of the Waldorf Astoria in New York City. This first national charity ball hopes to attract 3,000 attendees from throughout the U.S. and Canada and raise \$500,000 for several national gay and lesbian organizations primarily concerned with AIDS funding and gay civil rights.

"This is the first such major charity event in the national gay and lesbian community that salutes impersonators and 'our sisters in drag' who have added both color and grass-roots political clout to the movement," said Vivian Shapiro and George Dudley, coordinators of the event. "We are also pleased to be honoring The Imperial Court System of North America. With 10,000 members, the organization has raised tens of thousands of dollars to support AIDS organizations and community charities."

HONORARY COMMITTEE

Charles Pierce Empress Nicole de San Diego René Rodriguez Blaze Star, Miss Gay America 1987 Darcelle of Portland Norma Kristie Jose I, The Widow Norton LaRey Bill Bernardo Craig Russell Micky Day Kenny Kerr Rollerarena Jim Flint Candy Andrews, Miss Continental USA 1987 Jerry Bird Michael Andrews, Miss Gay USA 1986

Committee In Formation

Proceeds from the ball will be distributed evenly among the AIDS Action Council, The March on Washington Committee, The Human Rights Campaign Fund, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the New York Gay and Lesbian Community Center, which is serving as the local sponsor.

The Empress Nicole of San Diego, one of the leaders of The Imperial Court System of North America, sees the ball as a "grand cotillion."

"A cotillion is a formal ball where debutantes are presented to society, and 'Night of a Thousand Gowns' will offer an opportunity for individuals, couples or complete entourages to 'debut' in a most grand manner. There will be a flight of stairs and an announcer for anyone wishing to make an arrival during the evening."

During the evening a complete orchestra will play in the Grand Ball-room, cabaret acts will appear in one of the smaller ballrooms, and "Empress I" and "Emperor I" of New York will be coronated by a major celebrity.

"High heels are not mandatory," Mr. Dudley emphasized. "Men, as well as women, may wear tuxedos, dress uniforms or white tie if they choose. Of course, appropriate ball gowns will be de rigueur. We only advise people to dress as if they were to meet royalty or high society." A special "Debutante's Guide" will be included with invitations.

A donation of \$250 includes admission to "Night of a Thousand Gowns."
To receive a formal invitation and necessary information on hotels, air fare, limousines, etc., please write: Night of a Thousand Gowns,

New York, NY 10016. Impersonators should make a note on their request to receive a special communication.

NOTE TO EDITORS: This release will be followed by several stories on the history of drag and the gay/lesbian movement. All lesbian and gay publications may feel free to publish this and upcoming stories as long as mention of the upcoming "Night of a Thousand Gowns" and organizations benefiting from the National Charity Ball is included.

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