

## A-LIST FOR AFGHANISTAN

KUWAIT-AMERICA FOUNDATION 2006 BENEFIT DINNER

March 8th • Embassy Residence of the State of Kuwait

PHOTOS BY JONAH KOCH, VICKY POMBO AND KYLE SAMPERTON

**O**n a recent night filled with power, politics and posing, it was a surprise piano duet by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and composer Marvin Hamlisch that had the “Brides of Hope” night buzzing.

After the multi-talented Condi took over from **Roberta Flack**, the black-tie VIP guests must have been wondering, if there is anything this superwoman can't do? Among them: Supreme Court Justices **Anthony Kennedy** and **Samuel Alito** (making his first black-tie appearance since his confirmation), White House Senior Advisor **Karl Rove**, and most of the Cabinet, including Attorney General **Alberto Gonzales**, Homeland Security Secretary **Michael Chertoff** and National Intelligence Director **John Negroponte**.

Rice wasn't the only women in the spotlight; The First Lady **Laura Bush** was on hand to receive a Humanitarian Award, on International Women's Day and the 60th anniversary of the United

Nation Children's Fund. The cocktail reception and seated banquet was hosted by Kuwait Ambassador **Salem Al-Sabah** and his wife **Rima** at the Kuwaiti embassy residence. It raised \$1.1 million to benefit UNICEF efforts to rehabilitate schools in Afghanistan and was underwritten by Chevron, Dow Chemical, ExxonMobil and Shell International, and supported by a number of high-profile patrons including HSBC, Ford Motor Company, General Motors, along with Neiman Marcus and Kiton, who provided gift bags.

The A-List trifecta was complete with actor/producer/U.N. Messenger of Peace **Michael Douglas**, who received the Private Citizen Award. Sticking with the theme of raising education standards for girls, (the now grey-bearded) Douglas spoke about his 3-year-old daughter in his speech, saying, her “opportunities are boundless. Perhaps—as she will not be 35 years old until 2038—she will achieve a dream that no one here has yet

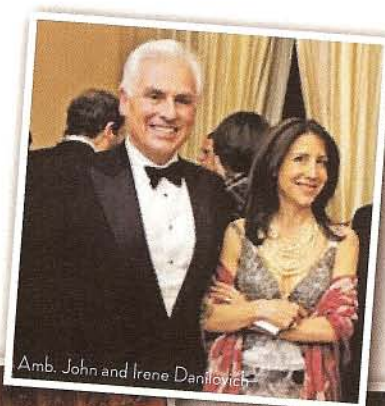
achieved. For maybe, just maybe, she will be one of the first female presidents.”

Not surprisingly, Rima Al-Sabah didn't miss a beat or detail as she floated effortlessly amid the glitter and gravitas, joking one moment with master of ceremonies **George Stephanopoulos**, the next with **Kirk** and **Ann Douglas**, then talking shop with UNICEF Executive Director **Ann M. Veneman**.

But the spirit of the evening was best described on the opening page of the dinner's golden tasseled program: “Last year, a girls' school in Logar Province, south of Kabul, was set on fire by terrorists. The Moghul Khail School, consisting of two large tents, was set ablaze at midnight. The next day, every little girl, every student, showed up at the school. They sat next to the ashes of their burned out classroom under the blazing sun. There was little left except the metal frame, but the little girls insisted on continuing with their lessons. This is the spirit of the Afghan people.”



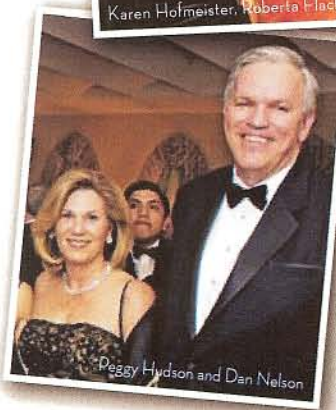
Karen Hofmeister, Roberta Flack and John Hofmeister



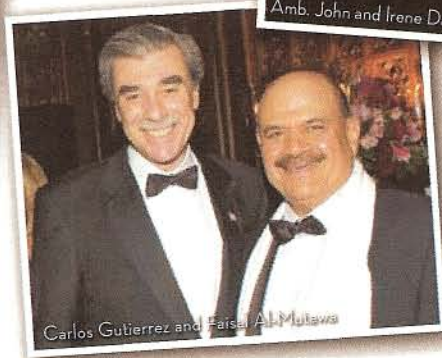
Amb. John and Irene Danilovich



George Stephanopoulos



Peggy Hudson and Dan Nelson



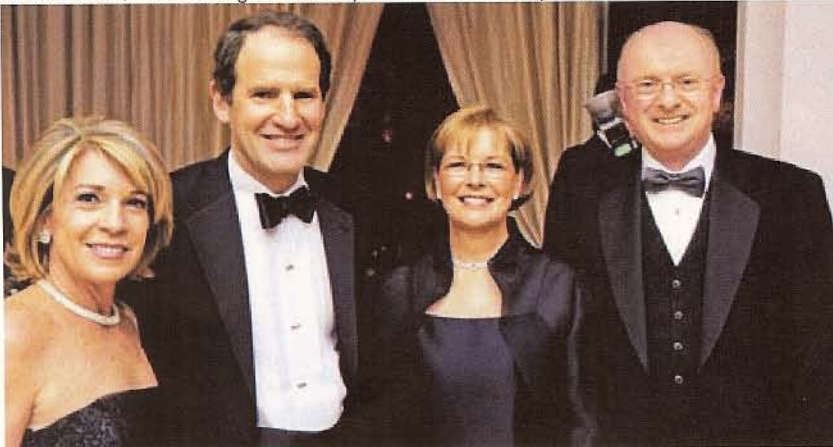
Carlos Gutierrez and Faisal Al-Mutawa



Sec. of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff and Justice Samuel Alito



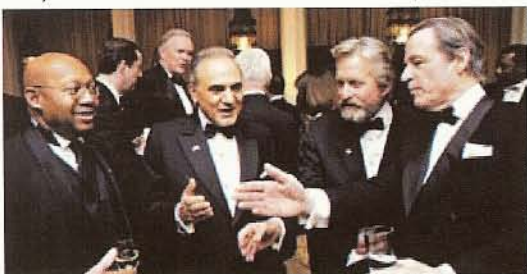
Rima Al-Sabah, Michael Douglas, First Lady Laura Bush, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Kuwaiti Amb. Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah



Kathy and Al Hubbard with Joan and Dave O'Reilly



Darby Rove and Anne Veneman



Sec. of HUD Alphonso Jackson, HRH Prince Turki Al-Faisal, Michael Douglas and Leo Daly



Ziad and Teresa Ojaki



Justice Anthony Kennedy



Martha Slagle and Dan Wolman

## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW!

THE FIRST LADY, CONDOLEEZZA RICE, KUWAITI AMBASSADOR SHEIKH SALEM AL-SABAH AND RIMA AL-SABAH

After patiently posing for our cover photo, the conversation turned to what brought the award winners together.

**Washington Life:** *Dr. Rice, what does the receiving the Public Service Award mean to you?*

**Dr. Rice:** I'm honored. I try to be a champion of women's empowerment, and I'm especially honored to receive the award with Michael Douglas and the First Lady.

**WL:** (to the First Lady) *Can you please tell us about your award tonight and the work you are doing in Afghanistan?*

**Mrs. Bush:** I'm really thrilled about the award, but I'm especially happy about the benefits that will help UNICEF and the work they do with the children in Afghanistan. UNICEF is a particularly favorite part of the U.N. of mine and I know what a terrific job Ann Veneman is doing as its new director. So I'm excited—I think it's a wonderful cause. It's a beautiful evening as always here, Rima Al-Sabah always does a beautiful job.

**WL:** *Why was the focus this year on Afghanistan?*

**Mrs. Bush:** You might want to ask Rima that. Rima, why Afghanistan?

**Rima Al-Sabah:** My husband and I watched the movie "Osama" and it really touched us deeply. We wanted to do something for



Afghanistan, particularly education of girls in Afghanistan. Seventy percent of the population can't read and write.

**Ambassador Al-Sabah:** We knew about what was happening in Afghanistan before, but what the movie

did was visually show us the misery, then when Rima and I were watching it our jaws dropped, and we said we have to do something for this.

**Mrs. Bush:** We saw the movie at the White House.

**WL:** *What was the reaction, what was the feeling there?*

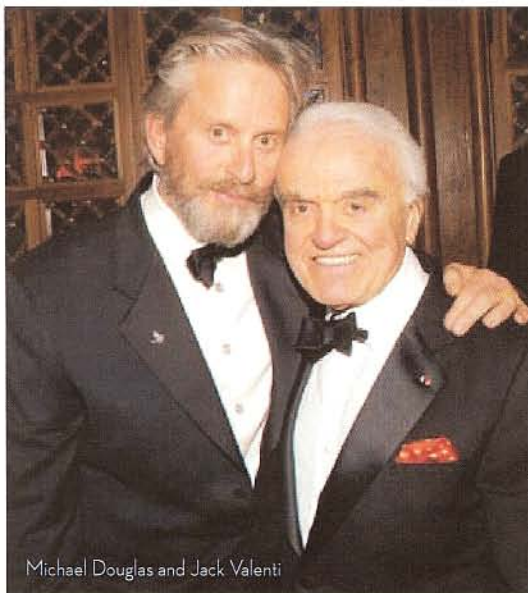
**Mrs. Bush:** The same thing the Ambassador just said: shock, sadness. No surprise, we knew that was the situation, but when it's dramatized it comes to life.

**Dr. Rice:** We [The First Lady and I] were just in Afghanistan, and you realize how spirited the Afghan people are, but how incredibly poor the country is. Ann [Veneman] has been our good friend for a long time, so it's especially wonderful to be involved with the United Nations Children's Fund and the Kuwait-America Foundation.

**Ambassador Al-Sabah:** We did the same thing for women and children in Iraq last year. We want to create this tradition, hopefully annually and choose a benefit for a humanitarian cause. So, we need to think about next year.

**WL:** *What's the biggest thing you're focused on with your humanitarian work?*

**Mrs. Bush:** My interest is still girls' education, education in general for boys and girls, but especially the idea that a lot of girls are in school in Afghanistan. And one thing that President Karzai and his wife Dr. Karzai told us, when we were there last week, is that today six million children are in school in Afghanistan. Half that number are girls, but there is still a huge need for schools, especially in rural and remote villages—schools and teachers—and that's what UNICEF will be sending a lot of their money to do, trying to build schools in rural villages.



Michael Douglas and Jack Valenti

## MICHAEL DOUGLAS PLAYS HIS PART

In a night where Washington's A List took center stage, actor Michael Douglas comfortably put on his diplomatic mask and fit right in. In his acceptance speech, he explained how he was inspired by the evening.

"In 1998, Secretary General Kofi Annan bestowed upon me the privilege of becoming a United Nations Messenger of Peace. Although my specific concerns as a U.N. Messenger have centered on nuclear proliferation and the control of small arms, I have long been aware of the importance of UNICEF.

"The war (in Afghanistan) is over—but the humanitarian crisis is not. Generations of girls

have little or no schooling, while the boys' education has been limited and inconsistent. The children have been traumatized by years of war, oppression and the daily struggles of living in a country struggling to get back on its feet. The rebuilding of Afghanistan's schools is critical to this effort...the opportunity of schooling...is vital if these young people have a chance of transforming from traumatized children into emotionally stable and productive adults.

"It is also a great honor to be here with a gathering of such accomplished women to celebrate International Women's Day. As I look around this room at the wise, intelligent, beautiful and extraordinary women I am truly in awe of the opportunities that await my 3-year-old daughter. With role models such as our First Lady and Secretary Rice her opportunities are boundless."



Kirk and Ann Douglas and Michael Douglas



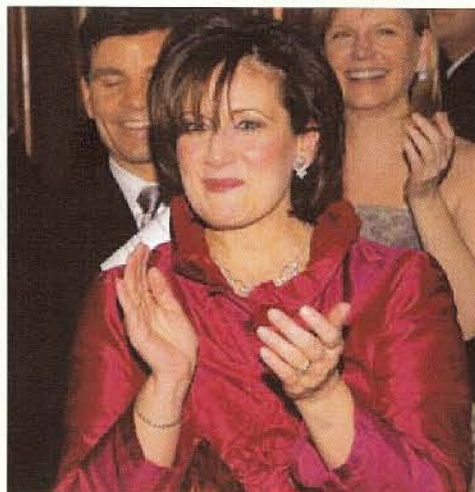
Paula and Andrew Liveris



Grega Daly



Marvin Hamlich and Terre Blair



Anita McBride



Becky and Attorney General Alberto Gonzales



Seamus McMahon



Sonya Medina



Lobster and beets a la Design Cuisine