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## ASIA SOCIETY TEXAS' TIGER BALL SETS NEW RECORD – RAISING \$1.73 MILLION

*“Enchanting Shanghai” Themed Gala Honored Y. Ping Sun and David Leebron*

HOUSTON, March 10, 2025 — **Asia Society Texas' (AST) Tiger Ball 2025** set a new fundraising record raising \$1.73 million while honoring Houston leaders **Y. Ping Sun and David Leebron** whose remarkable leadership and dedication have enriched the cultural vibrancy of Houston and expanded the city's global influence. Led by Ball Chairs **Shawn Stephens and Jim Jordan** and **Michelle and Rishi Varma**, alongside Honorary Chairs **Nancy C. Allen, Anne and Albert Chao**, and **Margaret Alkek Williams**, the record-breaking event on March 7 welcomed 600 guests into a breathtaking showcase of red and gold. Proceeds from the gala support AST's efforts to enhance Houston's vibrant cultural offerings through the celebration of diverse cultures and perspectives.

The enchanting evening unfolded in a burst of elegance, beginning with a celebratory champagne toast inside the iconic Asia Society Texas Center for the organization's closest friends and family to raise a glass to the gala's distinguished honorees and leadership. Following a heartfelt welcome by Ball Chairs Michelle and Rishi Varma that set the tone for a night of warmth and camaraderie, AST Board Chair, Marty Goossen, toasted the honorees sharing with the crowd his deep admiration for the couple's exceptional ability to foster connection, understanding, and friendship. Ball Chairs Shawn Stephens and Jim Jordan, alongside President Bonna Kol, presented Ms. Sun and Mr. Leebron with an, Auratic fine bone porcelain tea set with a willowy floral design and 24K gold plated accents in appreciation for their sustained commitment to cultural exchange and global community.

Guests arriving for the main event were welcomed to the red carpet by Hanfu performers dressed in vibrant traditional Chinese attire and the rhythmic sounds of drummers stationed outside the Gala Pavilion. Inside, the Pavilion glittered in shades of rich crimson and gold with Chinese lanterns suspended above the dance floor. Taking up a large portion of the AST parking lot, the Pavilion encompassed the area's live trees adorned with red Bougainvillea blossoms that complemented a copious amount of strikingly draped red fabric floating over dinner tables laden with bouquets of roses, tulips, amaranthus, and hydrangeas. The lavish design elements, artfully arranged by the talented team at **Prashe Décor**, transported guests to an opulent tearoom in the heart of Shanghai.

During the cocktail hour, guests enjoyed bites inspired by Shanghai including tea smoked salmon on wasabi potato cakes, duck crepes with hoisin and scallions, and spicy Hunan minced quail with walnuts and orange zest on endive. Guests perused a variety of luxurious silent auction items such as a **Harry Winston** Midnight Monochrome 32mm timepiece crafted in 18K rose gold and featuring a row of diamonds on a red alligator strap; a five-night stay for up to 20 guests in a lush 10,000 square foot home in Telluride, Colorado; two tickets to the AKRIS runway show in Paris during Paris Fashion Week; a private tour for up to 6 people of The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Japanese art collection with curator Dr. John Carpenter; roundtrip first-class Delta airfare for two to anywhere in the U.S., Canada, or Asia; and original artworks by both **Kelly Wang** and **Ping Zheng**.

Guests were then treated to an exquisite dinner by **City Kitchen** featuring five spice-roasted duck with yams, Sichuan pepper and wood ear mushroom appetizer followed by pan-seared sea bass with XO sauce, forbidden rice, scallion braised fava beans, and carrots with ginger and honey. Following dinner, guests enjoyed a variety of desserts while celebrating on the dance floor with music provided by **DJ Alx of Karma DJs**.

In addition to the honorees and event leadership, special guests included **Chinhui & Eddie Allen, Durga & Sushila Agrawal, Leslie & Brad Bucher, Gracie & Bob Cavnar, Theresa & Peter Chang, Anne & Albert Chao, China & Roberto Contreras IV, Molly & James Crownover, Jay Cuclis, Donna Fujimoto Cole, Aimee & Craig DiTomasso, Lily & Charles Foster, Kathy Gondo, Kathy & Marty Goossen, Marie & Vijay Goradia, Dr. Mikki Hebl & David Harvey, Mohsin Imtiaz, Renu & Suresh Khator, Kelley & Steve Lubanko, Sabria & Kevin Lewis, Sultana Mangalji, Petra Martinez, Gordon Quan, Sue & Randy Sim, Leigh & Reggie Smith, Anne-Laure & Steve Stephens, Starlee Sykes & Al Vickers, Selma & Mustafa Tameez, Tuu & Jim Teague, Phoebe & Bobby Tudor, Ileana & Michael Treviño, Stephanie & Frank Tsuru, and Shiang Ling & George Yang.**

A full complement of top-shelf talent created this year's Tiger Ball, including **Aztec Events & Tents, GTX, Prashe Décor**, with catering by **City Kitchen**, and DJing by DJ Alx of **Karma DJs**.

Proceeds from Tiger Ball support Asia Society Texas Center's 150+ public programs each year. Next year's Tiger Ball will be held on March 6, 2026, and will honor **Jenny and Henry Wu** and **Shiang Ling and George Yang**.

### **About Asia Society Texas**

Asia Society Texas believes in the strength and beauty of diverse perspectives and people. As an educational institution, we advance cultural exchange by celebrating the vibrant diversity of Asia, inspiring empathy, and fostering a better understanding of our interconnected world. Spanning the fields of arts, business, culture, education, and policy, our programming is rooted in the educational and cultural development of our community — trusting in the power of art, dialogue, and ideas to combat bias and build a more inclusive society.