



**Marc Benioff, Chairman and CEO of Salesforce, and U.S. Women’s National Soccer Team Receive ‘Inspiring Leader’ Awards at Annual Billie Jean King Leadership Initiative (BJKLI)**

*BJKLI convenes business, academic and non-profit leaders to take action on the issues of inclusion and equality in the workplace*

**New York, November 16, 2016** – The Billie Jean King Leadership Initiative’s (BJKLI) 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Symposium and Gala today convenes influential leaders from the business community, academia and the non-profit sector in New York to address the critical issue of diversity and inclusion in the workplace and the role of male leaders in addressing this issue. Focused on the theme “*Men – playing from a position of power and leveraging their ability to make change,*” the event calls on attendees to use their positions to further a corporate culture that embraces and promotes diversity.

The afternoon Symposium will feature speakers including: Robin Roberts, Anchor of ABC’s Good Morning America; Dr. David Thomas, Professor of Management at Georgetown University’s McDonough School of Business; Ralph Smith, Senior Vice President at the Annie E. Casey Foundation; and Tony Prophet, Chief Equality Officer at Salesforce. The Symposium will engage cross-generational, cross-cultural and C-Suite executives as active participants in solution-building and action-planning.

At this evening’s Gala, the BJKLI will honor Marc Benioff, Chairman and CEO of Salesforce, and the U.S. Women’s National Soccer Team, represented by Heather O’Reilly, a member of the victorious U.S. squad at the 2015 FIFA Women’s World Cup, with the 2016 “Inspiring Leader” awards. The evening will feature a performance by legendary singer and songwriter, Nona Hendryx.

“It is an honor to present this year’s ‘Inspiring Leader’ awards to Marc Benioff and the U.S. Women’s National Soccer Team for their commitment to leveling the playing field,” said Billie Jean King. “Marc and his team at Salesforce, and the entire management and players of the U.S. Women’s National Team are game-changers who are using their power and platform to champion equality in the workplace and the world. When Ilana, Teneo and I created the BJKLI we knew it would be critical to recognize and partner with those who champion the fight for equality and share our common belief that diversity and inclusion are catalysts for growth and innovation.”

Award recipient Marc Benioff stated, “Billie Jean King and those involved with the BJKLI have been pioneers in addressing the social issues that pervade us today, through both voice and action. I am honored to be recognized and on this journey with BJKLI to establish a more diverse and inclusive world and equality for all.”

Heather O’Reilly spoke on behalf of the U.S. Women’s National Soccer Team explaining, “As professional athletes, we focus on our craft and winning on the field, but also on the causes that are important to us as women in a historically male-dominated sport. It is inspiring to know that there are people like Billie Jean King and her colleagues on the front lines pushing others in positions of power to address these deeply important and consequential issues.”

“We’re excited our third year will bring together bold leaders who are committed to enacting positive change,” said Sherice Perry, Executive Director of BJKLI. “Those in positions of power, especially men, are critical to ensuring that every person, in every industry, is afforded an equal opportunity to contribute and advance in the workplace.”



BJKLI was founded in 2014 by social justice pioneer and sports icon Billie Jean King, her partner Ilana Kloss, and the global CEO advisory firm, Teneo, to move the needle on issues impacting diversity and inclusion by inspiring future leaders and motivating those in positions of power to promote diverse identities and challenge the status quo.

Members of the Billie Jean King Leadership Initiative Advisory Board include: Billie Jean King, Founder; Ilana Kloss, Co-founder; Paul Keary, Co-founder and COO, Teneo Holdings; Pablo Salame, Global Co-Head, Securities Division, Goldman Sachs; Christiane Amanpour, Chief International Correspondent, CNN; Jason Collins, Former NBA Player and Civil Rights Advocate; David Furnish, Chairman, Elton John AIDS Foundation and CEO, Rocket Entertainment Group; Margo Georgiadis, President of Google Americas; Maritza Gomez-Montiel, Former Vice Chairman and Deputy CEO of Deloitte; Sir Elton John; Jonathan Kraft, President, The Kraft Group; Robert McCann, Chairman, UBS Group Americas; Pat Mitchell, Founder and CEO, POW! Strategies and Executive Producer of TEDWomen; Robin Roberts, Anchor, ABC's Good Morning America; Andy Roddick, U.S. Open Champion; and Michael Strautmanis, VP of Civic Engagement for the Obama Foundation.

For more information on the Billie Jean King Leadership Initiative, visit [www.bjkli.org](http://www.bjkli.org).

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