

Christiane Amanpour and Shonda Rhimes recognized with “Inspiring Leader” award at Billie Jean King Leadership Initiative (BJKLI) Luncheon with Emma Stone and cast of Battle of the Sexes

BJKLI hosts leaders to discuss issues of equity and inclusion in advance of “Battle of the Sexes” film release on Friday, September 22



On September 19, 2017, The Billie Jean King Leadership Initiative (BJKLI) convened leaders from a variety of sectors to hear from Emma Stone, Billie Jean King, Shonda Rhimes and Christiane Amanpour on the importance of equity, inclusion and the power of the individual to make change.

The luncheon kicked off with an address from Christiane Amanpour, who was presented with the first BJKLI “Inspiring Leader” award before she departed for duty at the United Nations. Speaking about organizations like the BJKLI, Ms. Amanpour said “It is more important than ever in current conditions that we raise our voices and discuss these issues.” She also discussed the critical need for leadership referring to the global leaders she meets every week, including during UNGA, and encouraged the audience to recognize their power to impact change.

Producer, screenwriter and author Shonda Rhimes was recognized with the day’s second “Inspiring Leader” award. She spoke about how Billie Jean King served as an inspiration and helped her realize her personal power from an early age. Speaking about the need for equity and representation in the workplace Ms. Rhimes said, “We need to see people who look like us show up on screen and in positions of leadership.”

Following the “Inspiring Leader” award presentation, the crowd watched a video showcasing the previous three years of BJKLI symposiums and those that have received the award, including; Valerie Jarrett, Special Advisor to President Obama; Gracia Martore, CEO of Tegna; Martine Rothblatt, CEO of United Therapeutics; song, film and theatre legend Cyndi Lauper; Marc Benioff, CEO of Salesforce; and Heather O’ Reilly of the U.S. Women’s National Soccer team.



The event also included a conversation with Billie Jean King and Emma Stone moderated by Kim Davis, Senior Managing Director of Teneo, and member of the founding team of the BJKLI. The three discussed the making of the *Battle of the Sexes* film, the reason behind sharing the story, lessons from Ms. King’s life dedicated to social justice and equity, and Ms. Stone’s personal connection to the film including her own path to leadership.

The luncheon concluded with a live auction and the iconic phrase from Billie Jean King “Go For It”. As the crowd exited, they were treated to Sara Bareilles’ new song “If I Dare”, written specifically for the film.

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.

Leading sponsors of this year’s annual fundraising event included: Accenture, Salesforce, UBS, Goldman Sachs and the Kraft Group.

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