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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Museum of Natural History hosts PHENOMENAL Event

Funds raised support the Museum's Education Program

Santa Barbara, California (June 4, 2018) — The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History's 19th Annual Mission Creek Gala, *Phenomenal Santa Barbara*, took place Saturday, May 5. Inspired by the exhibits in the new Santa Barbara Gallery, which opened to the public on June 2, the Gala celebrated the region's unparalleled, and phenomenal, biodiversity, and habitats.

The Gala committee was chaired by Stacey Byers and included Bobbie Kinnear, Carolyn Chandler, Ginny Bliss, Kali Kopley, Nanette Nevins, Pam Valeski, Pippa Hames-Knowlton, Sheri Eckmann, Susan Parker, and Venesa Faciane. The committee worked with planner Gillian Valentine Events and Hogue & Co. to create a night of beauty and fun that raised \$450,000. The main décor inspired guests to journey from the depths of the ocean floor to the top of Figueroa Mountain, all while enjoying a delectable dinner by duo catering & events. The evening included a successful live auction conducted by Trustee Douglas Dreier and 11 year-old Sea Center volunteer Ian Sheshunoff.

The annual Mission Creek Gala sustains the Museum's outstanding education program that touches the lives of 20,000 schoolchildren each year through school tours, classes, storytelling, camps, the Nature Collection Lending Library, and outreach at the Museum and Sea Center.

The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History was founded in 1916 by noted ornithologist William Leon Dawson as the Museum of Comparative Oology. Soon after, the Board of Directors expanded the Museum to include other aspects of natural history, and in 1923, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History opened its doors at the current campus. Since then, the Museum has become one of the most important institutions on the West Coast. In celebration of its 100th anniversary, the Museum embarked upon a \$20 million Centennial Campaign to raise funds to support the improvement of the visitor experience on every level. This includes new exhibits, refurbished permanent galleries, improved universal access, landscape beautification, and more effective site interpretation to unlock the historical and natural richness of the Museum's grounds.

For more information about the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History visit www.sbnature.org.

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About the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

Powered by Science. Inspired by Nature. Founded in 1916, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History inspires a thirst for discovery and a passion for the natural world. The Museum seeks to connect people to nature for the betterment of both, and prides itself on being *naturally different*.



Décor in Fleischmann Auditorium celebrating Santa Barbara's Phenomenal biodiversity



Lady Leslie Ridley-Tree and friend



Left to Right: Hiroko Benko, Bob and Christine Emmons



Left to Right: Pam Valeski, Terry Valeski, Caroline Thompson, President & CEO Luke Swetland