

Reflections on the Pittsburgh Fundraiser

Candy Carson

Like the Bossa Nova music and subsequent dance craze that wowed Americans in the '60s, the Bossa Nova nightclub (literally meaning "new style") again provided an exciting backdrop for the eighth annual Pittsburgh Chapter fundraiser for the Carson Scholars Fund. And again several Pittsburgh Steelers came out in support for photo-ops and autographs. Emceeding the program was Bob Pompeani of KDKA-TV who gave opening remarks. Dr. Al Costa, president of the Pittsburgh Chapter of the Carson Scholars Fund and host for the evening, spoke eloquently of the occasion and introduced several stars, including: Jerome Bettis, THE BUS, of legendary Steelers fame; and Steeler linebacker James Farrior, with over 1,400 career tackles, who brought remarks and greetings from the team in support of education. Dr. Costa pointed out how the event was organized by the very capable and dedicated ladies of Costa Land Company, and without the aid of a professional event planner. His last star to introduce was Dr. Ben Carson, co-founder of the Carson Scholars Fund. Dr. Carson spoke on the importance of education and encouraging our kids, "our future," to be the best they can be.

Sally Wiggin, news anchor for Channel 4-WTAE-TV, enticed several interviews out of the honored guests. (She also has emceed the Pittsburgh Scholar Awards Banquet for the last 4 years.)

Guests reveled in the ambience created by large Picasso-esque paintings, including one with a horse in a business suit (brings new meaning to the term "work horse"), which looked down on the silent auction bidders from the historic brick walls, while the lights of 40 ten-inch candles in red, green, and blue-toned glass were magnified by huge mirrors on a chair-rail-high shelf. The silent auction items were quite tastefully arranged on the narrow, bar-height etched glass serpentine tables bordered by leather-cushioned bar seats. The Victorian crystal chandeliers over those tables were complemented by the more modern entry chandelier reminiscent of a 7' drum.

Emcee Bob Pompeani made the live auction even livelier as he coaxed the bidders up to more than \$3,000 for each of the items, from dinner with James Farrior to a hockey lover's dream of an autographed jersey and stick from famed Pittsburgh Penguins (donated by Jerome Bettis).

Special thanks to everyone who helped organize the event, and especially Pittsburgh Steelers Chris Carter, James Farrior, Hines Ward, and William Gay.