



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 4, 2009

Contact: Sara Bazant
Director of Marketing
Orangewood Children's Foundation
Office: 714-619-0206
Cell: 562-743-7272

Orange Blossom Bash Surprises Willa Dean Lyon as Honoree

Santa Ana – Over 330 Orangewood supporters and the family and friends of founding board chairman General William Lyon and wife Willa Dean gathered among vintage aircraft Saturday night at the Lyon Air Museum for the 2009 Orange Blossom Bash, benefiting Orangewood Children's Foundation. Although publicity materials announced the Lyon family as the night's honoree, the surprise honoree was family matriarch Willa Dean Lyon. Willa Dean was honored for her almost 30 years of commitment to Orangewood's abused children, along with many other charities. The event was chaired by Teresa Suryan and emceed by her husband and Foundation board member Frank Suryan. The evening raised over \$500,000 for Orangewood programs for current and former foster youth.

At the Lyon Air Museum the large hall was set with several pristine vintage aircraft from the 1930's and 1940's around the perimeter. The mainly-glass east wall of the hall offered a view of the runways of the John Wayne airport. (Lyon Air Museum is putting the finishing touches on their exhibit and should be open later this year.) Décor by Jason Kenneth Designs featured centerpieces of orange fruit and complementary florals, with orange-colored napkins and tablecloths. Appetizers and dinner were provided by Antonello Ristorante. Big-band style entertainment during the evening was provided by the Army Air Corps Band from The Noble Cause Foundation.

All five children and three of the six grandchildren of the General and Willa Dean were in attendance: their son William H. "Bill" Lyon, the General's daughters Susan Lyon Isola and Christine Rhoades (and daughter Jessica Rhoades), and Willa Dean's daughter and son Marcia Stone (and daughters Tiffany Campbell and Tiara Stone) and Byron Russell. General Lyon's

brother, Leon “Lee” Lyon, and his wife Barbara along with their children Curt and Bruce Lyon also joined in the celebration.

Other guests included Henry and Elizabeth Segerstrom, Paul and Daranne Folino, Henry and Susan Samuelli (Susan sits on the Foundation’s board), Bill Steiner (former Director of the Orangewood Children’s Home and former Executive Director of the Foundation), Heidi and Rick Sherman (major sponsors), Huntington Beach Mayor Keith Bohr, Neiman Marcus Fashion Island General Manager Ariela Shani, and Foundation CEO Cal Wilson and board chairman Dave Ritchie.

Former foster youth Nathalie Corbin shared her story, which started with multiple forms of abuse before she was seven. In her teens she learned of the Foundation’s programs and began attending workshops and working with a Foundation coach to help prepare her for emancipation. Today she is a college sophomore, thanks in part to Orangewood scholarships. She is a Human Services major at Hope International University in Fullerton and plans to pursue a career in law enforcement.

In the live auction, one-of-a-kind items included a personal tour by General Lyon of his classic car collection (which was purchased by three individuals at \$10,000 each) and a flight in the General’s “Fuddy Duddy” World War II B-17 (which was purchased twice for \$5,750 each by Foundation emeritus board member Dave Wilson and another individual). Bill Steiner, a co-visionary of the Orangewood Children’s Home with General Lyon, purchased the Maltese puppy for his daughter and her family. The live auction raised \$113,500. It was followed by a call for sponsors for college scholarships for former foster youth which netted \$71,000.

For her decades of support of the children of Orangewood, Willa Dean Lyon was presented with a Neiman Marcus Judith Leiber crystal handbag in the shape of a butterfly and shown a plaque that will mark a “Willa Dean Lyon Rose Garden” at the Orangewood Children’s Home.

About Orangewood Children’s Foundation

Orangewood Children’s Foundation is a private, nonprofit organization founded in 1981 and one of the leading providers of services to children in foster care. Through financial assistance, mentors, daily living skills workshops, transitional housing and college scholarships, we give these innocent victims of child abuse a chance at happy, productive lives. Last year alone Orangewood scholarships helped 241 former foster children attend colleges and universities throughout the United States. In our 28 year history we have helped over 62,000 kids find their wings and soar. Beyond our programs, for thousands of foster children Orangewood means “family,” “opportunity” and “hope.” Learn how you can help at www.orangewoodfoundation.org.