

# Act for MS: Christmas Tree Lane

Betty Francis, Special to The Desert Sun 10:02 a.m. PST December 25, 2016



(Photo: Gregg Felsen/Special to The Desert Sun)

My work (actually more fun than work) on this story actually began more than a year ago, when **Margot Nelligan, Suz Hunt, Linda Williamson, Ann Greer, Peggy Cravens, Sally Traidman, Marc Byrd, Richard DeSantis** and **Anne Pope** got together and picked December 1, 2016 as the date for this year's Christmas Tree Lane.

They worked on it all year, signing up celebrities and dignitaries **Beverly Johnson, Andrew Neiderman, Jerry Vale in memoriam, Fred "The Hammer" Williamson, PS Mayor Robert Moon** and PS Police Chief **Brian Reyes**.

Event chairs **Suz Hunt** and **Linda Williamson**, along with boutique chair **Sally Traidman** were out in triple digit temperatures this summer, lining up entertainment by the Desert Carolers, **Bill Marx** and **Tibor Lesko, Keisha D** and **Rose Kingsley**. They also signed emcee **Joey English** and auctioneer **Robert Aguillar** of the Stokes Auction Group. They even selected a Santa who sometimes goes by the name of **Robert Morrison**.

Perhaps the hardest working volunteers of all were **Linda Williamson**, who designed and decorated ten trees and retired floral-shop owner **Marc Byrd** who did 3 trees plus selling raffle tickets, donating 50 boxes of ornaments and performing a dozen other chores. Byrd commented, "This event is very dear to my heart, and I know my friend [Gloria Greer](#) was having a grand time gazing down from high above us!"

The committee's full year of hard work paid off. Over 200 guests paid \$75 (or more) to attend this year and they raised over \$50,000 for ACT For MS, the charity that provides free services for locals living with Multiple Sclerosis.

This was the 16th anniversary of Christmas Tree Lane, which was originally created by the late Gloria Greer at the suggestion of her strong supporter, the late Merv Griffin.



Christmas Tree Lane event committee members President Margot Nelligan, Event co-chair and designer Linda Williamson, board member and producer Richard DeSantis, event co-chair and sponsor Suz Hunt and boutique chair Sally Traidman happily greet attendees to the 16th annual Christmas Tree Lane benefiting ACT for Multiple Sclerosis at the Hard Rock Hotel – Palm Springs. (Photo: Sherri Breyer/Special to The Desert Sun)

Major Sponsors included Hard Rock Hotel-Palm Springs, Palm Springs Life, [Peggy Cravens](#), **Penny Mason**, **Suz Hunt**, and Nothing Bundt Cakes! Cravens had to cancel at the last moment but was mentioned and praised by nearly every speaker who could grab the mic.

Linda Williamson and [Barbara Sellers](#) were honored for their many years of service to CTL.

Another major contributor to the evening was event producer [Richard DeSantis](#).

In addition to Williamson's leadership, additional designers were **Jaimi Houston**, **Barbara Sellers**, **Debbie Ramsay**, [Ruth Moir](#), **George Turner**, **Pam Turner**, **Carol Levine**, **Elizabeth Maxwell**, **Sally Traidman**, **Sandy Woodson**, **Diane Neiderman**, **Melissa Neiderman** and [LupeWatsonRamos](#).

Celebrity trees included beautiful creations honoring **Gloria Greer**, **Barry Manilow**, **Carol Channing**, **Beverly Johnson**, **Andrew Neiderman**, **Jerry Vale in memoriam**, and **Johnny Mercer** as well as the **Fred Williamson tree honoring Gold Families and the Wounded Warrior Project and the Desert Symphony Tree**.

Friends seen in the Boutique & Live Auction included [Ogniana Masser](#), [Al Jones](#), [Sarah Milmet](#), **Leo Milmet**, [John Sacchi](#), [Betty Francis](#), [Renée Glickman](#), [Patrick R Mundt](#), [Bruce Johansen](#), [Nancy Stone](#), [Margot Nelligan](#), **Fred “The Hammer” Williamson**, **Kay Hanson** and [Michael Rolland Davis](#), [Ann Greer](#), **Grace Robbins**, **Rita Vale**, **Norm** and [Linda Lechlitner](#), [Gerald Green](#) and [Gary Hall](#), [Sherri Breyer](#), [Lindell Campbell](#), **Mayor Robert Moon** and **Bob Hammack**, along with founding board member [Norma Greer Fishkind](#).



Christmas Tree Lane in full splendor as donors, celebs, designers and clients join in song to celebrate the holiday while raising funds to provide free services for local residents living with multiple sclerosis: from left to right: President Margot Nelligan, Victoria DeSantis, model-author Beverly Johnson, founder client Norma Greer-Fishkind holding Ginger, Fred “The Hammer” with event co-chair, designer and wife Linda Williamson, Stokes Group auctioneer Robert Aguilar, emcee Joey English, executive director / designer Lupe Ramos Watson, event co-chair and sponsor Suz Hunt, and Rose Kingsley. (Photo: Sherri Breyer/Special to The Desert Sun)

Among the many well-known locals present were **Harold Matzner, Dr. Mona Khanna, Donna MacMillan, and Diane and Melissa Neiderman.**

The top tree, The Andrew Neiderman **Tree**, went for \$8,000 at auction to Leo Milmet, designed by Diane and Melissa Neiderman.

Marc Byrd contributed to this report.

NEXT: The next ACT for MS fundraiser will be March 5, 2017, -- their 16th annual Spring Gala. This year's theme will be "Magic & the Zodiac: Mystical Magic Meets the Stars of the Zodiac. The gala chairs will be Nancy Stone, Marc Byrd and Richard DeSantis.

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