

## PEOPLE

# Foundation one of the fastest growing in Florida

BY MARY SCHENKEL  
Staff Writer

The Indian River Community Foundation celebrated the generosity of ardent philanthropists at its annual Cocktail Reception, held last Wednesday evening at the remarkable John's Island home of Rick and Laura McDermott, who have been involved from its inception. Rick McDermott was the IRCF founding board chairman, and Laura McDermott is a founding member of Impact 100, an IRCF philanthropic initiative.

Fund holders and founders mingled with professional advisors and representatives from several non-profit organizations, reveling in a gorgeous sunset over the lagoon while enjoying cocktails and passed hors d'oeuvres before a brief presentation.

"I think we have an extraordinary board because of what's entrusted to them," said Rick McDermott, of the continued high-level of support



Laura and Rick McDermott.



Bob and Jeanine Harris.

for an organization that holds more than \$29 million in assets. Now in its eighth year of operation, the IRCF has cumulatively granted more than \$34 million, including \$7.7 million last year; 81 percent to local charities.

The IRCF facilitates donor driven philanthropy, with board members and staff working with donors to help connect them with the causes they care about. They offer a range of services depending on each donor's needs, from hands-on assistance developing estate plans and managing family foundations, to providing in-

PHOTOS: DENISE RITCHIE

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## FOUNDATION CAPTIONS

1. Chris Ryan, Bob Gibb and Bob Puff. 2. Scott and Gail Alexander with King Stubbs.
3. John McCord, Jeff Pickering, Carole and Phil Coviello and Marty Zickert. 4. Sherry Brown, Dace Stubbs, Becky and Bob Allen.
5. Susan and David Pyles with Nancy Puff.
6. Judi Miller with Sandy and Randy Rolf. 7. Sue Tompkins and Lois Appleby. 8. Neal and Nancy Lohuis with Susan and Mike McGee. 9. Steve Healy, Katie Block Faires, Emilie and Bob Burr. 10. Jim Currie with Faye and RB Jennings. 11. Linda and Neill Currie, Alice and Rene Donars and Anne Lanier.

formational access to nonprofits and connecting donors to advisors.

Board chairman Scott Alexander said that despite being one of the youngest community foundations, the IRCF is also one of the fastest growing, thanks in large part to the leadership of its past chairmen, McDermott, Becky Allen and most recently Bob Puff.

"Tonight I would like to announce that the Indian River Community Foundation will issue a Chairman's Nonprofit Leadership Award," said Alexander. "The award will include public recognition and a grant of \$2,500 to be used by a local nonprofit organization's executive director for his or her own personal development. This grant is being awarded for the first time to honor Bob Puff for his superb leadership as board chair for three years, between 2013 and 2015."

When told the choice of the nonprofit would be his, Puff thanked everyone for the honor and then quipped with his customary good humor, "What's the deadline for the assignment?"

IRCF President/CEO Jeff Pickering thanked the individuals, families and organizations with established accounts, the 52 IRCF founders whose initial \$1 million provided operating support, Warren Schwer-

in, who facilitated the foundation's move to new headquarters this past summer, his support team, Yamilet Cendejas and Jaci Ruppert, and the evening's sponsor, Northern Trust Bank.

"I know that you have many choices, and I am humbled and honored by the fact that you have chosen Indian River Community Foundation as a partner in your philanthropy," said Pickering, adding that the IRCF is one of the most active grant makers among community foundations in Florida. "It's truly an indication of the generosity of this community."

On a personal note, Pickering expressed gratitude for the warm welcome given to himself and his family - wife Stephanie and children Colin, Olivia and Grant - as newcomers to Vero Beach.

"This is truly a special place and we are blessed to be doing what we consider to be sacred work," he said.

Pickering said they try to teach their children that with privilege comes responsibility, adding, "When we ask Grant, 2, 'What does daddy do at work?' we think he gives a perfect answer. 'Daddy makes money and helps people.'"

"I think it's ironic that you named your son Grant," joked Bob Gibb, getting a laugh from the crowd. ■

INDIAN RIVER

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

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