

DIOCESE OF ORANGE



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KING AND QUEEN OF MARDI GRAS TO BE CROWNED IN ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF THE SPIRIT OF CATHOLIC PHILANTHROPY

ORANGE, Calif., (February 22, 2006) – The Catholic Charities of Orange County celebrates its 19th annual Mardi Gras Ball, February 25 at 6:00 p.m. The black tie fundraiser is set to take place at the Hyatt Hotel in Irvine, Calif., and is expected to draw more than 450 distinguished guests. The Most Rev. Tod D. Brown, Bishop of Orange, will honor the spirit of philanthropy and reflect on the bountiful contributions Catholic Charities has made over the past 30-years. Dick and Regina Hunsaker will reign as King and Queen of the Mardi Gras Ball.

“This celebration/fundraiser takes on even greater significance in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Catholic Charities of Orange County has raised \$157,426.93 in aid for hurricane evacuees and pledges to use this Mardi Gras Ball as an opportunity to raise even more to help those resettling in Orange County,” said Kim Neuhauser, chairwoman of the Mardi Gras Ball.

The annual Catholic Charities Mardi Gras event takes place just before the liturgical season of Lent, as does the famous Mardi Gras festival in New Orleans. Mardi Gras has a rich cultural heritage in the United States and is a celebration of surplus. The celebration arrived in North America with the LeMoyne brothers, Iberville and Bienville, in the late 17th century, when King Louis XIV sent them to defend France's claim on the territory of Louisiana on March 3, 1699. They made camp just south of New Orleans, named the spot Point du Mardi Gras and partook in a spontaneous party that is often referred to as North America's first Mardi Gras.

This year's Mardi Gras King and Queen were both born and raised in Los Angeles and met while students at the University of Southern California (USC). They were married in 1964 at Christ the King Church, Los Angeles, and moved to Orange County in 1970 where they raised their three children. Regina Hunsaker has served on the school board of Saint Catherine's Elementary and Immaculate Heart High School. She is an active member of the USC Trojan League, Orange County Chapter, and served as past president and board member of the Beverly Sills Chapter of the Orange County Performing Arts

Center. She has also participated for many years in the Cursillo Movement of the Diocese of Orange and is an active parishioner at Saint John Vianney Chapel, Balboa Island.

Richard Hunsaker has played a key role as a civil engineer in Orange County for more than 40 years. In 1976 he founded Hunsaker and Associates with three other partners. Their firm has designed communities throughout Southern California and Hunsaker has served on the Board of Directors of the Building Industry Association's (BIA) Orange County Chapter for 27 years. In 2003 he was inducted into the California Building Industry Foundation's Hall of Fame. Richard was named "Engineer of the Year" for land development engineering in 1998 and was also honored by the BIA in 2001 with the prestigious 10th annual Tribute to Excellence Award. Richard was also named "Alumnus of the Year" in 2001 by Chaminade College Preparatory in Chatsworth, where he is currently a member of the board of directors. For over 20 years Richard has served on the Diocese of Orange Construction Committee.

Dick and Regina are members of the Order of Malta, a religious order which has served the sick and the poor for nearly a millennium. They have made a number of pilgrimages to Lourdes, France, where the Order brings those that are ill for a week of spiritual experiences. Regina participates in the Order's Parish Nurse Program at Saint Norbert's in Orange and Dick is President of the Order's Orange County Chapter. They have also been longtime members of Legatus, an organization for Catholic business leaders who study, live and spread the faith in both their professional and personal lives.

"We appreciate being able to feed our faith in so many ways within the Diocese of Orange. We are humbled and honored to be named the King and Queen of the Mardi Gras Ball in this 30th anniversary year of Catholic Charities in Orange County," concluded Richard Hunsaker.

About Catholic Charities:

Catholic Charities of Orange County, Inc. is a non-profit organization that makes available a broad base of services to all Orange County residents regardless of religious, ethnic, racial and social backgrounds. Catholic Charities works with individuals to define, design and implement family-friendly programs that promote economic opportunity, educational achievement, family enrichment, community health and neighborhood reinvestment.

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