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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Museum of Natural History Raises \$445,000 for Education Programs

Annual fundraising event exceeds goal while celebrating nature's beauty

(Santa Barbara, CA – May 23, 2019) The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History's 20th Annual Mission Creek Gala took place Saturday, May 18, and raised \$445,000 for Museum education programs.

This year's annual fundraiser was named the *Walk Our Wild Side Soirée*, taking inspiration from the Museum's natural setting along Mission Creek. Over 220 guests had the rare opportunity to dine in one of three newly renovated exhibit halls—Mammal Hall, Bird Habitat Hall, and Santa Barbara Gallery. Uniquely designed tableaux were themed: the Fossil Society, the Cosmos Society, the Biblioteca Society, and the Vertebratas Society. Guests first enjoyed an outdoor cocktail reception in the Museum Backyard featuring a fossil station with Dibblee Collection Manager of Earth Science Jonathan Hoffman, Ph.D. and youth volunteer Ryder Welch, a bat station with Curator of Vertebrate Zoology Krista Fahy, Ph.D., a preview of the summer exhibit *Butterflies Alive!* in the new Sprague Butterfly Pavilion, and interactions (from a safe distance) with a live mountain lion from Zoo to You. Once in the galleries, guests enjoyed hearing from youth representatives from the Museum's signature teen program Quasars to Sea Stars (Bianca Campagnari and Diego Perez), Nature Adventures camps and classes (Hanna, Naomi, and Ava John), and Nature Ambassador Lena Fackler.

The gala committee was chaired by Stacey Byers and included Bobbie Kinnear, Amy Carpenter, Carolyn Chandler, Ginny Bliss, Elisabeth Fowler, Heather Hambleton, Emily Jones, Kali Kopley, Pam Valeski, Pippa Hames-Knowlton, Sheri Eckmann, Susan Parker, Venesa Faciane, Jenna Savage Davis, Meridith Moore, and Caroline Grange. The committee worked with planner Gillian Valentine Events and Hogue & Co. to create a night of beauty and fun that exceeded its fundraising goal.

The annual Mission Creek Gala sustains the Museum's outstanding education program that touches the lives of 20,000 schoolchildren each year through school tours, classes, storytelling, camps, the Nature Collections Lending Library, and outreach at the Museum and Sea Center.

The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History was founded in 1916 by noted ornithologist William Leon Dawson as the Museum of Comparative Oology. Soon after, the Board of Directors expanded the Museum to include other aspects of natural history, and in 1923, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History opened its doors at its current campus along Mission Creek. Since then, the Museum has become one of the most significant cultural and scientific institutions on the Central Coast with over 3.5 million specimens in its collections.

In celebration of its 100th anniversary in 2016, the Museum embarked upon a \$20 million Centennial Campaign to raise funds to support improving the visitor experience on every level. This included new

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exhibits, refurbished permanent galleries, improved accessibility, landscape beautification, and more effective site interpretation to unlock the historical and natural richness of the Museum's grounds. The revitalized spaces were unveiled in 2018.

About the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

Powered by Science. Inspired by Nature. Founded in 1916, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History inspires a thirst for discovery and a passion for the natural world. The Museum connects people to nature for the betterment of both.

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Museum Trustees Douglas Dreier and Tory Milazzo with Kelly Milazzo.



Specially designed fossil-themed tableau for sponsors from the Hutton Parker Foundation

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Gala Chair Stacey Byers, Director of Development Caroline Grange, Nature Ambassador Lena Fackler, and Museum President & CEO Luke J. Swetland



Guests in the Santa Barbara Gallery enjoyed a lovely program from teens in the Quasars to Sea Stars program and Director of Education Justin Canty.