

Russell Simmons hosts soiree for Soledad O'Brien

Written by Kam Williams



Over the weekend, hip-hop entrepreneur-turned-philanthropist Russell Simmons opened up his home to host a star-studded party for Soledad O'Brien in his lavish two-story penthouse located in lower Manhattan. The occasion marked the release of Soledad's autobiography, "The Next Big Story", which she co-wrote with Rose Marie Arce.

Besides the authors, celebrity guests in attendance included CBS news anchor Katie Couric, HLN host Jane Velez-Mitchell, actor Jamie Hector ("The Wire"), CNN reporters Alino Cho and Susan Candiotti, syndicated columnist Keli Goff, educator Dr. Steve Perry and PR maven Terrie Williams.

Also at the gathering was Soledad's husband, Brad, her father, Edward, and several of her siblings, as well as Corinne Vargas, who grew up on Long Island not far from the O'Brien family. Ms. Vargas' legal battle with the Village of Smithtown for affordable housing is recounted in the memoir, a section which serves to highlight the degree of discrimination there against minorities.

Given that Russell Simmons is a strict vegan, it was no surprise that the affair was catered by a chef specializing in vegetarian culinary fare, plus scrumptious desserts such as brownies, pumpkin pie, lemon tarts and chocolate mousse.

The only interruption of the otherwise informal festivities marked by imbibing of freely flowing wine and champagne arrived mid-evening when Russell took a moment to introduce Soledad (still on crutches recovering from a knee injury suffered while horseback riding), who in turn credited Rose and others who had helped turn the project into a success.

Always working the room, upon this reporter's introduction to Mr. Simmons, I immediately asked for an interview, and he assured me that we could do one soon, either to discuss his upcoming book (Super Rich), his new reality show (Running Russell Simmons), or both. So, watch this space.

Russell Simmons hosts soiree for Soledad O'Brien

Written by Kam Williams

To order a copy of The Next Big Story, visit: <http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0451231376?ie=UTF8&tag=thslfofire-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0451231376>

To order a copy of Super Rich: A Guide to Having It All, visit: <http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1592405878?ie=UTF8&tag=thslfofire-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=1592405878>

To see a trailer for Running Russell Simmons, visit:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpCI-dfDeFk>