



Walter and Shirley Massey.



Lois Weisberg and Richard Gray.



Robin Mumford salutes a friend.



John and Judy McCarter.



Steve Zick and Gail Freeman.



Chairs Shelley Gorson (from left), Catherine Handelsman and Madeline Gellis.



Ramsey Lewis mixes with fellow honorees and guests Saturday. —JEREMY LAWSON PHOTOS/FOR THE SUN-TIMES



David A. Bahlman (left) and John Bryan.



Maya Kumar and Scott Cockerham.

Cultural stalwarts gain legendary status

The glitterati swarmed **Ramsey and Jan Lewis, Richard and Mary Gray and John and Neville Bryan** outside the Red Lacquer Room at the historic Palmer House Hilton on Saturday. There were cameras flashing, hugging, kissing, posing ... all indications of a high-profile party. And so it was: the annual **Legendary Landmarks Gala**, presented by the Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois.

Last year, the council decided to launch the **Legendary Landmarks** program to recognize citizens who have made contributions to the civic and cultural life of Chicago and Illinois. The awards mirror the group's mission of identifying, preserving and maintaining state treasures such as the **Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House** in Downstate Plano and the **Chicago Theatre** on North State. **Lois Weisberg**, commissioner of the city's Cultural Affairs Department, was "landmarked" in the 2006 inaugural affair. This year's honorees,



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Lewis, Gray and Bryan, also have been stalwarts in the preservation movement and supporters of arts and culture.

"We are treating them like great pieces of architecture," said **David A. Bahlman**, president of Landmarks Illinois (the council's shorthand name). Bryan, the retired chairman and CEO of Sara Lee Corp., and Gray, a renowned gallery owner of modern and contemporary art, were instrumental in saving the **Farnsworth House** by raising \$7.5 million in eight weeks. Gray then headed to the auction of the **Farnsworth House** to bid aggressively on behalf of preservationists. Bryan also rallied supporters to help construct **Millennium Park**, which Bahlman called a "landmark of tomorrow." And Lewis, as a jazz musician, "is a piece of Chicago culture that's as important as those buildings," Bahlman said.

Gala co-chairs were **Madeline Gellis, Shelley Gorson** and **Catherine Handelsman**.

PARTY FILE
Ticket price: \$500.
Guests: 540.
Amount raised: More than \$400,000.

Guests feasted on **filet mignon** and vegetables, while the **Al Sofia Orchestra** supplied the entertainment. Adding to the sense of occasion were introductions by **Warrick Carter**, president of **Columbia College Chicago**; **John W. McCarter Jr.**, president and CEO of the **Field Museum of Natural History**, and **James Cuno**, president and director of the **Art Institute of Chicago**, who introduced **Lewis, Gray and Bryan**, respectively. **Leslie Hindman** was the emcee.

Among the evening's highlights: ♦ Lewis' intro, which drew parallels between Bryan and presidential hopeful **Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.)**. He noted that both are smart and good-looking, charismatic, politically savvy and frequent the barber shop **Truefitt & Hill**. The gala also provided the platform for Bryan's proclamation of the night: He plans to put his fund-raising muscle behind **Obama**, saying, "We are going all the way."