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FIGHTING FOR A CAUSE

LINDA GRAY, MORGAN FAIRCHILD, AND DONNA MILLS
UNITE AT THE STEVE CHASE HUMANITARIAN AWARDS
TO RAISE AWARENESS AND MONEY FOR AIDS SERVICES

BY KATHY STRONG

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ELENA RAY

Feathers flew as Linda Gray, Morgan Fairchild, and Donna Mills pummeled each other with pillows. The trio of nighttime soap stars whose characters fought hard for what they wanted laughed and squealed like teens — despite being dressed in designer gowns — during a mock pillow fight. Then they threw their pillows at the *Entertainment Tonight* camera, there to capture the scene for an upcoming broadcast.

The *Palm Springs Life* photo shoot in the Movie Colony marked the first time the stars of *Dallas*, *Falcon Crest*, and *Knots Landing* “worked” together, but they’ll do so again on Feb. 21 as co-hosts of the Steve Chase Humanitarian Awards in Palm Springs.

Although they have not collaborated through the years, they clearly share a bond, a mutual admiration and friendship that Gray calls “women actors on the leading edge.” “We were the first *Desperate Housewives*,” she says of their roles as strong women in oftentimes tough situations.

“We are just the girls hanging out — we should spend the night,” Fairchild said at the shoot. “It is fun to see how we’ve matured.”

If maturing means trading in their shoulder pads for challenging roles on stage and screen and leading important humanitarian causes, then the three decades since their primetime TV roles have been a success. After the pillow fight, they pulled feathers from their hair and lip gloss and concurred that they should have reconnected years ago.

Fashion Editor: Susan Stein

Photo Editor: Jay Jorgensen

Hair: Joy Fields of J. Russell Salon

Makeup: Chip Tuvman of J. Russell Salon and Kristian Eccles

Production Assistant: Diana Harris

Fashions: Morgan Fairchild and Donna Mills’ gowns courtesy of Fe Zandi in Palm Desert, Linda Gray’s gown courtesy of Kevan Hall Designs, Los Angeles

Location: Property presented by Beau Monde Villas (www.beaumondevillas.com) and professionally managed by Homes Run (www.homesrun.net)

Facing page from
left: Donna Mills,
Morgan Fairchild,
and Linda Gray
get into the
spirit of fun in
Palm Springs.





DONNA MILLS

(Abby on *Knots Landing*)

"We were all strong women, but I was the naughty girl," Mills says of her role as Abby on *Knots Landing*. "I had nine years to perfect that one. You never knew what she would do next, but she had a heart."

Although she is still entrenched in movies and television, Mills is dedicated to her role as mother to 14-year-old adopted daughter Chloe. "Once she was in school, I made it a rule not to go out of town for work," she says — one reason she enjoys doing Hallmark Channel movies (the latest, last October, was *Ladies of the House*). "They know to offer me movies that are shot here in town," she says, referring to her Los Angeles home base.

Life after *Knots Landing* saw Mills forming her own production company, choosing starring-role projects that would empower women, such as *My Name is Kate* and *Runaway Father*. In the desert last November to receive an award at Palm Springs Women in Film & Television's inaugural Broken Glass Awards, she said in her acceptance speech, "I learned [in my career] what tremendous power women have."

Visiting the desert is really coming home for the award-winning temptress who first made a name for herself in *Play Misty for Me*. "I used to own a condo in Santa Rosa Cove in La Quinta," says Mills, a trained dancer and avid hiker. "I am a big tennis player. I used to walk over to

[La Quinta Resort's] tennis courts and play." She returns to the desert every year for the Indian Wells Tennis Tournament (formerly Pacific Life Open).

"Playing tennis is my biggest pastime. I would play every day if I could," says Mills, who has a tennis court in her back yard.

She has also been involved in environmental issues for many years. "I attempt to get the entertainment industry involved," she says. "I have been on the board of the Earth Communications Office since it began 17 years ago, doing a number of PSAs and working on greening the studios early on, before it was a popular thing to do."

She feels fortunate to be offered interesting parts these days, such as her role in *Nip/Tuck* as a woman who wanted to look like a cat. "At some point, I wouldn't mind living in New York again," says Mills, who started her career in Woody Allen's stage hit *Don't Drink the Water*. "I would like to do stage work again."

"One of the nice things is you never know what the next role will be."

MORGAN FAIRCHILD

(Jordan on *Falcon Crest*)

When Morgan Fairchild auditioned early in her career for a role in a movie ("a ripoff from *Carrie*") and was reluctant to take to the bad-girl part, the director told her, "A good bitch is hard to find." Fairchild quips, "The movie began my road to bitchdom."