

**A Red Tie Gala**  
**47. Excellence in Special Events, Individual Event**

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**Description of event:** On April 24, 2008, approximately 1,000 Bradley alumni, employees, students, and friends attended a Red Tie Gala held in the ballroom at the Peoria Civic Center. “Imagine what we’ll do next” was the theme of the gala that combined the creative talents of faculty, students, and staff to produce an event that included live performances, multi-media presentations, and an inter-active dinner to announce the kick off of the Campaign for a Bradley Renaissance and recognize the largest gift in the history of the University.

See Red Tie Gala slide show at:

<http://campaign.bradley.edu/celebrations/redtie.shtml> and enclosed *Bradley Hilltopics*.

**Goal and objectives:**

Create a “wow” event that would showcase Bradley to the entire community and beyond and feature all of the great initiatives that are happening on campus including:

- The achievements of Bradley’s outstanding students and faculty.
- The announcement of the 2008 President’s Award to Robert C. Michel, former minority leader of the U.S. House of Representatives
- The announcement of the Campaign for a Bradley Renaissance goal of \$150 million and the unveiling of our vision for the future.
- The recognition of the 20 charter members of the Renaissance Circle Society established for those who have make a gift \$1 million or more to the Campaign.
- The announcement of the largest gift in the University’s history, a \$30 million gift from Caterpillar Inc.
- The announcement of the campaign total to date.

**How the project fits into overall institutional and advancement goals:**

Today, it is not enough to merely keep pace with the competition. Bradley University needs to move to a high level of academic excellence. In recognition of this challenge, the University’s Board of Trustees authorized the Campaign for a Bradley Renaissance with a goal of \$150 million. Following a 34-month “quiet” phase of internal preparation and solicitation, the University was ready to publicly kick off of the Campaign and to announce the lead gift on April 24, 2008. The Red Tie Gala provided an exceptional

opportunity to announce the campaign goal, recognize major donors, and celebrate our campaign achievements to date.

Most importantly, the Red Tie Gala provided an education opportunity for students in our Multimedia and Theatre Departments to become actively involve in a real-life production that showcased their creativity and talents.

**Audience:** 1,000 Bradley University alumni, employees, students and friends

**Professional and support staff:**

Executive Producer: Kathy Fuller, Asst. VP for University Relations, Bradley University

Directors: Jim Ferolo, Multimedia Program, Bradley University

George Brown, Department of Theatre Arts, Bradley University

Supporting cast and crew: (See Red Tie Gala Program, inside back cover)

**Budget \$350,000 (actual costs):**

Invitations & 1,500 programs (printing, packaging, red ties)	\$ 16,545.00
Catering	\$123,862.00
Productions costs (lighting, staging, sound system special effects, video production, table decorations)	\$197,335.00
Commemorative rose prints (materials)	\$ 1,635.00
TOTAL	\$339,377.00

**Challenges:**

- **How do you attract an audience to a “fundraising” event?** While invitees were not charged for this event, many are still reluctant to attend. To create interest in and excitement for the event we developed a very special invitation. Each invitee received a box that included a red bow tie to capitalize on Bradley’s colors of red and white. The response was a record-breaking 27% acceptance rate. See enclosed invitation and photos in *Hilltopics*, pages 12-13 and back cover.

- **How do you transform a 127’ 6” X 208’ ballroom into an intimate venue?** Instead of building a stage along one wall, we decided to build the stage in the center of the room with four 12x20 foot video screens above. With teleprompters on the floor, our key speakers were able to work all four sides of the room in a very intimate and personal setting. See *Hilltopics*, pages 12-13.

- **How do you highlight campus achievements in a new and inventive way?** A class of multimedia students took on the project of developing the opening segment of the evening that highlighted achievements of Bradley’s students and faculty. See DVD “Points of Pride” track.

**- How do you capture the heart and soul of Bradley and help create a desire to participate in the campaign?**

As one component of the Red Tie Gala, a 9:32 minute campaign video was shown. The video made use of beautifully shot b-roll footage of the university, engaging interviews of alumni, faculty, students and administrators, and first-class animation effects. The video also included an introduction from Bradley University's new president, Joanne K. Glasser. See DVD "Renaissance Video" track.

**- How to you keep an audience actively involved throughout dinner?**

Everyone seems to carry a cell phone these days—even to a "red" tie dinner. Our students developed a way to integrate the use of cellular technology into two interactive segments during dinner. Video directions were given on screen on how to "text" your favorite Bradley memories. These text messages were screened and posted on the four screens for the audience to read and enjoy. More than 1,300 Bradley memories were received during dinner. See DVD "Texting & Gameshow" track and read a selection of shared text memories at <http://www.bradley.edu/hilltopics/feature/>

During dessert, the audience was asked to use one cell phone per table to text their answers to a Bradley trivia game show that pitted the four sides of the room against each other. Everyone got into the game. See DVD "Text and Game Show" track.

**-How do you share the renderings of the campaign projects in an innovative way?**

Bradley's multimedia students created virtual architecture of each of the new building projects while Mr. Gerald Shaheen, chairman of the Board of Trustees and chairman of The Campaign for a Bradley Renaissance, described the vision of the future. See DVD "Campaign Initiatives" track.

**- How do you build momentum leading up to the announcement of the lead gift?**

Announcing the largest gift to Bradley in its history required a theatrical build. By engaging student dancers supported by a multimedia production and adding a bit of smoke to a revolving Bradley-Caterpillar logo at center stage, we set the stage for the very special announcement. See cover of *Bradley Hilltopics* and DVD "Caterpillar Highlight" track.

**- How do you commemorate the event with a special and unique keepsake gift?**

We tapped the talents of our art faculty along with the help of two Bradley MFA graduates. Thanks to the collaboration between Paul Krainak, chair of the art department and Oscar Gillespie, professor of art and founding coordinator/printer for Bradley's Cradle Oak Press, guests at the Red Tie Gala took home a signed,

limited-edition work of art to commemorate the Campaign. See Attachment A, *Hilltopics* pages 20-21.

In addition to the commemorative print, a copy of the case statement for The Campaign for a Bradley Renaissance was enclosed in a gift bag for attendees. A copy of the case statement is enclosed.

**Results:**

In addition to \$5,187,552 that has been raised since April 25 (the day following the Gala), Joanne Glasser, president of Bradley University, received numerous messages. Here is a small sampling:

“Wow! What a wonderful evening kicking off the Bradley Renaissance Campaign...your Red Tie Gala will go down in history.”

“It was a magnificent event highlighting everything our University has to offer. The feelings of enthusiasm, excitement, awe, and sheer amazement throughout that room were unsurpassed. It truly was a ‘had-to-be-there’ and ‘once-in-a-lifetime’ event.”

“What an evening! The Kick off Gala to announce the capital campaign was a spectacular event...I think I can speak for many when I say the contributions announced that night left many of us amaze and proud.”

“You could feel the excitement building throughout the night. I left feeling so fortunate to live in Peoria with its generous people and proud to be part of Bradley University.”

“I’ve not been very active with Bradley the past few years. After tonight, I want to get involved.”