

# COUNTRY - NOW - ™

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Country Now: [Morgan Wallen, ERNEST & HARDY Perform At The T.J. Martell Foundation's 49th Annual New York Honors Gala - Country Now](#)

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## Morgan Wallen, ERNEST & HARDY Perform At The T.J. Martell Foundation's 49th Annual New York Honors Gala



Last night, Sept. 17, the **T.J. Martell Foundation** hosted its 49th Annual New York Honors Gala in New York City to recognize this year's Lifetime Music Industry Award winner, Seth England, for his distinguished work as music industry leader and Partner / CEO of Big Loud. The event raised \$2.6 million, thus breaking the foundation's record for being the most successful gala in more than 20 years.



Held at Cipriani 42nd Street, the memorable evening was hosted by Steve Gawley, T.J. Martell Foundation Chairman-Elect of the Board of Trustees along with the Gala Co-Chair committee. This dedicated group includes Ben Adelson, Tyler Arnold, Scott Borchetta, Tom Corson, Archie Davis, John Esposito, Clint Higham, Lynn-Anne Huck, Monte Lipman, Avery Lipman, Rakiyah Marshall, Debbie Martell, Joey Moi, Brian O'Connell, Andre Stapleton, Julie Swidler, Greg Thompson, Candice Watkins and Craig Wiseman.

While delivering a heartwarming speech in England's honor, Gawley explained that England showed no hesitation when asked to be this year's honoree.



“He didn’t need to check his schedule, he just said yes, because that’s the kind of person Seth is. He truly cares, understood the gravity of our cause and he jumped in with both feet. Seth’s only question was ‘How do we make the most impact?’ Because Seth always thinks big.”

Gawley went on to gush about how England has truly made an impact on the foundation’s mission to fund innovative cancer research. England his wife, Rakiyah Marshall, kicked off the campaign by personally donating a quarter million dollars. Additionally, the Big Loud Team and the Martell Team held a breakfast at Nissan Stadium in Nashville last May which raised over \$1.1M and “highlighted the true spirit and generosity of the Nashville music community.”

“Our fundraising work continued full speed into the summer and that’s when I received a call from Craig Wiseman, Seth’s other partner at Big Loud. Craig is well known as one of the greatest songwriters and producers of all time, as well as a highly successful entrepreneur,” Gawley continued in his speech. “What Craig made clear to me was simply the enormous pride he took in having mentored Seth for his entire career. Craig asked me ‘How much do you need to go over the \$2M – I’m giving you \$300k today, we’re breaking the record today and now go on and get even more for cancer research my friend.’ and I was pretty stunned.”



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After hearing Gawley's kind words, England shared a few thoughts of his own regarding the impact the foundation is making, thanks to all their efforts.

"None of us would be here without the incredible work of the historic T.J. Martell Foundation. This year, I've had a massive learning curve about all that this organization means to folks— learning about the people it's helped save and the money raised that continues to go to cancer research," he shared. "The work that the T.J. Martell Foundation has done has touched countless lives, and being a part of that legacy is beyond humbling. I'm honored to be able to contribute to this mission in tonight's small way."



In celebration of England's generosity and achievements with Big Loud, three of the Nashville-based company's leading acts, **Morgan Wallen**, **HARDY** and **ERNEST**, delivered a special writer's round. ACM award-winning genre-bender, **HARDY**, opened with his No. 1 country hit, "Truck Bed," followed by an epic collaboration between Wallen and **ERNEST** on "Flower Shops."



Wallen also sang his Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 hit, "Last Night" and an unreleased song titled, "Love Somebody," which he previewed on the most recent leg of his European headlining tour but has yet to showcase to fans in the U.S.

"I like to always remind the three of them (Morgan Wallen, HARDY, and ERNEST) and anyone else who will listen that this business is what you do, it's not who you are," England continued. "Tonight, I couldn't be more proud of those three in particular who showed up for me, showed up for this foundation and for cancer research because that's who they are as people."





The evening, which was attended by Big Loud artists like [Ashley Cooke](#), [Lily Rose](#), [Miranda Lambert](#), and more, also included a fundraising auction. Additionally, Def Jam's Chief Creative Officer / EVP, Archie Davis, who received the New York Honors Gala Rising Music Superstar Award in 2023, announced an important new initiative that will continue to raise awareness of early screening and testing.

Each year, the Foundation hosts this elegant event as its main fundraiser, allowing it to continue to advance its mission of finding a cure for cancer by funding high-risk, high-reward research that could lead to groundbreaking advancements in early detection, screening, and treatments.