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## Leonore Annenberg, beloved philanthropist, remembered

By Peter Dobrin  
INQUIRER CULTURE WRITER

She was an enabler for world leaders, said NBC news correspondent Andrea Mitchell.

"A philanthropist of global acclaim," declared Britain's Prince Charles.

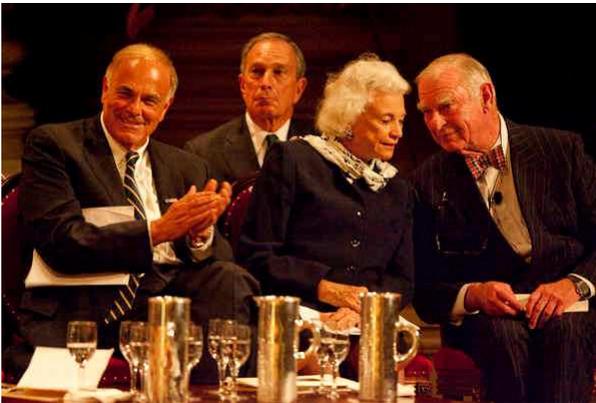
"It was never about Lee, it was always about others," said NBC special correspondent and author Tom Brokaw.

Today, it was finally about Lee - Leonore Annenberg, that is, the civic leader and philanthropist who died in March at age 91. Leaders in the realms of education, science, medicine, arts and culture, philanthropy, business and politics gathered to remember her in a 90-minute tribute at the Academy of Music.



Mrs. Annenberg knew that the key to a great party was the guest list, said New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg. "This surely is one of the great celebrations of our time," he said, gesturing out into the house of about 1,600 guests who heard reminiscences and testimonials to her good works.

Anyone seeking physical evidence of those good works could simply look around. More generously and lovingly than anyone else, Walter and Lenore Annenberg saw to it that the Grand Old Lady of Locust Street was maintained and restored.



In their lifetimes they gave more than \$100 million to the Academy and the Philadelphia Orchestra, which, led by Charles Dutoit, played excerpts of Dvorak, Tchaikovsky, Strauss and Copland while images of Annenberg flashed on screens above the stage.

After the ceremony, guests spilled out into the foyers of the Academy and could see for the first time the last big Annenberg project at the Academy: a ballroom restored to its original 1857 appearance.

The Annenbergs loved to hear the orchestra in the old hall that was its home from its founding in 1900 until 2001, and the ensemble is developing plans to return there for a small

number of concerts next season.

"Lee loved music and in particular the Philadelphia Orchestra," said retired federal judge Arlin Adams.

President George H. W. and Barbara Bush spoke in a pre-recorded but quite contemporaneous sounding video, recalling Annenberg's grace and civility.

"She literally changed our relationship with Japan," said Barbara Bush, referring to Annenberg's tenure as U.S. chief of protocol. And nearly everyone spoke of Annenberg's glamor, and her all-but-psychic ability to make people feel at ease.