



BROADWAY CARES / EQUITY FIGHTS AIDS

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June 20, 2026

Dear Esteemed Members of the INTERNATIONAL COURT COUNCIL.

I am writing this letter to most enthusiastically recommend that Coco LaChine be elected and elevated to the position of Queen Mother II of the Americas, Titular Head of State to succeed Empress Nicole the Great.

Of course, anyone who is a part of the LGBTQ+ community is aware and deeply grateful for Coco LaChine's 30+ year involvement with the International Court System, serving on the Council for over 25 years. As one of the founding members of the Imperial Court of New York (1986) Empress Coco serves as a permanent member of the Board, as well as completing numerous terms as President of the Board. It would take pages for me to recount how Empress Coco's dedicated, forthright and unfailing leadership has impacted both the Imperial Court and the expanse of the LGBTQ+ and HIV/AIDS communities.

I first attended Night of 1,000 Gowns in 1991 at the invitation of Empress Coco. I had just met Coco/Charles when he was working with Sean Strub on his gay direct mail business in the years before founding POZ Magazine. Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS (BC/EFA) had just come into being a few years before and while co-producing Off-Broadway play, THE NIGHT LARRY KRAMER KISSED ME with Sean, I soon realized the engine that effectively powered much of Sean's activism was the quiet, indispensable Charles Ching.

You can imagine my thrill when being introduced officially to Coco LaChine at that first NIGHT OF 1,000 GOWNS. That evening, at Empress Coco's invitation and royal insistence; a fruitful, now potent collaboration was born between the Imperial Court of New York and Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. was born. One that has continued now for over 35 years.

Empress Coco has encouraged and led members of the Court to volunteer at scores of BC/EFA events – from the hot, nearly naked glories of BROADWAY BARES to the sunbaked outdoor excitement of the BROADWAY FLEA MARKET. For a number of years, Empress Coco led a bejeweled royal contingent as special guests of the EASTER BONNET Competition for which Empress Coco also served as judge, the only celebrity judge to appear fully coiffed and crowned.

I am truly grateful to Empress Coco for inviting BC/EFA into the process of being a beneficiary of a number of NIGHT OF 1000 GOWNS, including most recently in 2025. Empress Coco understands clearly the essential connection between the fun and the fundraising, the glam and outreach, the spotlight and the frontlines. And yes, I have had the honor of being knighted by the court twice over those last 30 years.

But there is much more to recommend Empress Coco La Chine than simply recounting of her royal duties and community activism. Empress Coco's reliability and leadership skills complement an essential ability to read and finesse the professional and personal needs of those with whom he collaborates and works. His dedication is propelled by an enviable work ethic and a strategic understanding of the communication skills necessary for sustained, collaborative success.

Empress Coco exhibits a resilient personality that makes her invaluable on any team or Court. She understands the responsibilities of being "a soloist" as well as the value in being "a worker among workers." She is eager and willing to share her lived experiences and best self with others in a way that is supportive and engaging. At Broadway Cares, we are inspired by the belief that "what we do together makes a difference." We could not make a difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children in need if it weren't for the gracious commitment, generosity of spirit and leadership of Empress Coco LaChine.

I am honored and eager to recommend with enthusiasm that EMPRESS COCO LACHINE be crowned the next QUEEN MOTHER II of the International Imperial Court System.

Sincerely,

Tom Viola

Tom Viola
Former Executive Director – BC/EFA 1988 – 2024
Current BC/EFA Board Member

Cc: Danny Whitman, Executive Director – Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS.