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Photo by Sherry Ferrante

SISTER ACT:
Timolin (left) and
Casey Cole

LIKE FATHER, LIKE DAUGHTERS

Cole Sisters Create Music Foundation For Future Generations

By Linda Marx

After learning of budget cuts in South Florida's public school system, Timolin Cole, 47, and her identical twin sister, Casey, took action, creating a foundation named after their legendary father, crooner Nat King Cole, to fund music education for kids of all ages, ethnic backgrounds and diversities.

It was something their father would have wanted, the sisters agree. While he died from cancer when they were just 3 years old, the impression he made on them — and on American culture — remains indelible. Not only is he remembered for myriad musical hits (*Unforgettable*, *Mona Lisa* and

When I Fall In Love, to name a few), but for his gentle, gracious ways and trail-blazing career during a time of racial strife. He's credited with paving the way for minority artists and entertainers, dating back to when he became the first African-American to host a network TV program.

"Our dad was a kind and generous man who people called the 'gentle giant,'" says Timolin Cole, whose siblings include their late sister, Carole, and singer Natalie, who recently underwent a kidney transplant. "He always said, 'I may be able to bring harmony among people with my music.' We want to continue that dream."

The result is Nat King Cole Generation Hope, Inc., an organization that provides music-related resources to schools and religious facilities throughout Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade and Martin counties. The organization has already held fund-raisers in Miami Beach and Palm Beach, with more planned to benefit the region. In a few years, funds will be provided nationally.

The Cole sisters are no strangers to South Florida. While they grew up in the Berkshires and later moved to separate coasts (Timolin ran a New York public relations firm; Casey worked in music and charity fund-raising in Los Angeles), both

now live in Boca Raton with their husbands and children.

"We're laid-back in Boca ... we love to hang with our families, go to the beach, museums, play tennis and have weekends at Disney and Universal in Orlando," says Timolin, who has two sons, Justin, 11, and Julian, 13, with her musician husband, Gary Augustus. The family enjoys spending time with Casey, her husband Julian Hooker, and their son, 12-year-old Wyatt. "Boca gives the kids a good quality of life."

And, thanks to the sisters' philanthropic efforts, they're giving something right back. ○