

PAT

Tonight we are paying tribute to a woman who has devoted more than 20 years of her life to improving the lives of Lyme patients and their families. Listing Pat Smith's many accomplishments as president of the national Lyme Disease Association is a challenging assignment. I encourage all of you to visit the LDA website and read about the history of Lyme disease and the dozens of programs, projects and bills she may be working on at any given point in time with groups from coast to coast. There is a no more committed advocate for our cause than Pat Smith.

We first met Pat in the spring of 2003 when we invited her to our first Ridgefield Lyme Disease Task Force Town Meeting. Jennifer and I had reached out to leaders of established Lyme organizations for help with the endeavor. We knew nothing about the politics of Lyme. All we were focused on was that our families were sick and we believed the community needed more information about these diseases. I remember being amazed that the president of a national Lyme organization responded to our call for help and drove from New Jersey to help two women she'd never met in a small Connecticut town she'd barely heard of. She was generous with her time and the knowledge she shared with us as we began our own journey into the Lyme world, and she has been there for us ever since.

In 2004 we spent countless hours with Pat and other Connecticut groups organizing a Legislative hearing with then Attorney General Richard Blumenthal and the Connecticut Department of Health. For months, she met us in Hartford to help develop a program that covered all the issues and assured this included the voices of physicians and patients who could truly speak to the heart of this issue.

Charges against our beloved pediatrician Dr. Charles Ray Jones brought Pat back to our state in 2005. Pat was in the courtroom as Dr. Jones began his defense and continued to make the trip to support him until the verdict was read over a year later.

We stood with Pat outside the gates of Westchester Medical Center where she led a protest against the IDSA guidelines in 2006 and we supported her efforts to contribute to Attorney General Blumenthal's highly publicized investigation into possible IDSA antitrust violations that same year.

There have been successes throughout this journey as well. We were thrilled to celebrate the opening of the Lyme and Tick-borne Diseases Research Center at Columbia University Medical Center with Pat and Dr. Brian Fallon in 2007. Pat and Greenwich based Time for Lyme were instrumental in raising the money for this program.

In 2009, I had the honor of working with Pat and Maggie Shaw on HB 6200, AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF LONG-TERM ANTIBIOTICS FOR THE TREATMENT OF LYME DISEASE. I will be forever grateful for the daily support and guidance she provided throughout this experience—from fine tuning language to helping us rally support from across the country – supporting us as we navigated through the complexities of the legislative process. This bill would never have happened if it hadn't been for the incredible amount of time and support she provided. This legislation, protecting doctors from attack by state medical boards



for treating those ill with Lyme disease - was one of the first to pass in the country and led to many more similar bills being passed into law.

Pat is a power house with a compassionate heart, fearless in her commitment to do what's best for Lyme patients and their families. She tells it like it is and then let's – forces? – you to make the decision. Amazingly, she has accomplished all of this as an unpaid volunteer. Her courage will always be an inspiration for me and she will forever hold a very special place in our hearts.

Despite her reluctance to receive this award – we insisted she allow us to acknowledge her accomplishments here tonight. Joining us now are the LDA affiliates, physicians, friends and co-workers who have traveled from as far away as California to honor Pat on behalf of Lyme patients everywhere.

*Wait for them to come up*

On behalf of Lyme Connection it is my very special honor to present Pat Smith with the Courage in Advocacy Award.