MILITARY SPEECH

FOR

PATRICIA McCAFFERTY

Hello everyone. To all of you here today- distinguished guests-especially (**name any special officers or personnel that should be mentioned**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; to my brother and sister colleagues, to my family, friends, and anyone who has assisted me and encouraged me along the way, I am proud and humbled to be standing before you as United States Navy **CAPTAIN** Patricia McCafferty and I would like to take a moment to express acknowledgement and gratitude to all of you. Although I am here in front of this audience, on this podium as one person, there are many whose generosity and support have inspired my dedication and have facilitated my commitment as I find the way to serve my family, country and profession. I am the embodiment of the expression, “I am part of all that I have met” and I am so thankful for all of the relationships in my life and for all of the opportunities that have presented themselves along the way. Nothing could have been accomplished without the support, guidance, and encouragement I have received.

Sarah Palin said, “Buck up or stay in the truck!” I just want you to know that throughout my career, I’ve been in that truck and way out of it, literally, and as someone that has really “hit the ground running,” I can tell you, life affords endless possibilities as long as we are ready, willing, and able to find the way to handle all that we need to do in life. I wear many hats stacked on top of my new Captain’s hat-As a wife to a wonderful loving and caring husband and as a mother to six amazing children, as a daughter to the greatest role model anyone could wish for, as a civilian registered dietitian specializing in the long term care sector, and as a devoted serviceperson, I can tell you that as each hat and set of responsibilities motivate and inspire my passion for life, each aspect fuels my greater determination to find the way to serve all with whom I come into contact. We’ve all heard the expression, “It’s a big job but someone’s gotta do it!” I have learned the more that I accomplish; the more I want to serve. To those that make it possible for me to do what I do, you just inspire me to greater heights (**If you want to make a little joke you can say**)-which, of course keeps all of **YOU** even busier, but let’s face it, we’re in this together!

Having six children would ordinarily be enough to keep just about **ANYONE** engaged **overtime** in loving, caring for, and coordinating the schedules for all, but somehow as a hockey mom, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ gets to practices and games, as a dance mom \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ works on those wonderful new steps and moves, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ makes me proud to be an eighth grade class mom, and you **KNOW** military training definitely came in handy as a brownie mom who has recently been upgraded to junior girl scout leader thanks to the involvement of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. There’s also \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who loves \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and who keeps us on our toes even more than \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**name the one that is the dancer**) and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who really shines as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The age range of all six kids is from \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ and they are my joy and inspiration. You may think I sound like superwoman at this point, but **NONE** of this would have been possible without the love, support and amazing guidance we have all received from my mother, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. She really is the ultimate and I cannot imagine how I could have done any of this without her or the partnership of my wonderful, loving, “well-coordinated” husband, (**say “well-coordinated” if** **you feel it’s appropriate**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Let’s be honest, **SOMEONE** has to keep the hockey pucks on the rink and not on the dance floor!! (**Name your** **husband**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I hope you realize the merit badge for greatest dad goes to you!

Condoleezza Rice is known to have said, “What you know today can affect what you do tomorrow. But what you know today cannot affect what you did yesterday.” Life is about moving forward, and committing to leaving the world in a better shape every day.

I have always been proud of my military connection and commitment. In 2003 I was deployed for Operation Iraq Freedom and was gone for four and a half months. I completed an advanced degree in Navy War College for JPME and was recently selected as Navy Medicine East Deputy interim fill. I also serve as the XO of the Jacksonville hospital RC. I have spent twenty-one inspiring, challenging, rewarding and fulfilling years in the service of our country, and to me, this is just the beginning! I know that to some of you what I’ve just said may not make a lot of sense-you may not fully understand the abbreviations or catch phrases. Some of the younger people in the audience may not completely grasp the scope of the responsibilities and commitments that come with these assignments, but responsibility and accountability is relative to any age and lifestyle. One of the most important aspects of life is to constantly challenge oneself- to continually strive for is excellence and productivity and to discover your own special way to make a difference in the world. Honestly, sometimes I wonder how I get it all done, but I guess we all can relate to the famous quote by Robert Browning who said, “One’s reach should exceed his grasp…” When we focus on the benefits and rewards reaped as we concetrate on what we can do for our family, friends, community and country, it’s amazing how much we can get done!

As I have gone through my professional, personal and military lives mostly simultaneously, it becomes crystal clear that there are several essential qualities and assets required to be successful on many levels. The first qualities to posses are the awareness of what is going on around you, the drive to find your way to contribute to the world, and the spirit dedication, and determination to make a difference. It then helps to find a mentor… or two… to guide you, provide constructive criticism and an ear to listen and give feedback. By the way, it’s also important to note that mistakes are a way of learning. They’re a way of measuring progress and of experiencing how to be accountable, how to acknowledge less than successful actions, stand up, and correct. Mentors are also vital as beacons to light your way. An effective mentor knows there is no such thing as a bad question and as you are strengthened by mentorship, you will in turn learn how to give back to those that look up to you. Be conscious of who you are, how you work, and what impact you leave for those around you. Are you a leader or a follower? No matter what, both are essential components of a team and NOTHING can be accomplished without teammates.

As I go through life and look back on what life was like when I was younger and building my career, I can see so much of my mother in what I have chosen to do and how I’ve navigated my path in life. In many ways, my mother was my first mentor-among other essential roles, and I owe my “can do” attitude to her lessons of patience, resilience, dedication and determination. Dr. Norman Vincent Peale had these words of encouragement. He said, “Lots of people limit their possibilities by giving up easily. Never tell yourself, ‘This is too much for me. It’s no use. I can’t go on.’ If you do your licked, and by your own thinking too. Keep believing and keep on keeping on.”

I want to thank all of you for being here and celebrating this accomplishment with me. If there were one goal that I would have wanted to achieve today, it would be this: That you think back on this ceremony and remember that anything and everything is possible. You have the power and the ability to achieve your goals. You have the determination to find the solutions to breaking down the barriers and overcoming the obstacles that stand in your way, and whether you feel limited by time or organizational parameters or even confidence, work every day to achieve just that much more. I want to acknowledge all of you for what you have already achieved and what accomplishments you will attain in the future and I look forward to sharing our mutual successes for many years to come.

Sarah Palin has also said, “We don’t need to fundamentally transform America. We need to restore America,” As each one of you finds your strength and commitment to grow and serve you communities in the capacities you choose, our country will grow stronger.

Thank you all!