**HALL OF FAME SPEECH**

**FOR**

**NITA D’AGOSTINO**

Hello ladies and gentlemen. It’s a pleasure to be with all of you tonight and it’s a privilege for me to say a few words about this next portion of our festivities. We’ve all heard the song lyric, “Some people wait a lifetime for a moment like this.” ... and while this particular recognition does not necessarily require the full span of an actual lifetime.... although in work years, the longevity required can **FEEL** like a lifetime, (**Wait for the laugh**) it has taken this woman **twenty-two years** of determination, compassion, and the demonstration of unwavering resourcefulness and enthusiasm, to **FINALLY** get our attention... (**Wait for the laugh**). Of course I am kidding. Tracy Jones has been a consistent, compelling force of nature for her entire tenure here at PathStone. She’s demonstrated her resourcefulness time and again. She’s helped me get through the tough times.... and that’s just referring to my legendary **driving** skills.... (**Wait for the laugh**). She’s walked the walk, she’s talked the talk, she’s shown that teamwork amplifies our abilities and makes each one of us better, more effective, and more eager to go on.... and for all of those reasons, it is my privilege to **finally** (**Do you want to say this?**) make all of her considerable efforts and dedication... **legit**. Tonight, as an inductee, colleague, friend, and sister, I am proud to, in turn, induct Tracy Jones into the PathStone Hall of Fame.

It was Eleanor Roosevelt who said, “A woman is like a tea bag- you can’t tell how strong she is until you put her in hot water.” And it was Tracy Jones that taught us that energy, enthusiasm and proactive response to “hot water” is infinitely renewable. As the Executive Director of Program Administration here at PathStone, she has been by my side and she’s been my voice of reason. She’s been my sounding board, my “external hard drive,” my power source and has been with me... through thick... through thin... and through **TRAFFIC**... for those of you that may not be aware....I understand the word going around is that my “**creative driving skills** are uh... ‘**notable**’”... Tracy survived even **THAT**... just **BARELY**... (**Wait for the laugh**) .... and she keeps going and going and going....

I don’t have to reiterate that the work we do at PathStone is vital and critical to tens of thousands (**revise this if more**) of people who rely on our programs and services in order to establish security... personal, educational, financial, professional ... as they build better lives for themselves, their families, and ultimately their communities. What we do matters, and the more we can accomplish, the greater our outreach, the more pervasive our positive impact, the better off we **ALL** are. Tracy Jones is directly responsible for our continued and increased effectiveness in the communities and sectors we support. Tracy is **THERE**... as needed and we all appreciate that kind of dedication. She is someone who responds when it really counts. I will never forget once... probably **MORE** than once, we needed a grant written and it was complicated... detailed... time consuming. It was going to take all weekend to meet the deadline... but there was Tracy... by my side... getting the job done... making it work. (**Do you want to make a joke and say**)... but let’s be “**real**.” She **DIDN’T** let me drive her home... (**and wait for the laugh**).

Tracy Jones does an excellent job and she has made a truly positive impact on this organization professionally. She has also worked with me consistently and the results are clear... thanks to Tracy’s insightful enthusiasm and dedicated partnership, our trajectory has expanded and the base of our participants has grown considerably. I’m proud to say we now serve upwards of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ clients and beneficiaries of our much needed programs (**please try to provide a number and revise language if this is not accurate**), and she performs all of her duties and responsibilities with intelligence, respect, grace, and humor. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge just how deep our friendship and connection goes. While we have shared great laughs, considerable pressure, and notable pride in our combined achievements, Tracy and I share something much deeper. We have stood with each other, side by side through personal crises as well. We’ve shared the challenges that have deemed to place us in plenty of hot water, and together, we have prevailed and only gotten better... more effective... more insightful, and hopefully wiser. I would hope that Tracy agrees when I say that we are each other’s second family, and for that, I have tremendous gratitude.

Michelle Obama has said, “We, as women, we have to understand that we know more, just even instinctively, than we think we do.” Tracy, while you constantly work towards personal and professional goals, you hold up a mirror, not just for yourself, you provide a lens in which we can all see what excellence and service really looks like. I am so proud of observing your growth and contribution over the years, and, yes, to paraphrase what was said in **that** movie, “You make me want to be a better professional.” Tracy Jones, it is an honor to induct you into the PathStone Hall of Fame. Congratulations and here’s to many more years of collaboration! Thank you all!!