

THE *Pat Summitt* FOUNDATION

Dear Friends,

As you know, in the summer of 2011, at the age of 59, I received a diagnosis that I now share with 5.4 million other Americans: I am suffering from early onset dementia, Alzheimer's-type.

On hearing this difficult news, my son Tyler and I had two important decisions to make: First, whether to keep this a private matter, and second, how to cope with the disease. The course we've chosen will be familiar to our friends, family, and all those who share the values of Tennessee women's basketball.

Put away your hankies. There's not going to be any pity party. We're going to fight, and we're going to fight publicly.

In my 38 years as head coach of the Tennessee Lady Vols I have preached the following things: Absolute dedication, unselfishness, unwillingness to give up, determination to see every contest to the very end.

I have demanded these things from the young people I've coached. Now I am asking them from you.

Tyler and I have decided to join this battle, not just for us, but also for the millions of families affected by this disease. As I have always told our players, our greatest opportunities are disguised as our greatest obstacles. It is time to treat this obstacle as an opportunity – and a stepping stone to a cure. We are therefore excited to share with you the creation of The Pat Summitt Foundation.

Our focus will be on awareness, advocacy and research:

- Awareness that over the next 40 years, it is estimated that as many as 16 million Americans will have the disease.
- Advocacy for patients who, despite the stigma of the diagnosis, possess far more abilities than disabilities, yet who too often are told to quit living.
- Research for a cure. Great work is being done right now, but we need to better equip the talented professionals on the front lines of clinical study and care giving initiatives. There is not enough funding for their critical work – in fact, research dollars are declining.

We are just getting started, and we need your help.

I have often said this about coaching players: They don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care.

Show you care. Join our team. We will gain strength in numbers.

Yours truly,



Pat Summitt