

LIFE Gives Thanks to the Heroes Among Us

November 2, 2023



Dear Friends:

I just came back from a short trip to New York, where I attended the Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis' 38th Annual Sports Legends Dinner. As you may recall, I made a significant gift to the University of Miami 23 years ago to create a center where research and treatment could be conducted in search of cures for neurological diseases -- from spinal cord injury to Alzheimer's and ALS. That building is called the Lois Pope LIFE Center, which has become the world's leading center for research and treatment of paralysis, spinal cord injury, and other neurological afflictions. The Lois Pope LIFE Center is home to the Miami Project/Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis.

The dinner was a star-studded affair, with the Buoniconti Fund honoring nearly a dozen sports HEROES and SHE-ROES. This year's inductees included Hall of Fame football star and TV personality Michael Strahan, Olympic Gold Medal swimmer Missy Franklin, and Baseball Hall of Famer Jim Thorne, who played for my hometown Philadelphia Phillies.

My dear friend, Gloria Estefan, who spoke at the dedication of the Lois Pope LIFE Center, and twice headlined our annual Lady in Red Gala, served as Mistress of Ceremonies and spoke so beautifully about real HEROES and SHE-ROES – the doctors at the Miami Project who helped her recover from a near-fatal tour bus accident in the early 1990s.



**Gloria Estefan,
who spoke at the dedication of
the Lois Pope LIFE Center,
was also treated by the Miami Project,
who helped her recover
from a near-fatal accident.**

While in the city, a friend told me about an exhibition at the Museum of Jewish Heritage -A Living Memorial to the Holocaust in lower Manhattan. "Courage To Act" tells the story of another group of HEROES – and SHE-ROES – in fact, an entire country of them. In October 1943, at the height of the Holocaust, the nation of Denmark – from the King and his government to the Lutheran Church to ordinary citizens – defied Hitler and the Nazis and not only hid Jews but, over a four-week period, took them in wooden fishing boats to safety in Sweden. As a result, more than 95% of Denmark's 7,000-plus Jews survived the Holocaust. That is the very definition of what makes a HERO and a SHE-ROE.

And you know who else are HEROES and SHE-ROES? The men and women of Magen David Adom, Israel's national emergency service. As you can imagine, its 33,000 medical technicians and paramedics have now deployed its fleet of 2,000 ambulances, medicycles, helicopters, and other emergency vehicles to try and save every man, woman, and child possible who have been victimized by the massive bombings and terrorist assaults in the current war there.

They are doing all this while putting their own lives in jeopardy AND while working on hundreds of thousands of other lifesaving cases every year – heart attacks, births, vehicular accidents, animal bites, household falls, gunshots, and the like. Plus, it helps many countries during natural disasters, lending its experience and expertise in the aftermath of earthquakes, tsunamis, and other extreme weather tragedies. And it does so regardless of faith, religion, ethnicity, race, gender, nationality, or political affiliation. That is the very actualization of the words HERO and SHE-ROE.



**Moti Ferder,
CEO of Lugano Diamonds and Jewelry,
will be honored with Lois Pope's
16th Ambulance donation to AFMDA.**

So, I consider it a privilege to be able to donate ambulances to MDA. Over the past several years, it has grown into a fleet that now numbers 16. Each of my ambulance donations is made in honor of a dear friend of mine and a significant supporter of LIFE and the causes we support. The 16th will be officially dedicated on December 10th in honor of a truly remarkable man, Moti Ferder, CEO of Lugano Diamonds, who served four years in the Israel Defense Forces, and in tribute to our longtime friend Tova Leidesdorf, who was Miss Israel as a young adult before becoming one of the world's most generous philanthropists

In fact, Thanksgiving is the perfect time to honor all our HEROES – and SHE-ROES, whether they are the doctors and researchers at the Lois Pope LIFE Center, the sports legends, the righteous who saved Jews from the concentration camps despite their own lives being at stake, and everyone else in our lives who go above and beyond to make this a better, safer, and more humane world.

I wish all of you – my dear friends and my personal HEROES and SHE-ROES, the happiest and healthiest Thanksgiving. And even more personal to me, I give my deepest thanks and my unconditional love to my daughter Maria, who was born on Thanksgiving. She continues to inspire me as one of my SHE-ROES!

With love always,



**Lois Pope, the largest non-Jewish funder
of mobile medical intensive care units for
the State of Israel poses with
Tova Leidesdorf at the dedication of
Lois Pope's 15th ambulance donation
to AFMDA which was in honor of Tova.**

Lois



Noteworthy

Dear Lois,

During these horrific times, it is comforting to know that friends like you are truly supportive of Israel and the Jewish people.

Thank you for your amazing leadership and philanthropic support. You are such a wonderful woman. Always focused on caring for others and making the world a better place. USO blood clearly runs deeply through your veins!

With love,
Sandy

Sandra K. Baker
Managing Director, Development
South Florida PBS

Re: In the trenches: Palm Beach fundraising dollars at work in Israeli rescue operations

Thank you Lois,

I only saw this when a friend sent it to me at 5:30 this morning. I knew as I read it that you, Lois, an Angel on earth, had a hand in putting the lifesaving work of MDA front and center. You are a true friend to Israel and the Jewish people. You stand by your friends in good times and in bad, and for that, I will always be grateful. You have cast light upon Israel in a week of extreme darkness, one I never thought I would see in my lifetime, one that I hoped was a piece of our history, not our future. Your voice screams out in defense of the victims you won't ever meet, but you have given them a voice by using yours, and for that, I will always be eternally grateful.

May you always be blessed, for you have blessed so many. Thank you hardly seems enough to express my gratitude and love. But thank you, Lois, thank you.

With love,

Tammy

Tamara H. Karu
Southeast Region Director/National Director of Strategic Philanthropy
AFMDA. Saving lives. It's in our blood.

Photo of the Month

A Quacky Police Escort



Photo taken by Palm Beach Daily News photographer Damon Higgins

LOIS POPE AND THE BOARD OF LIFE
PROUDLY PRESENT LIFE'S 30TH ANNUAL

LADY IN RED GALA

MARCH 17, 2024

THE BREAKERS, PALM BEACH

STARRING GLOBAL SUPERSTAR

PAUL ANKA

AND COMEDY ICON

JAY LENO

To purchase tickets online, go to
life-edu.org or call 561-582-8083

*Reserve your tables and sponsorships
early for what promises to be a truly
historic event.*

Proceeds benefit:

Disabled Veterans through American Humane's
"Pups4Patriots" Program and South Florida youth
through Palm Beach County Food Bank's Lois'
Food4Kids Program.

To purchase tickets online,
go to life-edu.org or call 561-582-8083