

ADL Speech for Debbie Dietz

Good afternoon, and congratulations to Alan Diamond for receiving this award today.

My name is Debbie Dietz and I am honored to be introducing the next award recipient. She has been a role model to me for my entire life. I will never forget her starting law school when I was 7 years old and watching her study late at night and even having to go with her to class when she had no other choice.

We are here today to honor Sharon Langer, my mom, and an amazing person. As a Jewish woman who grew up in the 1950s and 1960s, in Miami, she told me stories about how she was excluded solely because of her religion. She grew up and lived by the tenets of the ADL to secure justice and fair treatment for all. She has always stood up for inequality and her vocation was to speak for those that didn't have a voice and to protect those who were the most vulnerable. My mother installed those values in me. Both of my parents have dedicated their lives to community service and living by example. My sister, brother, and I have tried our best to live up to them as role models and Matt and I have passed those same values on to our son, Max.

In her twenty-eight year career at Dade Legal Aid, she built a small legal aid program into one of the largest programs in the state, and a pro bono lawyer program that has been copied nationally. However, through the growth, she has stayed firm to her goal to secure justice and fair treatment for those who were not being served or who were vulnerable.

Once my mom decided to retire from Legal Aid, Matt and I knew that her experience, drive, and compassion was needed at Disability Independence Group.

Unlike corporate lawyers or personal injury lawyers that retire and travel the world, Public Interest Lawyers do not retire, they can't afford to!

So, my mom finally agreed to work at DIG and she has been a quick study and is now an integral part of our team. She is a passionate advocate for persons with disabilities, and she has already made a difference in the lives of many persons with disabilities in our community by her activism.

Now it is my honor to present this award to my mom, Sharon Langer. We are so proud of you.