

This is a very special day for me for so many reasons. First I am so honored to be recognized with Alan Diamond a man I have known and admired for decades. He is everything you have heard today and more. Congratulations Alan.

SECOND My family is here today.

My husband Lester, my daughter Debbie, who you just met, my daughter Stephanie Langer and my son in law Matt Dietz. They are each unique, talented and committed to social justice each in their own way.

They are all pursuing careers that are taking on the issues before us today and solving them. I learn from them every day.

There are so many of you in the audience today who have traveled with me on many journeys from bar work, to legal aid to casa Valentina. I am so grateful to you for sharing this day with me and sharing your time and talent over the years.

I am humbled and also inspired by this award at this time in my life.

As some of you know I retired from a long career as a public interest lawyer and now work for disability independence group that was founded by and is run by Debbie and Matt Dietz.

DIG as we lovingly call it is a nonprofit law firm that does not just focus on legal solutions for the problems facing persons with disabilities but also seeks a holistic approach that includes education and empowerment.

We are challenging the status quo and participating in what we believe is the next great movement in this country the disability rights movement.

There are over 53 million people in the United States living with a disability ... they are three times more likely to be victims of crime, abuse and sexual assault .. children with disabilities are subjected to harsher punishment for minor infractions leading to the "school to prison" pipeline, access to employment is very limited and there is a great disparity in access to health care. We have work to do.

I have witnessed the civil rights movement, the women's movement and the gender equality movementall in my lifetime.

I sometimes watched from the sidelines and sometimes jumped right in. This time I am jumping in.

That brings me to the third reason this is such a special day for me. I am Receiving an award from ADL an organization that stands for everything I admire , which has inspired me and generations of others for years and is a leader in the issues that I care deeply about. They have been in the forefront of each of these movements and they are doing that again with the disability rights movement. I will give you a couple of examples: ADL included disability in their model hate crimes statute 9 years before the ADA was passed... they created educational modules for students and their teachers that promote tolerance and understanding of persons with disabilities and then brought that training into schools all over the country and they have framed the conversation into one that is about inclusion and acceptance not fear and stereotypes. We have work to do but I am excited that DIG and ADL are already discussing ways we can work together .

These are hard times and there are many challenges for all of us. ADL has positively affected history for over 100 years and I believe it will do so now. I am so proud to be here today and to have received this recognition from this extraordinary organization.

As I look out into this audience, I see dedicated individuals with passionate concern. Together We are powerful Thank you

