

Cynthia Mitchell to Pat Gregory (posthumously):

Good afternoon. I'd like to thank the Museum for inviting me to help honor my colleague and good friend Pat Gregory with this year's Martha's Vineyard Medal. As you know Pat served as West Tisbury's town moderator for 23 years. His term of service and mine roughly coincided until his death in May of 2014. His family asked me to speak on behalf of the town at his memorial service a year ago in May, an event which drew over 1,000 people, certainly the largest gathering I've ever addressed. Thinking about what I would say today I looked back on my remarks and with a few minor revisions and your indulgence I will repeat them here as they very much apply to the honor you are giving him today. This may be obvious, but may I also say I have not been able to get through remarks about Pat without deep sadness and emotion, so consider yourselves forewarned.

Pat and I had a running joke or rather Pat had the joke. And I was the one who was never going to live it down. It's a custom at the West Tisbury town meetings to begin with what is called the brief overview. During our early years sharing the stage this was my assignment. He, impatient to get the meeting moving and underway, would lean against the podium, flip through his papers, tap his pencil, mind you not even faining interest in what I was saying. One particular year when I was really into the brevity of the overview, and stopped for just a second to take a breath, he saw his opening, and said 'thank you Cynthia,' and we were onto the business of the evening. Virtually every time I saw him he would find some way to bring the brief overview up and have a good chuckle. Of course one didn't really share the stage with Pat. He was a presence wherever he was, but at town meeting, he was radiant. Bounding up to the podium in his boyish way, it was his time to shine, and shine he did. Lending his considerable skills, grace, and humor to the important role of facilitating the legislative work, all moderators have their style, and Pat's clearly grew out of teaching.

Town moderator Harry Pape of Princeton, MA, President of the Massachusetts Moderator's Association, described him this way in an official tribute that he actually personally delivered to the family and the town. 'He was a beloved, and respected teacher fascinated with the New England tradition of the town meeting. He found it to be an admirable model, and one that he could use in the classroom to discuss matters of classroom life. A student would serve as the moderator in these discussions. Thus motivated to run for moderator himself, he found running the West Tisbury town meeting much akin to running a classroom. Everyone gets a turn to speak, and the body gains the wisdom thus developed.' Mr. Pape went on to write, 'I suppose we should be grateful that he modeled his town meeting style after his teaching approach rather than his experiences refereeing soccer games.'

Pat also had good political sense knowing when and how to give a hot button issue it's due. He knew to allow a little or a lot more floor time for debate and whom to call on to make sure all sides had their day. At what would be his last town meeting in April of 2014, he demonstrated these skills as he moderated that year's controversial question having to do with the management of the Mill Pond. But he always moved things along priding himself on the one night annual town meeting. And there were a number of special town meetings

when we were in and out in under 45 minutes, and he was home in time to watch the Red Sox.

The weekend he died, some of fielded calls first from the regional press and then the west coast: requests for information about his life and the island community's reaction to its loss. They were told of his years as an adored teacher at the West Tisbury School; of Edu Comp, the business that he and his wife Dorothy built, creating yet another family among their employees; of his years of superb public service to West Tisbury; of his children Tim and Shannon and her husband Dan and his grandchildren Jack and Bess; of his relentlessly positive, supportive, engaging style, and what an easy, kind and loving man he was; and about a community that was struggling, still does, to reconcile the vibrant life-enhancing soul they knew to the sudden end of his life.

Of course his memory, his example, has, and will live on. This is the fourth honor or dedication I know I have personally participated in, and I know there have been others. And so once again I speak from the heart and represent all of the town of West Tisbury staff, departments, committees boards, as well as the larger community when I present the Museum's Martha's Vineyard Medal to Pat Gregory, a fine public servant and a true friend. We will always deeply miss him. Here this afternoon to accept this honor on behalf of the Gregory family is Pat's son-in-law, Dan Carbon.