

## Testimony of Quentin Andrea Lawrence

Good morning, it's an honor to be speaking here today. I would like to thank Congressman McKeon for the invitation. I am Quentin Andrea Lawrence the youngest daughter of Andrea Mead Lawrence. I speak today on behalf of my older siblings; Cortlandt, Matthew, Deirdre and Leslie. I am also here as President of the Andrea Lawrence Institute for Mountains and Rivers to testify in support of HR 5194, naming Peak #12,240 for my Mother, Andrea Lawrence. The list of Mom's accomplishments is long, varied and well publicized. In my testimony today, I will give you a glimpse into her childhood, the time and place that laid the foundation for what became a life lived to the fullest. I hope to give you a glimpse of the human behind the fiercely determined and incredibly successful woman known as Andy, Andrea and Mom. Please forgive any emotional moments I might have as this is still a difficult time for me.

Mom's relationship with the mountains began just outside of Rutland, Vermont where she was born to Brad and Janet Mead. Brad built a replica of a Scottish Castle for his wife and family hidden in the hills outside of Rutland. Mom had a younger brother, Peter (Pete) who was her favorite friend. Together they lived a fairytale lifestyle; playing in the forests and lakes, climbing surrounding mountains and skiing the nearby slopes of Pico Peak, the ski resort that Brad and Janet began in the 1930's. When Andy, as they called her, was 10 years old, her father died in a boat accident. For Mom that was a defining moment in her life; when she felt a huge sense of responsibility fall upon her shoulders and an obligation to care for her brother and her Mother. That sense of responsibility and obligation gave her the determination to succeed and push herself beyond the limit by giving 150%. These strengths and qualities carried her to the top in competitive skiing and into her fight for environmental justice.

Andy and Pete were brought up with the philosophy that "If the weather is good, go skiing, if it is bad you go to school" Mom learned to ski at the age of 3 by following her Mother and Father down the slopes. Skiing was a relationship with the mountains for Mom. It was about seeing a path through tracked snow and following it to the best of her ability, forcing herself through what obstacles lay in her way. This mentality gave her strength in her racing career and throughout her entire life's endeavors. My Mom's philosophy regarding her Olympic gold medals was; "It's not about how many medals you've won, but what you do with them afterward that counts" this is the reason she was honored as Olympic historian Bud Greenspan's Greatest Winter Olympian of all Time. Mom stood by those words until she died.

That spirit gave her the strength and courage to endure being a single parent raising 5 children. By her own choice, Mom never capitalized on her 2 gold medals, she raced as an amateur and she proudly maintained that status. Although there was financial difficulty, Mom nurtured strong family bonds. Her philosophy was that small things in life will take care of themselves, it's more important to maintain core values, independence and respect for one another. In 1968, after her divorce, we moved to Mammoth. We lived outside of town in a large "A" frame house. Mom loved to fill that space up with huge Christmas trees. We had great family adventures, bundling up to trudge out in the full moon

to cut down and drag home 20 foot tall trees for the holidays. There were mornings she would wake the house by playing "Zarathustra" by Richard Strauss at high volume. In the fall we would gather our own firewood for the winter. At Easter, we would go camping in Death Valley as a short respite from the snow. Mom often instigated food fights and pandemonium would ensue as we all joined in. We had as many dogs as there were children. Discipline was never one of Mom's strengths and when she got angry she would end up going through the dogs' names, then kids' names, by the time she got to whomever she was mad at we were all laughing so hard she was no longer angry. To support her parents' philosophy about skiing when the weather is good, after fresh snow had fallen and the sun was shining; we would spend school days skiing as a family. I remember watching enviously as she and my brothers walked off for a backpacking trip. Frequently when I came home from school, Mom would run me up to the ski area to ski with my sisters. On occasion, she would sneak me over to Yosemite Valley to play hooky. In these ways Mom instilled a sense of family, fun and a lasting love of the mountains, and skiing.

In 1970 when she got involved with Friends of Mammoth it took a lot of her time and energy. As is true with any passionate endeavor, there was sacrifice. As her involvement with the organization grew, time at home with family suffered. Many evenings we would go along and help fold letters and stuff envelopes. Other evenings we children were home taking care of ourselves. But, those early days of bonding helped keep us close as a family. Part of the hardship for us children was the contempt that certain people held for Mom including death threats on the entire family. To this day I don't know how she worked through those frightening times. Despite all of that ugliness, she never held contempt for her opponents; she respected their point of view

In the early days of the Mono Lake Committee, I recall sitting by a campfire on the southern shore of Mono Lake where Mom went to meet with scientists who were studying the impacts of water diversions on the lake. Needless to say, Mom was deeply disturbed that this beautiful region would be destroyed so that another region could thrive. One fond memory; Mom, my sisters and I were scheduled to spend a full moon night on Pohoat Island in the middle of the lake. As we were crossing the lake the boat engine died. We made the best out of the situation; laughing and taking turns paddling and held up our blankets to catch any little wind that came up. Finally, we floated back to shore and in the full moon light walked back to the car. Mom again dedicated herself to preserving a region she held dear in her heart. It was another instance when the family experienced little time with Mom at home. Despite her absences all of us children had what we needed, we learned good values and the difference between right and wrong. We learned it is important to stand for what you believe in and feel is right. We also learned it is important to follow your heart for that is what is true in this world.

Mom's experience in public office was likely her most difficult yet rewarding endeavor. She constantly met with opposition and downright meanness. As was her *modus operandi*, she kept focused on what her goals were and forged ahead. We were grown and busy with our own lives but we supported her from the sidelines as she overcame sexism and bias to be very successful in achieving her agenda. I'm sure that during those sixteen years the local police department was mostly funded by her pension for driving as fast as she skied to get to meetings! Finally, they would just ask her to please slow

down when she saw other cars on the road. In the end many of the people who opposed her became her ally and friend.

Mom did not graduate from high school. She was exceedingly intelligent and well read, often quoting famous poets and writers of the world. Mom was successful in politics without being a politician. Her motivation came from her heart and her convictions for what she felt to be true. In Mom's years as a public servant, campaigning for office, standing up for causes she felt important, she never wrote a speech. Each word was spoken straight from her heart. Her integrity, articulation and ability to see the big picture allowed her to reach across party lines and work together for the common good.

Mom's belief that you should leave the world a better place than when you found it is epitomized by the legacy she leaves behind. Mom set Olympic records when she was 19 years old that still stand 58 years later here in America. She inspires generations of female skiers and athletes. She raised 5 children who are good people with strong values and love for each other. She inspires individuals and groups that share a love of their environment to take a stand for what they believe in. Mom was fortunate to live long enough to realize one of her dreams, that parts of the Eastern Sierra are protected by the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009. It is more than appropriate to have a peak that overlooks where her heart and home were and the region she considered her magnetic north be named in her honor as Mt. Andrea Lawrence. Good day and thank you very much.