

Marty & Pat Schottenheimer

Q: When and how did you two meet?

A: (Pat) It was 1965. We were both seniors in college, and we both went down to Daytona Beach, Florida for Spring Break. I met Marty on the beach. My friends and his friends got together, and he invited me to go out for dinner. Sounded nice, so I went back to the room and I had put my contacts in and gussied up my hair and was looking pretty good. My friends went for dinner. I waited and heard a knock on the door. I opened the door, and there was Marty. He said, and I quote, "Hi. I'm Marty. Is Pat here?" And I looked at him and I said, "Well, I'm the only one here right now. The other girls have gone for dinner." He said, "Gee whiz. I was supposed to take her to dinner tonight. When will they be back?" And I said, "Probably half an hour." "Okay. I'll come back." And he walked away.

A: (Marty) I was playing hard to get.

A: (Pat) Half an hour later, another knock on the door. My friend opened the door. He said, "Hey, I'm Marty. Is Pat here?" And she said, "There's Pat right over there." He looked at me and he goes, "You're Pat." "I'm Pat." Long story short, I was hungry because I hadn't had anything to eat from breakfast. I decided he owed me dinner, so he and I went out for dinner. I thought he was a bozo. I wasn't quite sure what I was going to end up with on the dinner, whether he knew what he was doing or not. His tagline, however, was, "How could I remember her? I never looked above her chest."

A: (Marty) She had the greatest two-piece bathing suit I've ever seen in my life.

A: (Pat) We've been married 50 years as of February 4, 2017.

Q: When you two first met, were you already involved with football?

A: (Pat) He had just finished playing his senior year at the University of Pittsburgh. He was an All-American. He had been drafted by the Buffalo Bills and the Baltimore Colts, when they had the duel draft with the still two leagues. That's how old we are. And he had signed a contract with the Buffalo Bills, so yes, he was involved in football. I knew there was something called the quarterback and something called a touchdown, but I didn't know what they meant. So, he was involved with football. I knew nothing.

However, if it pays your bills, you learn real fast what's going on. He tried to explain everything to me with x's and o's and little lines going all over the place, but I learned football from the other coaches and player's wives.

Q: Marty, why did you love being a coach?

A: (Marty) I wasn't a very athletic individual, and I decided I was going to go ahead and pursue coaching or playing.

A: (Pat) His first NFL coaching job, he played for six years in the league and then we had an opportunity to coach the New York Giants. I'll never forget. He came home and we were talking as you would on Saturday, Sunday morning, off-season, and he said, "You know, I really love coaching. I'm really enjoying coaching." I said, "Honey, that's great." He said, "And I'm good at it." He said, "I don't mean to toot my own horn, but I'm pretty darn good." I said, "That's great." He said, "You know the best part? They pay me American dollars to take care of my family by doing something that I'm good at and I love." And I thought, okay, this is where we belong.

He always said it gave him great satisfaction to see players improve and get better and perform on the field. He always thought it was a piece of him out there when he saw the players doing what they were supposed to be doing and having success.

Q: What's one of your biggest highlights as a coach?

A: (Marty) The year with the Chiefs we had two Hall of Famers. The NFL has its spots it picks. Kind of like somebody walking around a pear tree picking. I was never one early on in my career that I wanted to get out in front of everybody, but as I progressed a little bit, it kind of worked its way down, but Pat, on the other hand, she was working in Chicago. She finished up school.

A: (Pat) I think we've been very fortunate. He coached in the NFL for 30 years with 20 of those as a head coach. The memories we have, the people we've met, the people we call friends, it has been a great ride. We're very fortunate to have experienced all the things that we have and to have had our children be able to enjoy all of that. NFL has a lot of ups and downs, there's no doubt about it. It is a rollercoaster ride.

We handled it as a family. It was never all about Marty, although he was the name out front. He was the name out there. When the kids were very young, when he was just first coaching with the Giants, we would drive by a moving van and I would say to my little kids in the back seat, "Oh, look! Somebody's daddy got fired! They get to move! They are so lucky!" So, our children were brainwashed to think that we lived this wonderful, fabulous life where we got to move and go new places, so we can't pinpoint one time. The whole 30 years of coaching was a family experience, good and bad.

We had a little thing where we were the fist, and it was mom, dad, Kristen, Brian, and the dog, and together we could do anything. That's how we handled the NFL. It worked very, very successfully for us, so we have no one particular point. It was just a great experience for Marty and the family.

Q: At the end of coaching, what was next in your life?

A: (Marty) Golf.

A: (Pat) He had fun! There was a new league that was created called the United Football League, so he went down to Virginia Beach and had a good time with that for a year, won the

championship. So, that was fun. He played with that. He did speaking engagements here and there, all round. Life was busy. Life was full.

Then, when the Alzheimer's reared its ugly head, things started to change, but we try not to stop doing what we do. We still try to travel. We still have all kinds of experiences with our children and enjoy all of that. We don't feel sorry for ourselves. This is just one other dip on the rollercoaster ride that we have. That's been our whole 50 years of married life and raising children. We approach it as we always have, with the whole family. We've got three fists now, so we're really powerful.

The grandkids know Poppa's got Alzheimer's. It's just what it is. If he starts, can't remember things that people ask him if we're at one of the kids' basketball games, they'll say, "My Poppa's got Alzheimer's, so that's hard for him to answer that question." So, they're very comfortable with it, and we're just going to ride this thing out with the help of medical professionals, which we're very fortunate to have here in Charlotte, and do the best we can and just riding that rollercoaster.

Q: What are some of the initial symptoms that made you think something was going on?

A: (Pat) We were in Germany in the middle of a field, and he got us to the Mercedes plant where we wanted to go and take a tour. He was the pathfinder. He could get us anywhere. All of the sudden, I noticed he lost his sense of direction, which was always so acute, and then he couldn't remember where he was supposed to go, like places we'd been before. That kind of bothered me.

Then, it was just very, very gradual. We were very fortunate, again, through the NFL, there was a doctor in California who was doing a study of 100 retired NFL players. We went to see, his name was Dr. David Amon, and we went to see Dr. Amon with some other friends, players. He spent time with all the other players and their wives individually. He did a brain scan, was one of the things he did as part of the testing. When Marty and I went in, he said, "I don't think you belong in this group. From what I see, you need a different kind of help. You need to seek out a neurologist. I don't want to diagnose, but you need to seek out a neurologist."

We came back to Charlotte from California. That's when we found Dr. Steven Putman, who's a neurologist and wonderful, very hopeful, honest man. We've been working with him since probably 2010 maybe.

Since then, the symptoms have progressed. I tell anybody I meet that asks about it that there is medication to take that will slow the symptoms, so get on it as soon as you can, but nothing's going to cure it.

He is involved in a drug trial through Dr. T. May not help him. May not be in time to help him, probably won't be in time to help him, but we're hopeful that it will help people in the future.

Q: Can you tell us about the time when you first met Dr. T?

A: (Pat) Marty and I went down to the Nantz Alzheimer's Center in Houston, Texas. Through the medical staff there, they made a phone call to Dr. T. He was also with Carolinas HealthCare System. They knew that he did trial studies and that we were in Charlotte, so they matched us up, the Nantz Alzheimer's Center and Dr. T. And I talked to him. He didn't have anything going at the time, but then we got involved with a study this year, so I think we're five infusions in. And it's a two to three year study, depending on the success of how it goes.

Q: Pat, your role is tremendous in this. As a caregiver, can you give us some perspective into what that entails?

A: (Pat) Being a caregiver of an Alzheimer's patient has its highs and low, like anything else in life. Unfortunately, it gets more difficult as time rolls along, but when you've been with somebody 50 years and you know them so well, and when you're as fortunate as I am, to have a partner who is a genuinely happy man. He's fun, loves to go out and enjoys people. We try to have as good a quality a life as we can. We try to keep things as much as possible. So many people love him, feel like he has been a very important person in their lives. He's had the opportunity to influence young men.

I, personally, am so proud of him. The goal of being a coach in the National Football League is to win a Super Bowl. Marty never won a Super Bowl, but I think he has far more awards. A week doesn't go by when somebody doesn't call and say, "Coach, you don't know this, but you changed my life." "Coach, you don't know this, but every morning when I'm driving into work as a coach for such and such, I think, 'What would Marty do in this situation? How would Marty handle this?'" I think his award is so much greater than winning a Super Bowl because he is so respected and so beloved by so many men in our profession. I'm proud of that and I want to, as a caregiver, extend that. People fly into Charlotte, get a car, come down here, spend the afternoon with him, ex-players, just because they want to talk to him while they still can. How good is that?

So, I am embracing, as a caregiver, all the good things that happen. The good times we can have with our kids and our family. I know it's not going to be forever, and just like in football, I'm not going to look too far into the future. We learned that as a family. You never know where you're going to be next year. I never planted tulips because I never saw them the next year at the houses. We're just moving forward and that's the only way I know how to do it.

It's not easy. It is not easy, and I know it is going to get more difficult, but, again, silly as it sounds, I got my fists. I got my kids. I've got my family. I've got my grandkids. I've got wonderful medical support. I am a very lucky lady, so I don't want anybody to feel bad for us. I want people to appreciate what he's accomplished. I want people to appreciate how blessed we are with the family we have. I want people to know that life is good, and we're going to take really good care of him, and whatever happens is going to happen, and we're going to be there, all of us.

Q: How do you consider yourself as this leader now? What would you like them to know about life with Alzheimer's?

A: (Marty) It has its own little part in our relationship, but I've never been one to indulge in self-pity, so we have one basic philosophy in our home. Pick one foot up, put it on the ground. Pick the other foot up, put it on the ground.

Q: Pat, what advice or suggestions would you have for others who don't know how to act around your family?

A: (Pat) Every family handles it totally different. In the very beginning, Marty didn't want people to know. He's a very proud man, and it's very hard to put it out there, but quickly, as a couple, we learned the best way to handle it is to let people know that you have Alzheimer's. Once people know that you have Alzheimer's, they're much more comfortable talking with you, spending time with you.

He has gold course buddies that he plays golf with. They take such good care of him. They laugh and they tease, and they say they got to make sure that he is the fourth guy to tee off, because if they let him tee off first he forgets that he already teed off and then he wants to go again and take a mulligan.

We utilize humor. We utilize reality. We don't go out and talk about it. We don't make a big deal about it. It's just who we are right now. That's the best Marty and Pat can do.

Q: Why did both you decide to participate in this clinical trial since there's no guarantee?

A: (Pat) Well, I can say, there are universal reasons and selfish reasons. I would love for him to be the old Marty. I would like that. Reality is that's not going to happen. I have two children and four grandchildren. If they would have Alzheimer's, and who knows how we get it, where it comes from, why, I would like for them to be able to have something that would help them, cure them and make a difference. And universally, why not do it? It may help, probably won't, but gosh, if you could make a difference for goodness knows how many people later on, it's a no-brainer.

Q: Marty, do you want to tell us what Pat means to you?

A: (Marty) Everything. She's my anchor. When things get tough, I can always count on her.

Q: Why the move to Charlotte?

A: (Pat) In our 50 years of being married, we have lived in 26 different homes. Some of it was coaching. Some of it was playing and moving every six months back and forth when he played in the NFL for six years.

Charlotte was a very personal move. It was when he took a two year stint from the NFL in 1999 and 2000 and worked with ESPN. We sold our house in Kansas City and had a condo in Naples, Florida. We came up to Charlotte, where our daughter, Kristen, had just moved. Marty came up to play golf, and we just fell in love with Charlotte, ended up buying a home that trip and moving to Charlotte. 1999. Marty still coached after that, but we always came back to Charlotte. We always joked and said we needed a place to

put my mother's wedding gown, the kids could always come to, where all those special things could be, and Charlotte has created exactly what we have needed.

As far as experiencing the medical care that is provided in Charlotte, we've just kind of gone up the chain. Our internist, Dr. Bachelor is in Charlotte. Through him, we found Dr. Putman. It's just through Dr. Putman we've got involved in other things. They've just moved us up the chain and we've needed to go. I can't say it was unexpected. I think we just do what we're told a lot of times with medicine, but it's been very, very helpful. We are very, very fortunate to have the medical support that we do here in Charlotte.