



April 1, 2010

Subject: Acceptance Speech - 2010 Parkinson Awareness Proclamation Ceremony SC State House ~ Columbia, South Carolina

Thank you, Governor Sanford.

As a caregiver of a Parkinson patient and as President of the Columbia Parkinson's Support Group, I am very proud to accept this Proclamation from the state of South Carolina on behalf of the Parkinson's Community.

The focus during the month of April on Parkinson's disease awareness is very important for several reasons:

This disease needs to be better understood by the citizens of South Carolina.

- You can't catch Parkinson's.
- It is not contagious.
- It is a long term progressive disease of the brain, that affects the body movements of the patient
- Every 9 minutes another person is diagnosed with Parkinson's.

Unfortunately the age of those being diagnosed with this disease is getting younger and younger - so it is not a disease of just the elderly any more.

The impact of Parkinson's disease on the patient, their family, their caregivers, and their community can be horrific: emotionally – physically – spiritually – and economically.

All the citizens in South Carolina pay a price because of Parkinson's. There are significant economic impacts to South Carolina's financial and public health resources, which needs to be understood by our state legislature and the citizens of our state - especially now during these difficult financial times.

The South Carolina Parkinson's Community "**WELCOMES**" increased awareness of Parkinson's disease. We want the citizens of South Carolina to

- **RECOGNIZE** the disease,
- **BECOME INFORMED** about it,
- **SUPPORT** the Parkinson's community,
- **VOLUNTEER** to help, and
- **BECOME ADVOCATES** for finding a cure for Parkinson's disease

Today is a very good day for our community.

We are here - in our State House - formally and proudly acknowledging that South Carolina is among the growing number of states in our nation who proclaim April 2010 as "Parkinson's Awareness" month.

Governor Sanford, we thank you for supporting the South Carolina Parkinson's community.

Dottie M. Gantt, President

Columbia Parkinson's Support Group