Davidson College aspires to prepare students for lives of leadership and service. Few alumni stories can compare to the ways in which this evening’s award winner has truly allowed her life to live up to this purpose.

Andrea Lytle Peet was diagnosed with ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) in 2014 at the age of 33 after completing a half-ironman triathlon. Since then, she has worked hard to maintain her muscular function including completing a super sprint triathlon just a couple months after her diagnosis. Inspired by the support received from family and friends at that event, Andrea created the Team Drea Challenge to encourage others to complete a physical challenge while raising money for ALS research – more than 150 athletes, including many members of the Davidson community, have raised more than $275,000 to date.

Never one to settle, Andrea was further inspired to found the Team Drea Foundation in 2016 with her husband and 2005 Davidson alumnus, Dave. The foundation, which Andrea directs to this day, seeks to “fund and support bold, innovative research to find a cure or effective treatment for ALS [and to] raise awareness about this devastating disease as an opportunity to inspire people to live bravely, love joyfully, and appreciate the gift of life.” In addition to directing the foundation, Andrea continues to compete in marathons, half marathons, and triathlons on her recumbent trike – completing 30 races since her diagnosis.

One of Andrea’s nominators wrote: “To say Andrea’s diagnosis has changed her life is an understatement. However, she may never know how much her diagnosis has changed other people’s lives.” Many here tonight can attest to just how true this is.

Thank you notes from the Team Drea Foundation, which many in this room have received, read: “I didn’t ask for this to be my life’s work, but I truly believe it is. Thank you for helping me create something positive and meaningful out of ALS.”

Indeed, it is your life’s work – and what a life it is. Andrea, today is our day to thank you. For all you have done to inspire us to reach our goals; for motivating us to live bravely in the face of unimaginable difficulty; for the contributions you have made to ALS research through fundraising and advocacy; for epitomizing how our greatest challenge can become our greatest opportunity; for being an unparalleled example of what it means to live a life of leadership and service, we honor you, Andrea Lytle Peet, with the John W. Kuykendall Award for Community Service on the occasion of your 15th Reunion, June 9, 2018.