

## Remembering Pat Summitt: Joan Cronan shares her story

Retired Tennessee women's athletic director emeritus, Joan Cronan, reflects on her memories with the late Pat Summitt.

It was 5:15 in the morning, and Joan Cronan had just lost one of her best friends.

The retired University of Tennessee women's athletic director hurried through her house, called the funeral home and prepared to walk out the door.

Then she looked back at her unmade bed.

And she stopped.

Cronan had so much to take care of, certainly no time to tuck the sheets under the mattress, pull up the bedspread and arrange the pillows.

But Pat Summitt, she knew, would have disagreed.

The legendary University of Tennessee women's basketball coach had succumbed to early onset Alzheimer's disease at 5:05 a.m. CT that morning. Before her death, she taught innumerable young basketball players about the importance of making their beds.

"I can't tell you how many times I went down the first day of camp and there would be a thousand 12-year-olds there looking at Pat waiting for what she could say," Cronan recalled, "And the first thing she said was: 'Young ladies, how many of you made your bed today?'"

A few would raise their hands.

The next day, Summitt would ask again, "How many of you made your beds today?" A few more would extend their arms.

By Friday, when Summitt posed the question a final time, every girls' hand shot in the air.

That morning, at 5:15 a.m. before she went to join her best friend's family, Cronan made her bed.

"Pat told me that discipline's important," Cronan said.

