



THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

November 19, 2024

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Past Pres Edwin Peacock

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Kelly Weeks and the Instantaneous Standing Ovation

by **Marilynn Bowler**

At Tuesday's Charlotte Rotary meeting the packed ballroom was treated to a lesson in heroics. The amazing Kelly Weeks, widow of slain U.S. Marshal Tommy Weeks who was murdered when he and three other law enforcement officers arrived at a home in east Charlotte to make an arrest on a man who fired at them as they approached the house.

Christine Cipriano introduced her longtime good friend, giving us all some insight into the stupendous young wife, mother, stepmother, and friend our speaker has always been and continues to be as she journeys through widowhood and becomes a staunch spokesperson for law enforcement. In Christine's words, "Kelly is courageous, resilient, and a "beacon of hope."

Since that awful day seven months ago, Kelly has stepped up in a way that seems almost unbelievable. She is an advocate for citizens' strong support of law enforcement, speaking publicly about the extreme stress and daily trauma endured by members of the U.S. Marshal's office and police officers all over the country.

Her grief is palpable, but her strength is even more so. She's a mother who is raising her daughter and stepdaughter to understand that it's "okay to grieve and be vulnerable" but also to look for ways to emerge from this huge tragedy in ways that help, support, and encourage officers of the law.

Kelly told her story eloquently and with candor, giving us all a peek into her heart and soul. She stated over and over how urgent the need for us to support law enforcement agencies and the organizations that back their

cause, and the very poignant effect a simple "Thank You!" offered to a police officer can have on that officer's mental and emotional health.

Kelly, in her own words, "rallies around people who are doing the job today and my request to all of you is to help me rally around them, remind them that we care, remind them that we're here for a purpose." She is clearly Tommy's voice from Heaven, speaking to us on earth.

Tommy Weeks was a brave warrior who gave his life in the act of making our lives safer. Kelly Weeks is just as brave a warrior as she shares her journey through handling such tremendous grief. She told us it's normal to grieve as long as we advocate and appreciate and support while doing so.

In closing, Kelly saluted the U.S. Marshal's Critical Response Team (CIRT) as well as the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department (citing, in particular, Chief Johnny Jennings) and Tunnel to Towers Foundation, the On the Nines Bistro, BoatYard, and the U.S. Marshal's Survivors Benefit Fund for their superb help financially, emotionally, and in every other meaningful way.

Kelly speaks out and speaks FOR law enforcement. She is a miracle worker and a true heroine. Tommy Weeks is watching and guiding her from Heaven. And he is so proud.

No wonder when she concluded her address the entire room stood and applauded continually for many, many minutes.

A recording of the meeting can be found here:

With slides: <https://vimeo.com/1031279913>

Without slides: <https://vimeo.com/1031278704>

The presenter's introduction begins at approximately 25 minutes and 35 seconds.