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**I'd Rather See a Sermon Than Hear One:
A Testament to Ms. Pat Tobin
Between the Lines**

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BlackCommentator.com Columnist**

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For the longest period in our community, I've said that if more people did a fraction of what they say they can do, there would be a different reality in black communities across America. There are three types of people in our society: those who watch things happen, those who make things happen and those who wondered "what happened??"

There's something to be said for people who can "make it happen." They are far and few in between. The collective black community, nationwide, lost one last week. Journalist turned Public Relations specialist, Pat Tobin, lost her long battle with cancer. In losing her, we lost a major link in our social and professional network. That was Pat's specialty - putting people together with resources (an important qualifier). Pat was a master networker and expert promoter. She promoted her clients so well, that she herself became a brand - long before people understood how to brand themselves.

Pat could sell ice to Eskimos and talk her way into Fort Knox. The difference between Pat and other people, however, is that Pat could make the best of the opportunity. She knew what the client needed and had the answer when they asked

her, "So, what you got?" Pat Tobin helped others build and add value to their end-game. She always had the end-game in mind, to make people better and enhance their impact.

There are plenty of people in our community that have "rap." But few know what to do after they rap themselves into a chance of a lifetime. More people talk themselves out of opportunities than make the best of the ones they get. Everybody wants to be rich, but few know how to get rich. Everybody wants to be at "the party" to be seen, or be in the room with the stars and the powerful, but few know how to be heard; when they open their mouths, they really have nothing to say.

In the 1980s, the only real voices in our community were entertainers, athletes, preachers and politicians. The former two tried to dance and sport away our misery, and the latter two sermonized the community's misery. But that was it. The misery remained. Even Blacks in the black media had lost their voice. Pat Tobin helped people understand their talents, the resources at their disposal and the opportunities of which they could avail themselves if properly positioned around like-minded people. Pat Tobin's weekly networking receptions were legendary.

"Back in the day," when "networking" was largely standing around trying to "look" successful - for the *wrong* reason, to catch a person of the opposite sex, Pat Tobin was one of the first to tell people to build their Rolodex. Note: For those of you who don't remember what a rolodex is, it is a card file, alphabetized, where you log (or clip) business contacts. It was more in use before e-mail, "palm pilots, Blackberries, and I-phones. It wasn't just about how many business cards you could collect. It was about how many *important* contacts you could collect: people who could make things happen.

The difference between a white boy with a Harvard degree and a brotha' with a Harvard degree is the size of their social network. It really is not just what you know, but *who* know and what you show (can deliver) after you make the contact. White graduates inherit their father's (and grandfather's) social networks, which ultimately represent their business contacts. Black graduates, most of the time, have to build their own. Pat encouraged people to network with a purpose, and to get to know at least one person they didn't know. That's how you built your social and business network. In a city where you can go to three receptions and two parties on every night of the week, to this day, I don't attend any event without the end-game in mind (a purpose) and I make one contact of significance that I didn't have prior to attending the event. That's how I've built my network for the last 25 years (and I have a helluva network). That, I learned from Pat Tobin.

I run into people everyday that "talk" about what black people should be doing, what we need to do, and how come we don't do this or that. I hear this particularly from our politicians and preachers who are the most disingenuous - in terms of the impact they make. We are the most "prayed up" community in America and we still have the most problems. We have 10,000 more black elected officials than we had 40 years ago and our communities are still just as deprived. Preachers and politicians talk more about changing people's lives than they make it happen. I tell them, "I'd rather see a sermon than hear one."

Pat Tobin didn't just tell people how to work together; she showed people how to do. She was a living testament, and practiced what she preached. More people knew Pat Tobin than knew her clients because she wanted it like that. She didn't just talk about networking, she networked - she pulled her clients into her network and she


made things happen. She was an example of the sermon you saw (see) - not the sermon you heard (hear). Thank you, Pat, for your example, showing many of us how to make our impact felt.


God bless Pat Tobin and her family. She will be missed.

BlackCommentator.com Columnist, Dr. Anthony Asadullah Samad, is a national columnist, managing director of the [Urban Issues Forum](#) and author of [Saving The Race: Empowerment Through Wisdom](#). His Website is [AnthonySamad.com](#). Click [here](#) to contact Dr. Samad.

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