



The 2020 Gala Chair, Jennifer Ann Marron **SHARES HER INSPIRATION**



Dear Friends,

We can all agree that 2020 has been a most unusual year. For many people, the Covid-19 pandemic has been frightening and bewildering. Like Covid, the diagnosis of a spinal disorder is often accompanied by fear and confusion, which is exactly what I felt when given my scoliosis diagnosis as a young teenager. I recall my dismay, learning I would have to spend every day in a back brace. I was afraid that the active life I loved was ending. Over time, the required hours spent in my brace decreased. With my doctor's approval, I tried out for my college crew team, and discovered a new passion for rowing! I became captain of my university team and went on to row for the US National Lightweight Women's Rowing Team. Today, I share an active life with my husband and our three adult children. Successful treatment of my scoliosis makes me a Spinal Champion! I am passionate about sharing my story, and that is why I am proudly serving as this year's We've Got Your Back Gala Chair.

Each year, 100 million Americans suffer from debilitating neck or back pain; that's roughly one in three people. Persistent pain prevents people from working, enjoying sports, or simply playing with their kids. Neck and back suffering creates a \$200 billion burden on the overall national economy.

The National Spine Health Foundation helps people return to the people and activities they love, improves the lives of those with neck and back pain, and gives hope. Thanks to their focus on unbiased education, as well as groundbreaking research, both non-operative and operative treatment choices are made known to all who are seeking answers for their suffering. In the current Covid-19 landscape with teleworking, distance learning, and disruption in our daily routines, spinal health is more important now than ever. Neck and back pain don't stop in the pandemic, they worsen. When access to care was limited during the pandemic, not only did spinal health worsen, but associated cases of depression and anxiety skyrocketed. The well documented correlation between spinal health and mental health needs our attention. Those who depend on us most cannot wait for "normalcy" to arrive - we can give hope now! That's why we have committed to taking our 2020 We've Got Your Back Gala to a virtual format this year, and our theme Out of Pain and Into Hope means more than ever.

I am living proof of the promise of excellent spinal health care. I ask that you join me in supporting our event. Consider joining my virtual table. Or, I invite you to start your own virtual table, which is an opportunity to invite your friends, family, employers, and colleagues to join our cause. Our virtual gala will feature a unique program showcasing Spinal Champions and insights from the top spinal specialists from across the country. You won't want to miss the on-line auction with unique offerings! All donations are tax-deductible, and 100% of funds go directly to helping those in need. Our work is so desperately needed, and your support is appreciated now more than ever.

Thank you for considering being a part of our efforts. We hope you will contribute, help spread the word, and plan on joining us virtually on November 6th.

With gratitude,

Jennifer Ann Marron
Gala Chair, 2020 We've Got Your Back Gala