



## **Opening Remarks from Dennis Robinson, Co-Chairman of the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Luncheon with Alice Cooper, November 1, 2018**

I want to begin by thanking Mel, Monica, Megan, Bob and all of the folks at The Council who have done the real work to make this event happen. Thanks to all of you who have so generously contributed financially and as a volunteer to today's event.

My name is Dennis Robinson, and it is a great honor to co-chair this event, especially being able to share it with my good friend Tony. When I learned Tony and I would be doing this together, I wondered a little about the pairing. Then it came to me -- someone has to be the eye candy on this stage. Of course, I realized that was my role so then I relaxed about my remarks since my work is done just by standing up here. And as for our chairing with today's guest speaker, I have already been assured by close friends that they will include in my obituary the following: "He once opened for Alice Cooper."

Alcoholism runs in my family. My only sibling struggles with this disease, and while she has managed periods of sobriety, she was hospitalized just two months ago from a near fatal drinking binge. From the time I began drinking at age 16 it was a problem for me. This continued for 23 years until as I was about to turn 40, I quit. Today, I have 23 years of sobriety. I like to say I only had two blackouts – the 70s and the 80s. There is a saying in meetings that "it takes what it takes." I believe that if God had not given me consequences I couldn't brush off, I would likely still be living that half-life of active alcoholism.

Those who know me, know that recovery is my greatest passion in life and that is because I never dreamed my life could be as rich and full as it has been sober. Because I have experienced getting out of the darkness of addiction and have been given a new life I want that for those still struggling. There is much heartbreak in being a part of trying to help others achieve sobriety, but when I do get to witness someone turning their life around, it is the best feeling I have ever known. A part of that reward is meeting parents, spouses and children whose lives are also positively impacted when their loved one gets sober. That is what we are a part of today. Each of us has our own gifts to offer in helping people battling addiction. Financial support for an institution that is a national role model for prevention and recovery is one very real way we can make a difference.

I would like to close by repeating what many of you have heard me say before. I am quoting a man who was very instrumental in my early recovery. It just so happened he was also my probation officer. He told me "Recovery has the ability to make you the man God intended you to be". I am sure I haven't achieved that yet, but I live in gratitude for how much closer I am today than the man who first asked for help all those years ago.