

PATRICIA SCHEDING KIMBER

Patricia (Pat) Kimber, born in Syracuse, was the only child of Paul and Annella French Scheduling. The names themselves tell of her ancestry and of Pat's interest in it. Her mother's name was created by combining the names of her grandmothers, Ann and Ella. Pat's ancestry is predominately German and English. Her paternal grandfather, Rev. Dr. William L. Scheduling, a non-English speaking German immigrant who arrived in the US in 1906, was awarded a Doctorate of Divinity and ordained as a Lutheran pastor three years later. After several years as a pastor in Wisconsin and Kansas, he answered a call to serve a Lutheran church in Syracuse. Throughout his career, he was an outspoken activist in causes related to immigrant communities. He was invited to serve on Herbert Hoover's Russian Relief Commission when the Russian people faced severe famine and starvation after WWI. He became a personal friend of Hoover's as can be seen in photos in Pat's possession. Pat names her grandfather as one of her heroes. On her English (surname French) side, she can trace her ancestry back to the Massachusetts Bay Colony and the group associated with the Puritan expulsion of Quakers Roger Williams and Anne Hutcheson, who subsequently founded the state of Rhode Island. Pat admits that her interest in genealogy really began as she was researching the history of the house south of the village in which she and her husband, John, now live. That interest evolved into her involvement in the Frontenac Historical Society. It was here that Pat met another of her heroes, local genealogist, Norma Bilak, remembered as one of the founders and soul of the Historical Society.



Another of Pat's heroes is her own mother. Her heroic qualities went way beyond the ordinary. She was born and raised in Oneida, NY. Known for her musical talent and her independent spirit, she graduated from high school at 16 and was awarded a full scholarship to attend Oberlin College in Ohio for music. Her parents thought she was too young to move away so she declined the scholarship and instead, trained to become a nurse in Utica. Perhaps still chafing under the Oberlin restriction and still longing for something more adventurous, she enlisted in the Army at the beginning of WWII. She was one of the first group of nurses who served on the front line of this war. She served with the army invasions of North Africa, Italy, Sicily and Pantelleria where the 34<sup>th</sup> Station Hospital was the first ever attached directly to an Army unit during war. She even cared for German POW's, singing to them as neither spoke each other's language. In her own research, Pat discovered a newspaper clipping in the National Archives with a picture showing the first group of nurses disembarking in Pantelleria. Her mother was the second in line. After returning from the war, while very active in her community, Pat's mother opted for the role of housewife and mother in Syracuse, creating what Pat described as a typical 1950's family and community life.

Pat graduated from Syracuse City Schools and Cornell University. While at Cornell Pat married, however, her studies were temporarily interrupted by the birth of her first daughter in her sophomore year. After taking that year off, she returned to classes and received her degree in psychology with a minor in family development three years later. She describes those years as part of a unique student community in which married students cared for each other's kids, often exchanging their charges between classes as one left and the other arrived. Such communities evolved in the 1960's as more women were married and had children while pursuing their education. Women had more opportunities but often retained their

footing in traditional expectations. They did it all, developing skills in time management, setting priorities, and balancing multiple tasks and responsibilities. After graduation, Pat answered a newspaper ad with a vague job description that turned out to be opening a Head Start Program from scratch, something that her college education did not cover. Still, with her usual determination and organizational skills she had developed while as wife/student/mother, she was successful. That job ended when she and her husband went to Boston where he attended graduate school. They had their two more children, a daughter and a son. During this time, Pat took a job as an insurance claims adjuster to help support the family. Wives of graduate students in collegiate communities frequently take jobs for which they are overqualified as they know their terms in those jobs will be brief and will end with the spouse graduates. Little did she know where that particular job, completely out of her chosen field or experience, would lead to a successful career she never dreamed of, or even knew existed.



Pat returned to Syracuse a few years later as an unemployed single mother of three. Her part time position directing a nursery school did not provide the financial security the family of four needed. Searching the newspaper for a job, she came across an ad by a 'headhunter' for a Division Manager position with an insurance company. She met with the headhunter who deemed her unqualified. Pat disagreed with his judgment. She went home and used the yellow pages to call every insurance company in the city until she found the one with the opening. She asked for and got an interview directly with the company---and got the job. The headhunter tried to get his fee; she refused! Her gritty refusal to accept rejection led to a career path she never could have imagined. It was in a field for which she had not trained and included tasks, roles, and opportunities outside of her personal or family history. Descriptions of the actual managerial roles involved details that are unfamiliar to those not knowledgeable about the commercial insurance industry. Pat's jobs with Head Start and in Boston provided her with transferable skills which were enough to get her foot in the door---the rest was up to her. She studied, attended workshops, worked evenings and weekends. She applied her determination, grit and people skills rising from her initial role to manage commercial premium and claims processing functions. Using innate influence management and leadership skills, Pat became a Vice President and Director of Human Resources, a role which evolved from a traditional HR function to one of strategic planning and leadership. Through the years, she managed an ever-growing number of subordinates and offices throughout the country. As the industry experienced trends that may be read in business magazines headlines her role shifted to one of linking strategic Human Resources to business planning. Pat's travel reached a level of demand beyond reasonable expectations and she chose to retire to her home and life in the 'Springs'. After a period of throwing herself into every community activity looking for volunteers, she decided she wanted to focus on the two that mattered most to her: The Frontenac Historical Society and Museum and early American decorative arts, the latter through active membership in the Historical Society of Early American Decoration. Husband John is as involved in the museum as she is. His building and ground's role there, as well as at home, keep him as busy as he wants to be. Asked what she wants to be remembered for is as her subordinates and others have described her: someone who sees the person first, the who and not the what that person is and acts accordingly. Those who know her in community activities know Pat that way---as someone who gets things done but always in support of and caring for others. They would also add her attention to detail, her never ending curiosity, and her interest in others and in history.