

## Editorial

# A Huntington Hero, Age 10

Four years before he became president of the United States, John F. Kennedy authored a book called "Profiles in Courage." The book, which won a Pulitzer Prize in 1957, offered vignettes of some men that Kennedy considered authentic heroes of our time.

Today, in Huntington, we need look no further than Cold Spring Harbor to find one of the heroes of our time in the person of 10-year old Patrick Booton, who is a living profile in courage. Patrick, featured in this week's issue of *The Long-Islander*, is a 10-year old who at the age of 12 months was diagnosed as learning disabled. In an earlier, less enlightened age, Patrick might have been called "slow" and kept out of the mainstream community. But Patrick Booton did not allow any impediment to hinder him. He worked, and worked, and worked, and never quit. He entered the Special

Olympics and won medal after medal. He went beyond the Suffolk County version of the contests, entering the regional editions and finally the state, and this year, is considering the national Special Olympics. Patrick Booton doesn't take "no" for an answer. Patrick Booton, in short, is not a quitter. He believes in giving his all.

That's because Patrick Booton, who doesn't even turn 11 years old until this March, has, as his mother, Mary, explained, "the determination to do the best he can." That's a trait that all too many people, most of them far older than Patrick is, don't seem to have. Some years ago, a member of Congress rose to extol the mediocre. All too many people have the mindset that even a minimal effort should be found satisfactory.

But if we buy into that argument, we undo all of man's progress, none of which has to date been

achieved by people who did less than their best. And as we stand on the threshold of an exciting new century, there's no reason to believe that whatever progress the next 100 years will bring will be achieved by mediocrity.

Patrick Booton may not be the best athlete in the Special Olympics. But he got as far as he did because of that determination, that drive, that spunk, that enthusiasm, that determination to be the best he can be. And in a real sense, that's all that can legitimately be asked of any of us: to be the best that we can be.

A hero is one who is admired for achievements and qualities; one who shows great courage. Patrick Booton, by the determination he has shown despite his handicap, is a hero. One, we predict, who will go far in life, and one who, because of the determination he has shown, deserves all the best.

Take a bow, Patrick Booton.