Welcome to the Twenty-First Annual National Conference on Private Property Rights! What a great pleasure to see all of you! I am looking forward to meeting you as the day goes on.

You have made it possible for us to achieve several landmarks since our corporate founding in 1994. It is said that the Property Rights Foundation of America is the only grassroots group from the early nineties that still is carrying on.

These are the names of the co-sponsor organizations that donated toward the success of the conference: Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI), Gardiner Residents for Individual Property Rights (GRIP), National Center for Public Policy Research, New York Farm Bureau, and Saratoga Wetlands Action Task Force (SWAT). Great Circle Foundation on Long Island again contributed a generous Grassroots Outreach Grant. Many people who could not come today sent donations, including a couple who asked me to find two other people in their stead, which is a neat idea.

So, why is my speech entitled "You are the One"?

The answer is that experience has taught me the truth of the saying that if you want something done, see yourself that it is done. The other side of the coin is that when it is worth it, you must stand up and take the risk.

I have been happy to read this month's news that President Trump is withdrawing the United States from UNESCO.
I remember that I used to buy greeting cards from UNESCO to help feed poor children around the world. But there's more to UNESCO. However, few people know that UNESCO is a tool in land use restrictions in the United States.

A UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Blocked

The recent news articles about leaving UNESCO reminded me of the sense of satisfaction and the surprising risk that a couple of us experienced in the course of "standing up" --and preventing the UNESCO designations of a Biosphere Reserve region and World Heritage Site because they can be used to tie up land and infringe on private property rights here in the U.S.

When the late Congressman Jerry Solomon represented this district, I made three trips to his office in Washington, D.C., with the singular goal that the designation of the UNESCO Catskill Mountains Biosphere Reserve be stopped. On my third trip to Washington, D.C., the nomination had progressed through the National Park Service and was in the final stage -- approval at UNESCO in Paris.

Rep. Solomon's chief of staff came out and said, "Carol, I have that letter you wanted."

He stepped back into the working office and reappeared to hand me a copy of a letter by the National Park Service stating that the nomination of the Catskill Mountains Biosphere Reserve had been withdrawn from UNESCO in Paris just before approval.

But a powerful man orchestrated malicious slander against me. I was able to dispel this.

A Proposed UNESCO World Heritage Site Pulled

World Heritage Sites seem more innocent, but are used to block man-made structures visible from designated sites and can be used to stop mining and other human activity near, or in the region of, the sites.

A few years ago, the National Park Service had a list of 29 sites in the United States that it wanted approved by UNESCO. PRFA circulated the entire list.
Here in New York State, two men whom you have often seen at these gatherings became the focal point of opposition to the designation of Olana, which is the mansion of Frederick Church, of the Hudson River School of landscape painting, overlooking the Hudson in Columbia County. No other proposed World Heritage Site was reportedly opposed.

Olana's existence was already being cited by preservationists as the reason that a farmer on a hillside barely visible from the back of the mansion should not expand the communications tower on the hilltop at the farm to improve various services, including emergency communications. Olana was the only site removed from the list.

I enjoyed the Park Service's explanation for removing the site recommendation: Among other negative points, they reported that the architecture of the mansion was merely an "eclectic" mix.

But there was vengeance here also.

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Several years have passed. We are in the company of the President of the United States in some significant feature of our organization's work. Some of our best friends are connected to or within the Administration.

This is an important day for us! Have a wonderful day!

Now, let me introduce the first speaker.