

## **Nancy Brinker to receive Anti-Defamation League award for breast cancer efforts**

By Michele Dargan, Daily News Staff Writer

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On the eve of a week of breast-cancer awareness events in Cairo in October, Susan G. Komen for the Cure, a sponsor, became aware that Israeli advocates had been denied access.

The organization launched a diplomatic effort on behalf of the Israelis and helped to resolve the situation a day later, although the Israelis, ultimately, did not attend.

Palm Beacher Nancy Brinker, founder and CEO of the organization, had already planned to travel to Israel following the Cairo events. The result: Komen is planning its first Race for the Cure in Jerusalem this fall.

The group has funded \$2 million to research and support programs in Israel since its early days. In fact, Komen's first international research grant went to an Israeli institution in 1994. Brinker founded the organization in 1982 and named it after her sister who died of breast cancer at age 36. A breast cancer survivor, Brinker promised her dying sister that she would do everything in her power to end the disease.

"Susan G. Komen for the Cure took strong diplomatic action to make sure the Israeli delegates could, indeed, be included in our event," Brinker said. "We are not a political organization. We are a humanitarian organization. We are there to cure breast cancer. That is our mission and our only mission. When we're doing it, sometimes we have to take on tough issues and this was a tough issue. We will continue to carry out our global mission irrespective of religion or native country."

The Anti-Defamation League is honoring Brinker Thursday night at the annual dinner at The Breakers with the ADL Americanism Award. She is being honored for her efforts "as the leader of the global breast cancer movement," said National ADL Director Abraham Foxman. Foxman will present Brinker with the award.

Brinker served as the U.S. ambassador to Hungary from 2001-03. She also served as chief of protocol from 2007 to the end of President George W. Bush's administration.

"Nancy Brinker is taking awareness globally," Foxman said. "When she came across exclusion and discrimination, she stood up and challenged it. Nancy Brinker and the Komen organization made sure the world knew they would not stand for discrimination by excluding Israel.

"She stood up, spoke out and challenged anti-Semitism and bigotry," Foxman said. "She's a leader. We're delighted she will accept the Americanism Award."

Brinker said she is proud of the entire Susan G. Komen organization.

"This is a very important nod that we are doing the right things to promote better understanding, a solution to an absolutely deadly disease that is still the leading cancer killer of women between the ages of 40 and 60, and we're doing this all over the world," she said of the award.

Brinker said Komen is one of the only organizations taking on the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force policy guidelines issued last fall, saying mammography is not useful to women in their 40s and for those over 70.

"We are fighting on the ground and standing very strong so that people across the country will not have mammography benefits and opportunities to be screened taken away from them," Brinker said. "I am particularly honored to be cited by this group as a leader and I think it says a lot about my background. I'm Jewish, and it's always nice to be honored by the culture from which you come."

Brinker has collected a laundry list of high-profile national and international honors.

Time magazine named Brinker one of the 100 most influential people in the world for 2008. In August, President Barack Obama awarded Brinker the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor.

"I'm still pinching myself a little bit," she said of receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom. "It makes me realize how important it is to finish what I promised my sister and how much more we need to do to get to that point. I'm particularly honored for my organization because I believe Susan G. Komen is the one organization to fight breast cancer and cancer more than any other organization in the world."