

Mom's Eulogy

A few days before my mom passed, I sat by her bedside as she was sleeping soundly and thought, how can I do this again. How can I honor another parent. How can I possibly do justice to the life of a woman that has given her family and her world so much. How can I tell the world what a great person she was and how much she meant to me? John, Dave and I just went through this for our dad and that took a lot out of us. Couldn't we just let Pastor Marion speak on behalf of the family? Everyone would understand, right? Then I sat there and watched her, and I thought...how could I NOT.

Memories flooded my head as I watched her sleep and I took comfort in knowing she was in a dream-world, instead of plagued by her dark reality. At one point, Gina came in and asked me what I was thinking, and I said I didn't know. My thoughts were bouncing all over the place getting into everything, (kind of like Dave's kids do when they are visiting Mom and Bob's.)

I was sitting there feeling sorry for myself. I was mad. I thought about my mom's emotional and physical pain. I thought about life without her. I thought about Bob and John and Dave and all the grandkids. About how I am going to hate the entire State of Virginia or anybody older than my mom and my dad because my parents didn't get to get old. All of these feelings; indescribable feelings. I felt like my heart was going to burst. I felt like I couldn't take it anymore....and then I heard my mom say something in her dream and she partially smiled. Then all I could think of is that big smile of hers. I could see her smiling ear to ear, and how happy she was with Bob, the chickens and all of you, her incredible Virginia family here in Nelson County. And just like that, all those sad thoughts faded away.

I thought about how lucky my mom was to have had such a wonderful husband. To have found such a beautiful place to live. To have become part of such an incredible community.... I now understand why my mom and Bob moved down here. It wasn't to get away from us, like Nic and Tim said... It was because this is where she was meant to be.

Mom was born in Munich, Germany, married our Dad, came to the US, and then gave birth to the three stooges; John, Dave and I. This was when truly God tested my Mom. From me knocking my Dad's T-Bird out of gear and crashing it into a neighbors tree (at the tender age of two), or Dave getting creative with the ready-made paint in the bottom of his diapers and decorating his bedroom wall from his crib, or John getting lost at every major public event causing widespread law enforcement manhunts, or the three of us sledding down the stairs in laundry baskets, or the new sport John developed: 2nd story roof soccer. (mom found out about that game via a phone call from the neighbors). or the three stooges wrecking more cars within one year of getting their licenses than most people own in a lifetime. or the time when one of the stooges runs in the house yelling for a fire extinguisher and runs out. (later my mom found out that the brain surgeon was flicking matches at gasoline in the garage and almost burned the house down, or the time when the three stooges decided it would be fun to throw rocks at a world record sized wasp nest in front of the house and then run through the house with a thousand bees chasing us as Mom tried to slam the door closed, or maybe the fact that every piece of furniture and every lamp was held

together with superglue from all of the wrestling matches that went too far... yet probably the most stressful situation my Mom faced raising the three of us was when she tried teaching me to dance to the Village People's "In the Navy"it wasn't pretty.

Thank goodness we all got through that and ultimately gave her something to be proud of...her grandkids. She was so proud of Cally and Sylvi getting into Swarthmore and Harvard, (they ARE John's, right Calista?)...of Little Dan getting into the robotics school in Portugal and of her adorable little grandkids, Paityn and Cody.

Mom and Bob were such awesome grandparents. Taking all of the little rug-rats on vacations, providing all of them with experiences that they will cherish for their entire lives. Bob, Dan still loves to make those exploding volcanoes you guys had created in your kitchen in Cherry Hill and Dave said that all of those trips with Paityn and Cody to the parks, the beach at Blue Marsh Lake, and the library have become treasured events and will never be forgotten by him, Sue and the kids.

Mom was our matriarch. Her iron was what forged this family into what it is today. She did everything a mother was supposed to do and more – she took care of us when we were sick, celebrated our accomplishments and comforted us in defeat. She fiercely protected us from anything that dare harm us and always guided us in the right direction, and when we didn't follow the exact path she would have liked, she still was there to support us.

She was a strong person and this strength shone throughout her life but especially during her battle with cancer. She was always hopeful and upbeat when talking to us on the phone. She never let us see weakness. At one point, she had told me that she wanted to be strong like her father was during his fight with cancer. Even though she was losing mobility and in pain, she always remained positive and never let the attention focus on her. Mom was always more concerned with how we were doing and comforting us.

Our mother was one of the most genuinely good people I have ever known. She was able to experience and deliver incredible happiness and joy. She was our beacon and she was our glue. She gloried in her family and friends. You...Everyone in this room and all those that have known her and loved her were her happiness. My mom and I had so many great phone conversations about the grandkids, friends, family, church, the sewing groups, the prayer groups, the beer brewers, the neighbors where I could just feel the love and warmth just pouring from the phone.... She loved each and every one of you.

I have heard numerous times from so many people visiting mom, that it was a privilege to have known her. But I have to say that the privilege has been all mine. You have made my mother's life happy and complete, and for that, John, Dave and I thank you.

Our mom was a remarkable woman and I doubt she ever realized how many people she has had an impact on in her lifetime. Cherish the memories you have of her and honor her memory by doing good things for others. This is how she lived her life and there is no better way of honoring her than by following her example.

Before I close I would like to read a poem by Mary Elizabeth Frye. I posted this poem on Facebook when our Dad passed and Mom said it was really beautiful, so Mom, this is for you:

Do not stand at my grave and weep

I am not there. I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow.

I am the diamond glints on snow.

I am the sunlight on ripened grain.

I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you awaken in the morning's hush

I am the swift uplifting rush

Of quiet birds in circled flight.

I am the soft stars that shine at night.

Do not stand at my grave and cry;

I am not there. I did not die.

Mom, you will live forever inside all of us. I miss you. I love you.