

Eulogy For My Father

I'm touched but not surprised that so many people have come together to share their grief about my dad's passing and to honor him. I will miss him so much, and I hope that our memories of him will endure and remain vivid. I fear that with the passing of time, memories of him will fade like old photographs, and I want to remember every moment that my dad and I shared; these were too many to number.

Looking back on his life, I imagine that my dad would have few regrets – he planned his time carefully, and though he knew how to enjoy himself, he balanced recreation with work and attention to us, living each moment fully. He filled his time with family, with tennis and cycling, with study and writing, and with his career as a learned, careful and caring physician. All of these pursuits blended in him, and he became for us an example of what a father should be – loving, attentive, inspiring, gracious, respectful, and generous.

He was a witty man. He appreciated a good line and a long gag. Most of us have heard the story of the Meyerburg memorandum, in which he and a medical school roommate passed a “buck” back and forth for 40 years. He especially enjoyed recalling funny lines from our Aunt Ida and Uncle Bert, and he used stories about them to celebrate and remember them long after their time.

He took his greatest pleasures in his family, and he was proud of us all. Mira and Sophie, who bears dad's mother's name, were the shining stars in his life; they sustained him in his final years, and they were balm to his sore feet. I want them to know about the papa whom they loved so much, and when I have children, I'll wish they had known him. He was a wonderful father who always had time for us, who treated our concerns as his own, and who treasured every scrap that we wrote to him. He sang us to sleep and attended our graduations and concerts. In a way, I feel that a special achievement hasn't really happened until I've told my parents about it, and I'll miss being able to share my news with him. He felt extremely fortunate to have Barry and Phyllis join him in Atlanta, and he treasured visits from Jerry and his family. And when our family grew, he embraced our wives completely, and took direct pride in their warmth, talent, and humor. He loved them as he loved us, and treated them like daughters.

One summer, as a teenager, I worked in medical records at Piedmont Hospital, and while there I witnessed firsthand how highly my father was regarded. He was most beloved for his clear appreciation of everyone who made the hospital go, regardless of his or her station. He valued nurses, doctors, and staff with equal respect as contributors to the workings of the hospital, and patients were supreme: special and individual. I am told that when you were in the examination room, it was as if you were alone with him, that nobody was in the waiting room, and that there was no other patient but you.

Because of the prominence of the cardiologist Silverman brothers, people used to chide my brother and me about how neither of us went into medicine. But Joel

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and I were always encouraged to follow our own paths, as long as we followed our passions, worked with integrity, and strove to be the best we could be.

Sunday night, at my last dinner with dad, he beamed looking around the table, realizing that both of us had, in fact, gone into the family business. We were all teachers – one of medicine, one of photography, one of music. And the similarities didn't end there – our wives are all bright and accomplished, and they joined our family as if they were born into it.

I'm glad we had him for as long as we did, but he was gone far too soon. I know that as I live the rest of my life, his high standards will be my yardstick. I'll miss my dad. I know that we all will.

Adam Silverman, November 14, 2008