

4 Eulogy Examples

1.

I thank you all so much for being here today to honor the life of our father. As you know, he died far too young and so suddenly. It has been difficult and our grief is still painful. Your presence and your prayers are so much appreciated.

Eathon, Laura Lee and I have always considered ourselves the most fortunate of people to have had a father like ours. Dad was kind and good and fun to be around. I don't mean that he let us do whatever we wanted as we were growing up – he didn't. He disciplined us as needed, but always with love. We never doubted that anything he did was always with our best interest in mind. He loved us more than anyone in the world. I think Laura Lee probably had the closest relationship with dad than either Eathon or me. She was always his little girl – his pride and joy. There is something special about the bond between a father and daughter. They were no exception. Their admiration for one another was obvious.

I know dad would have wanted to see Laura Lee and Eathon and me get married and start families – to give him grandchildren – but that just wasn't to be. And it will be one of our greatest sorrows that, when we do have children (if God so grants it), they won't know the wonderful man who was their grandfather. They won't know the sound of his laughter and the sparkle in his eye. They won't know the great man we loved so much...

Dad taught school for twenty years. He was a high school teacher and loved to see young minds develop and learn to think and discover new

things every day. Nothing gave him greater pleasure than seeing his students light up with new knowledge – to finish school and go on to college and make a success of their lives. So many of them came back to him later and thanked him for how he had changed their lives. After twenty years, dad decided to step out and do something even more impressive in the education world. He started a school – Pricilla – and he lead that school as principal for another decade. He was so proud of what he had done and he LOVED being principal. Every day was a new challenge. Every day he walked into his office not knowing what was in store for him. And, every day, he met all the challenges with enthusiasm, patience, and wisdom – and often humor.

Our father would tell us stories of his own school days, when he was young. He told stories mostly of soccer and rugby. He loved to be active and those sports filled his life with games and practices and learning new strategies. All his life he was a soccer and rugby fan. He loved watching them on TV. His favorite teams were the _____ and the _____.

He was involved with the Namibian School Sports Union for years. That's an organization that organizes teams of high performing young athletes and arranges competitions. He loved seeing them play and develop their athletic abilities.

Dad was such a happy man. He was seldom cross. He always wore a smile. He was jovial and he wanted people to be happy if at all possible. He was an optimist. He believed that God would make everything, in the end, come out alright.

That had to do with his trust in God, of course. He was a man of deep faith. Seldom did a Sunday go by without him having been in church. He taught us the centrality of Christ in our lives. He taught us of the Savior's love and sacrifice and showed us what it looks like to be a

Christian – he lived his faith. Dad saw the gentleness and love of God in Christ (the meek and mild lamb of God), but he also believed in the power and discipline of the Almighty Creator (the lion).

It is dad's faith that gives us our greatest comfort. He believed – and we do too – that “to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.” We know where he is. He is with the one who has loved him from the beginning of time.

Dad loved to sing (probably learned it in church when he was young). It wasn't uncommon to hear him singing around the house - a hymn or some song of Frank Sinatra – maybe “Fly Me to the Moon” or “Strangers in the Night” or “Pennies from Heaven.” There always seemed to be a song inside that wanted to come out.

We have a number of aunts and uncles – dad's siblings. *He loved all of you. You were his family. Clement, especially – probably his best friend. But Lorraine, Andy, Ingrid, Imelda, Vincent, Lorenzo, Ignatius, Bernadette, Brigitte, Adeline, Joan, Richie, Gregory – he loved growing up with you and fighting with you and loving you...*

Another dear friend was George L. He met George in his college days. They loved to go to games together, to go out for lunch and talk sports and world events and simply enjoy one another's company... *Thank you, George, for being such a good friend to our father.*

When I graduated from medical school, I felt a great sense of accomplishment but, more important to me, was the fact that I knew dad was proud of me. He inspired that. We all wanted to do whatever we could to make him proud and, throughout our lives, he showed it. He encouraged us and prodded us and inspired us to go for whatever it is in life that we wanted to do. He truly was a wonderful father.

I'd like to conclude with a few words (taken out of context) of one of Frank Sinatra's songs, After You've Gone. It says

After you've gone and left me crying,
After you've gone –there's no denying
You'll feel blue – you're gonna be sad
You've missed the dearest pal that you ever had
There'll come a time – don't you forget it
(Yeah) There'll come a time... There'll come a time.

The time has come. Dad has left us and we are feeling blue – feeling sad. *Dad – you've been a wonderful influence in our lives. We will never forget all you did and all you were. We will love you forever.*

2.

I want to thank you all for coming today to say a final farewell to my wonderful wife. I want to thank you for all the support so many of you have given over the past couple of years – for the cards and calls and prayers and visits. You have all helped immensely in this difficult time.

I remember so clearly – as though it was yesterday – when Dee and I first met in that park in Ottawa back in 1972. We were just teenagers then but I think we both knew from that first conversation that we had something special... at least I did.

It took us six years to get married. We had to finish school and go to college before we could get our lives together started, but we both knew it was inevitable. And I've never regretted it. Dee was probably the best person I've ever known. We had 41 years together. Most of them better than these past couple – most

better than the three battles with other cancers which, as you know, she won... but all of them, even those tough times, were precious. I was inspired by her bravery and her strength and her refusal go to give up.

I suppose you have to have a sense of humor in all of this. When she was recovering and rehabilitating with her brain cancer, I loved to tell people she was my "Crash Test Dummy". I would explain the various medical issues she endured and how the doctors would fix her up and put her out there again for more testing. It made people laugh but more importantly, it put a smile on her face. She knew she was one of the lucky ones and God was on her side.

Dee was a registered nurse for over forty years and nursing was truly her calling. She loved it. She especially enjoyed that 28 year stint as a school nurse. She loved helping the children and young adult with whatever malady they might present. She handled everything from stomach aches to bruises earned on the playground to broken bones. I think her real success as a nurse was how positive she always was. No matter what ailment presented she would treat it with encouragement and a smile and assurances that all would be alright (and, of course, maybe an ice pack or a Band-Aid). She wasn't really ready to retire, but her health issues made that necessary.

She treated her student patients the same way she lived her life – with hope, with a smile, with an amazingly positive attitude. I can't think of anyone who didn't love her. She was just sincerely a nice person in every way. I won the lottery when I met her.

Dee and I had two great kids – Henry and Candida. *The two of you were the two most important people in the world to your mother. She was SO proud of you both and the wonderful adults you've become. When she looked back on her life, you two were her brightest stars.*

Then there's Ella and Parker, our grandkids. She was thrilled 'over the moon' as they say, when each of those two little ones were born. Those two were the greatest source of her strength to fight on. The hardest thing she faced was the knowledge that she wouldn't see them grow up... But they have her genes so there is little doubt that they will become the kind of people Dee was – and that she would be so proud of.

I'd like to ask all of you a favor. This evening, before you go to bed, would you take a small piece of paper and write down a memory you have of Dee – something she said or something you did together or something unique about her... No long essays – just two or three sentences – and send them to Ella and Parker's parents, _____ or to me. We'll collect them and put them into a notebook for the kids to look at when they grow up so they can know their grandmother... If you'd do that it would be SO appreciated.

Dee was also close to Francine and Jimmy and Peter's kids – her nieces and nephews. She was always happy when they were around. *Thank you all for loving your Aunt Dee the way you did.*

Dee was the kind of person who never shied away from problems. She was a problem solver and was always ready and willing to take on the challenge. That's how she battled her cancers and any other obstacle life threw at her. She was determined to overcome. Whatever it took, she'd give it her all.

One of her passions was gardening. Usually she preferred being out there by herself pulling the weeds and tending her plants. When I was able to give her a hand, she would stand over my shoulder like a Hollywood director, talking and pointing out the way she wanted it done (the right way – HER way). When she was no longer able to do the plantings and weeding, she still sat out there and watched me to make sure I did everything

properly. I am proud to say that I have carried on her work – probably not quite up to her standards, but I do my best.

I think it was her faith that gave Dee all the strength she had. She trusted God and knew that, somehow, all things work together for good (I have no idea how). She knew God was in her corner and she used the strength of her faith to go at it yet one more day. She was a member at the First Congregational Church. She was there every Sunday she was able. She loved the people there and the singing and the prayers and the sermons that inspired her. She loved the God they worship.

I can't forget to mention one of the other great loves of Dee's life... our Yorkie, Oliver. He and she were so attached to one another that we'd sometimes tease her that Oliver was her boyfriend. And that may not have been far from the truth. Even at the end that little dog stayed by her side, loving her, willing her to get better... He will sorely miss her... We all will.

Dee, love of my life, you enriched the lives of everyone you touched – perhaps hundreds – and none of us will ever forget you. We love you and will forever.

3.

My Uncle Bill was such a wonderful man. He had this unique ability to make ME feel special. To make ME feel loved. To make ME feel beautiful. And I'm pretty sure I wasn't alone in that. Isn't it true? He made YOU feel loved and special and beautiful, too, didn't he? That's what made HIM beautiful and special and loved.

I remember so often, when we'd visit, just having so much fun. We'd laugh together until tears were running down our cheeks.

We never wanted to go home and we always knew he didn't want us to go, either. We always had such a good time...

I always loved it when he'd tell the story of how he got the nickname, 'Bill.' His older brothers and friends all had nicknames – names like Zippo and Sparky and Stallion. He didn't just want to be called Rocco, so he begged them to give him a nickname. They asked him what he wanted to be called and, being very young and not knowing exactly what to say, he blurted out, "Just call me Bill." And his brothers, knowing that no little Italian boy was ever, in the history of the world, called 'Bill,' that was the name that stuck.

Uncle Bill and Aunt Marie were married for 58 years in, what most of us would call a wonderful, love filled marriage. I know that emotions flared from time to time – in what relationship doesn't that happen – especially in our family? But Uncle Bill loved Aunt Marie so deeply that it was obvious to everyone who knew them. *Aunt Marie – you and Uncle Bill inspired all of us to love one another more... you inspired us to be better people – to be more compassionate and supportive and loving... Thank you.*

Uncle Bill was very vocal about how he felt about all of us, but especially how blessed he was to have raised such children as Roseanne, Rocco and Anthony. *He was so proud of you all.*

But, of course, the shining stars – the greatest joys of his life - were his grandkids, Isabella, Victoria, Nicole and Dominic. *The four of you were adored by your grandfather. I hope that, as you continue to grow up, you will see so much of him in yourselves – his strength and his dedication and his love for life – and the depths of his faith. If you grow up to be amazing adults and you will be blessed.*

Uncle Bill's faith WAS an important part of his life. He loved this church. He loved to attend mass here. He loved the God who is worshiped in this place. His faith carried him through many hard times in his life, especially in these later years when his health was failing. He always knew that God was watching over him and giving him the strength he needed each day.

Uncle Bill's closest friends were Aunt Marie's brothers, Sammy and Elmo. That may well be because they played such an important part in his life. Sammy and Uncle Bill were in a car pool together about 60 years ago and Sammy's sister was babysitting at the house where he had parked his car. They managed to meet. She thought him cute and a very nice man. He thought she was about the most beautiful thing he had ever seen. He became the Godfather of Sammy's daughter, Veronica, and at her first birthday party, Uncle Bill got her alone and popped the question.

Sammy and Uncle Bill loved going hunting together. It was their passion and they bonded out there, tramping through the woods, searching for game... telling stories and just being together... They always looked forward to their annual expeditions and I know Uncle Bill was sad when that all came to an end because he just couldn't anymore.

He had fought in the Korean War back in the early '50s. He never talked about it much. A lot of soldiers like to keep those experiences private and most of us would never intrude on that privacy, but I do know that Uncle Bill loved his country and was proud to serve... and then get back to civilian life...

He had grown up on a farm upstate - Hillsdale. His family moved

there when the Great Depression hit. He used to tell about how, even as a child there were chores to do every morning before going to school – feed the farm animals, water them, make sure they were all OK. Then, after school, more chores. One spring, his father decided to plant a crop of onions and, of course, all the kids had to help plant the little seeds. But no one thought that his father would come home with 100,000 seeds to individually plant. It took them weeks of backbreaking work... but Uncle Bill learned perseverance and endurance and the eventual satisfaction of seeing a job well done.

All his life he worked hard. He was a member of the International Union of Operating Engineers. He loved his work. He loved to see a project – something beginning with nothing – become something solid and strong and enduring.

Uncle Bill's life was like that – a man of strength and integrity and endurance. We will all miss him terribly but will love him forever.

Uncle Bill – you've been such an important part of so many of our lives. You made us laugh until we cried. You showed us unconditional love. You were the kind of person we'd each like to be. We will honor your memory for as long as we live. We love you.

4.

I want to thank you all for coming today. I knew there would be a lot of people paying their respects, but we've been overwhelmed in these past couple of weeks with the number of people who have

called or sent cards or stopped by or, in some way, let us know that they are praying for us. Your surrounding us today with your care and your love is deeply comforting.

When John and I got married three years ago, we knew this day would come. He had been diagnosed a year before, but we chose to walk this final earthly journey hand in hand - together. We had known one another for quite a number of years – since all the kids were young. We were friends for years before God brought us together in, what I would describe as a wonderful, love-filled marriage. When we were dating, we discovered that we had the same values and family ideals. We both wanted the same things in life. We both were committed to our relationship with God. And God honored our coming together by giving us three wonderful years. Not long enough, of course, but every day was full and rich and never to be forgotten.

John was a man who had an amazing capacity to love. It wouldn't be uncommon for him to stop if he saw someone – especially an elderly person – stranded on the road. If he saw someone who needed help, he knew he was the one to provide it. *John and Carolyn – you raised a son who loved everyone. You know, there wasn't a person he'd come across anywhere that he didn't introduce himself to. He loved to meet people, to find out what they were about and, if they needed something he could help with, he was always willing. Carolyn, you instilled faith in him – he was a man of God because of you and all he did he did to please God. John – you gave him a work ethic and taught him how to work – on cars or boats or engines or just about anything. I know he made you proud.*

He loved his work. He started his landscaping business 27 years ago, when he was just 18. He LOVED to be outside, trimming and

climbing into trees and hedge cutting and mowing and planting. Then he loved to stand back and look at the beauty he had created. He'd often come home and describe, in some detail, all he had done. It was obvious that he was made for the work he did... And when JJ was old enough to work with his dad, he couldn't have been happier. Spending time on the job, doing what he loved, working beside his oldest son – what could be better than that.

John loved his kids more than life itself. JJ, Stephanie, Paul – and Brittain – your father loved you more than you can ever imagine. He was so proud of you and the young people you've become. When you were little he loved going to your games and school events. If you had an interest in something, so did he. Always remember the kind of man he was – a man of character and caring and faith. He'd want all that for you.

John had a deep love for children – anyone's children – but especially for his grandkids, Sage and Matthew. When he was around children, John's childish nature came out. He'd forget about the other adults in the room and get down on the floor and play with the kids. He especially adored his nephews Colton and Taylor and Jason. His grandkids and so many of the children he interacted with are too young to remember him as they grow up. But I like to think that, in the recesses of their little hearts, they will always know of this man who loved them...

When John was a kid himself, he and his brother Jason had any number of adventures. One he loved to talk about was when he was growing up near Charleston, South Carolina. He would say that he and Jason would be out swimming like kids everywhere but with a bit of a twist. They were swimming in the river and it was known to have Water Moccasins along the shore, waiting for

young boys to take a dip. His mom knew of the danger, so she watched over them as they swam, with a gun, ready to protect her sons...

Another animal story: This was when John was an adult, trimming a tree some 30-40 feet off the ground. With his face just inches from the trunk, suddenly a Palm Rat appeared. Then, before he could shoo it away, he saw, on the edge of his vision, a hawk come swooshing in. The hawk grabbed the rat and flew off. John had never been so close to a rat nor to a flying hawk...

But he was always a man for adventure. He had a need for speed. Out on the water, he loved to open the throttle on his Action Marine and see what it could do. He loved to take his family to the annual Scream and Fly boat event at River Ranch for a long weekend to see the hundreds of speed boaters racing all over the lake.

And he loved his Harley. He'd use any excuse to go for a ride – even to go get groceries. There was no job too insignificant if he could take a ride on that motorcycle.

John's life was filled with so many good experiences and memories. He had so many friend. ...Years of memories made with people like Jason and Hollie Noe and Robert and Kellii Sherman... the Geidi's and so many others. *Thank you all for loving John as much as he loved you.*

But John's greatest love was for his savior, Jesus. And it was his faith that made the end of his life bearable. He believed that God is able to make something good out of whatever comes our way and that even when we can't see the whole plan, God has a purpose. John's life was filled with happiness because he knew

that the secret to happiness and fulfillment in life is to serve others. He was so dedicated to our church – and our church family has been wonderful in these past days – he, of course, did whatever needed to be done with landscaping and some maintenance on the property. It was his pleasure. It was his way of serving God.

John loved to tell and retell stories. Whenever he retold a story, it never seemed to lose its flare and fun even though it might have been told for the tenth time. We all have stories – memories – experiences – adventures – where John is one of the players. I hope that we can all share those stories with one another and with his children and with his grandkids – over and over again and, in so doing, letting his life continue in our own.

John – you were a wonderful husband – a man to be admired and loved. You will live on in my heart – in all of our hearts – forever.