

DAD's EULOGY
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Imagine being born, and just three weeks later, the stock market crashes, and over the next ten years, stocks lose nearly 90% of their value, and millions of people lose their jobs, their homes, their ability to take care of themselves and their families, and they go hungry and become homeless and helpless and hopeless. Some even lose their lives.

For the first decade of my father's life, this was the world he was brought up in. And yet, when he told stories about his childhood, he never discussed or gave details of any struggles or hardships he and his family may have endured.

He was the 6th child of 8 children born to James Joseph Donaghy and Anna Marie O'Dell Donaghy in a city that was hard-hit during the Great Depression: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Yet mostly what he talked about of his years in that city were the adventures he had with his friends, and the music they danced to and listened to, and the life that they lived to the fullest.

Both his parents lived nice long lives for their generation. His father, my GrandPop—was 76 years old when he died, and his mother, my Grandmom—was 93 years old when she passed on.

My Dad...and Tom's Dad, and Sharon's Dad, and Mike's Dad...lived long and well for 95 years. He didn't graduate from high school, but when he joined the army, he made sure he got his GED. He was smart, and though he knew our mother Irene—Renee—for years, at some point in time, he fell in love with her, and she became the absolute love of his life!

His ability to learn quickly, be frugal with his money, and make grand plans for his future gave him the courage and determination to ask my mother's parents—my Nana and GrandDad—for Renee's hand in marriage. When Nana asked Dad what he was going to do for her daughter, he declared with clear-headed certainty that he was going to take her around the world... And that's exactly what he did.

He knew what he wanted and he set out to make it happen. And my Dad never dwelled on the negative. He was always a man of possibilities. Anything was possible.

He made real the possibility that we as a family would travel around the US and into Canada. We went camping for years and fell in love with nature—we had two travel trailers

that were well-used—and then we went boating, where we stayed during the summer months on the Renee D and learned what it was to live on a boat on a river—the Bodkin River—and we traveled all around the Chesapeake Bay when my father was able to take some time off work. It was a great life that my Dad gave our family.

I learned a lot from my Dad, and I'm still learning so much from him even on this very day that we will be laying him to rest.

When my siblings and I were younger, my father worked at Peach Bottom Atomic Power Plant—that's what they called it then. Atomic Power Plant. And he was a Nuclear Reactor Operator. Sounds kind of like a Rocket Scientist! And he kept studying and testing and getting advanced licensing, like a Chief Reactor Operator and then a Senior Reactor Operator, and then he became a Shift Supervisor and eventually a Shift Superintendent, running and overseeing two Nuclear Power Plant Units at Peach Bottom for 11 years—a combined thirty years in total that he worked there—before he retired—and then he became a consultant at other nuclear facilities for a few more years!

Then one day he decided that he was ready for a real retirement and the next phase of his life... here in Flagler Beach Florida.

But when we were young, and Dad was working or studying to improve all our lives, he would do shift work, which meant he would sleep during the day and work at night, or vice versa, and we may not see him at the dinner table for several weeks or a month or more.

My favorite memories of my father when I was younger were when he would eat dinner with us as a family. He never failed to say "Renee, what's for dessert?" We knew we'd have dessert whenever Dad was eating dinner with us. But when we were finished, there were times that everyone would leave the table except for me and Dad. On occasion, Tom would stay, and Sharon or Mike less often might stick around, but I absolutely loved that time together when it was just me and my Dad, and he would ask me questions...Math questions!

I sometimes had no idea how to solve some of the math problems he posed, but he would show me how to solve them, and I learned from him how to learn. He made me think, and I loved it when I solved problems correctly and he expressed pride in me. I wanted so much to please him. And in school, I almost always had straight A's in Math and in Algebra, and in most of my other non-math-related classes as well. I was an Honor Student. My Dad taught me how to do that!

My Dad also loved music and he and my Mom wanted their children to have a real understanding and appreciation of music. So they had each of us pick an instrument...and then they bought it for us! I chose the organ and then the piano, Tom and Sharon selected

the guitar, and Mike chose the drums. We had to practice a half hour every day—well, almost every day—and that was the part that none of us liked. But I eventually played in the Chorus, and Talent Shows at high school where I won 3rd place one year and 1st place another year, and I played at the American Legion and other locations, and even at my high school graduation!

My Dad made that happen! And my Mom. They both together inspired us to be better and smarter and wiser.

Years later when I moved to Flagler Beach—before my Dad fully retired and then after he and my Mom moved here for good, whenever we would go out to eat or go have a few drinks at one of the beachside bars, we would always end up back at their house and sit in their dining room, talking and laughing and listening to music. And we'd have another drink or two. Mom would eventually go to bed, leaving Dad and me alone together, at the table, once more.

We would stay there sometimes for an hour, many times for many hours. And we did this for over 35 years! We talked about politics and culture and social issues and the past and the future and anything and everything. We listened to music and sang along, and talked about movies and actors, and singers and songwriters. My Dad and I loved it when Alexa came into being and we could play any song at any time, and that's exactly what we did.

We also talked about wars, and the war my father fought in—the Korean War—and I'll never forget how after decades of discussions, he finally disclosed to me one night in a very detailed reliving of his first night on the battlefield, what he witnessed, and his emotional anguish from that was real and raw and still very painful for him. He was scarred by that experience, but he rarely allowed anyone to see that scarring that he privately carried with him even near the end of his life.

I will miss my father forever, and I will miss our table-side chats and musical sessions and his challenges to me. I know my mother and my siblings and their families and Mom & Dad's grandchildren and great-grandchildren and Dad's sister Joanne—my Aunt Joanne and my Godmother—and Dad's sister-in-law Aunt Carmella and all the cousins and nieces and nephews and their families—they will all miss him and wish, like I do, that we had more time together.

But God gave us this remarkable man who made a wonderful life for our family—He gave him to us for as long as he needed to be here. And now we will have to be satisfied with the many memories we have of our time with him...until we meet again.

I love you Dad! May God continue to bless your family. For we were truly, truly blessed to have you in our lives. We will love you forever!