Eulogy

Honesty, integrity, decency. These are among the most important things I learned from my father. If you met him -- you understood pretty quickly that he was an exceptional human being. Someone at the visitation yesterday said this was “the end of an era” and I thought that put it well.

I’ve never known anyone else like “Terry” as all my friends called him. After moving away from Toronto, I recall describing my father to new friends and they thought he was a mythical character. They wondered if I was delusional. How could any person have the character I described? You meet a lot of people in this life, and I have met many who have not been as fortunate as I have in my upbringing. My father was a stellar man. He loved his wife, he loved his children. He was passionate about the natural environment, golf, his career and Canada. Oh, he was as proud a Canadian as you could know, always flying the flag at the cottage and home. Oh Canada. I think he forgave me for moving to the Evil Empire some 20 years ago, but probably only because I tend to be bashing Republicans regularly.

At the height of his career, he was a very busy person. He was on call a lot, and not always available. It was a regular occurrence for his pager to go off in the middle of dinner or

some other family activity and he'd have to bolt off to the hospital. But none of that mattered to us. We knew he was important. We knew he was helping other people and doing great things. I recall the pride when we would travel and he would visit local hospitals – and they would welcome him like a rock star. I remember being in Nairobi with him, and the rest of our family in 1986 visiting my sister Molly when she was working there. He dropped into a local hospital and introduced himself and the next thing he knew he was on the hook to give a lecture the next day. He wasn't prepared for this of course, and in the days before powerpoint this required him to search the stores for cellophane wrap to use as makeshift overhead transparencies. I'm pretty sure this was a novel approach and in the end he never told us how it went, so I'm not sure it was the best approach.

I never heard my father swear. Not once. As a parent now, I realise just how remarkable this is. Alright, there was one exception, and he never knew I heard. It was after an apparently epic costume party at the Rowes across the street on Golfdale. He went dressed as a golfer, of all things. When he and Mom returned home, late at night, Tina the Saint Bernard (many of you will remember that lovely dog I'm sure), Tina the Saint Bernard got out and he chased her down the street with his driver raised high and swinging in the air over his head, while yelling at the bleebing dog to come back.

My Dad was proud of all his kids and encouraged us in his own way. After barely finishing grade 12, I moved to Vancouver for a while to “get my head together”. I worked in the hotel business as front desk clerk with an eye on eventually going into hotel management. On a call home towards the end of that phase I told Dad that I had decided to go to university instead of stay in the hospitality business. I expected him to say something like “what a relief”, or “yes!” before I even finished the sentence. But he took time - he took time to see if I was making the right decision for myself and for all the right reasons. I couldn’t believe he was questioning this decision, which would have been exactly what he wanted, but what he wanted didn’t matter. He eventually came around to the idea of me becoming an academic. Many years later, when I eventually finished my PhD it was easily my proudest moment to have him call me Doctor Doran on graduation day.

We were lucky to be Terry Doran’s kids. He was a beautiful person.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep. Enjoy them Dad, I love you.