

Remembrances of Dad

Thank you for being here or watching. Dad's wishes make this a long service, so I'll try to be brief.

Dad often brightened the spirits of people around him. He liked to tease people in a friendly way, and often said "You've gotta have fun." He laughed easily. He also had a bit of a temper. Some would say I share that trait.

Perhaps the hardest I ever saw him laugh came as a result of my alleged temper. We were working on drywall in a house, I was having a bad day, and when trying to put my hammer back in its holster, I caught the handle on my shirt. Instead of pausing, I just jammed it -- and so managed to pop every button off that shirt. He almost hit the floor from laughing so hard. He had much better control of his temper.

Being able to work with Dad for several summers was important to me for many reasons. After actually trying to do some of the work he made look so effortless and efficient, I could appreciate what an artisan he was, and understand how his work days went. And that time together definitely shortened my rebellious independent phase. Soon the house was again big enough for both of us.

Most times when I sought Dad's advice or perspective, he would encourage me to do what I thought was best, usually along with offering some insight. I especially remember how he succinctly cut through some religious and social quandaries by saying "Who am I to judge? Who am I to judge?" He knew that God loves everyone and is always with us.

Dad seemed to be ever thankful. During the 9 years since Mom died, we family members have tried to return some of the support he has long given us. He frequently thanked us for time and effort we were quite happy to provide, even as he was just as often helping us.

Dad was able to accept things he couldn't change. "So be it" was a common phrase. He endured an awful lot recently, with few complaints. He dearly wanted to stay in his own home. That wouldn't have been even remotely possible these last 9 months without loving nursing care from Naomi. He deeply appreciated that amazing extended kindness, and so did we. Tim, we thank you, too.

Probably the two strongest aspects of Dad's essence were his deep and abiding faith in God, and his absolute dependability. His actions and attitudes clearly demonstrated both his faith and how completely he could be counted on. He was generally selfless, devoted to his wife, family, and Grace Lutheran. One shining example is how he made Mom's parish nurse ministry possible for years, while she had such severe knee problems.

Let me invite you into a thought experiment, to help you understand a key part of Dad. Why this imaginary situation could happen isn't important, just the answer you would give to: Whom would you choose? Six months from now, your life will be saved if the person you designate now pushes a button within a particular 10-minute period, at a place 500 miles away. You can't be there. You can't even remind your advocate in the meantime. No one will try to stop them, nor aid them. They have to cherish you, plan ahead, pay attention to detail, stay focused, and overcome any unforeseen obstacles. Whom would you ask to save you? For most of his life, I'd have asked Dad, and would've known I'd be safe.

We can all make life better for others, like Dad did, by acting dependably in ordinary, everyday ways, whenever we can.

We're so thankful that Dad loved us and let us know it, and that he knew we loved him.

I'm blessed to be LuVerne's son. Thank you, God, for Dad.