

Eulogy for Bruce Weissman

By Pete Weissman

September 25, 2017

Thank you all for coming. My dad loved to laugh. But more than laugh, he loved to tell jokes ... often the same ones.

Like the one about the wife who went to her husband's urologist very worried.

"Doctor, I'm afraid my husband is hallucinating. He believes that when he gets up in the middle of the night to pee, God helps him. When my husband opens the bathroom door, God turns on the light. After he's finished and shuts the door, God turns off the light. What should I do?"

The doctor says, "Mrs. Rosen, tell your husband to stop peeing in the refrigerator."

My dad was such an amazing man – always so generous and always thinking of us.

He lived a rich and significant life serving others – helping people hear . . . helping people speak . . . serving our country as a major in the Air Force.

It's hard to sum him up in a short talk – even for me – a professional speechwriter. I think best way to capture who my dad was is to share 5 of his favorite phrases.

First, he believed - if you do what you love, it will never feel like work.

Ever since he was a little boy in Philadelphia, he wanted to be a doctor. And he loved it. He loved travel, scuba diving and snow skiing. He loved to dance with Annette, and he was a very good dancer. Unfortunately, my wife Emily can tell you it skipped a generation.

He loved Annette -- his constant companion. "Annette and Bruce." "Bruce and Annette." Always together. They enjoyed trips around the world, and she took such great care of him for 35 years, and especially in the last few years.

He loved his ham radio, listening to *Car Talk*, watching *This Old House*, and of course – chocolate, which did *not* skip a generation.

He loved music – John Philip Sousa, Sinatra, Pavarotti, Andres Bocelli and – most of all – private piano concerts by his favorite - Brandon Goldberg. Dad would sit beside him at the keys, march, tap his feet, and ask for more.

Dad loved to play songs like *Anne's Song* and *Ballad of the Green Beret* on the piano, which was a big improvement from when I was little, and he played the accordion.

He loved his grandchildren and got so much joy from them:

- Brandon's music
- Aubrey's gymnastics
- Michelle's humor and artistry
- Spending time with our son Ryan in Lenox and Aventura,
- and although he didn't get to meet our daughter Hannah, his eyes lit up every time I showed him pictures of her.

My dad loved woodworking: turning wood on a lathe to make a pen or a bowl ... using his Shopsmith to make a table or a bookcase ... working with great care on the perfect dovetail joint.

Whenever I'd walk into his workshop, talk radio was blaring, and the table saw was spinning.

I'd ask, "What are you making today?"

He always gave the same answer "Sawdust."

His approach to woodworking reflected his approach to life.

And that's the **second of his favorite sayings** -- "**Keep sanding.**"

Before you stain the wood, you can always make it a little smoother, a little better. That drive to always do your best – in school, in your job – is something he encouraged in us and showed us through his own example.

As doctor, he constantly learned and trained. *U.S. News and World Report* named him one of the top doctors in the country. Celebrities came to see him because he was the best ... David Cassidy, Raquel Welch, Sophia Lauren, Shakira. Please forgive the HIPPA violations.

He was an innovator. He created the Professional Voice Institute and the South Beach Facelift. He knew the most advanced medical techniques . . . but somehow 90% of his advice was to use steam inhalation and gargle with warm salt water.

When I was young, he hoped that I would follow in his footsteps as a doctor. One time, I watched him stitch up a woman's face. I felt sick to my stomach, and that was the end of my medical career. No worries. The next time we were eating in

the Doctors' Dining Room at the hospital, he jokingly introduced me all the doctors as his son Pete -- the future malpractice attorney.

His medical practice was truly a family affair. I think all of us worked in his office at one time or another. And you would be surprised by how short-lived most of us were ... except for two family members – Arthur and Carmen, who were with him for many years until he retired.

He valued education and intelligence, and he was brilliant. He was so smart that became something of an authority on stupidity. Which brings to me a **third favorite saying – “stupidity is its own reward.”** Do something stupid, and that's what you'll get.

Of course, one of the problems with stupid people is they don't know they're stupid. But here again, dad would provide a helpful public service, by informing them. That driver who cut him off in the Publix parking lot? “Stupid.”

The idea of working hard – of doing your best – was a constant theme. When I was young, he told me he would get me a Porsche.

“Really?” I said.

He said, “Yes, I'll give you the education, so you can earn enough to buy any car you want.”

Then, when I was older and 6 foot 2, he said, “Don't worry about it – you're too tall to fit in one anyway.”

And that's what I would tell myself . . . every time my brother Jason got a new Porsche.

Dad took such pride in his family's accomplishments:

- Annette getting her masters and her doctorate;
- Richard becoming a police officer and earning promotions as a Sargent, Lieutenant and Captain;
- Jason's incredible success in business;
- and the pride he felt when I gave him a tour of the West Wing and we had lunch in the White House dining room.

His favorite birthday card said on the front, “To a man who is outstanding in his field”

When you opened it up, it showed a guy standing alone in an empty field. It captured both his humor and his love of excellence.

We used to talk every Sunday night at 9 pm, and he often said, **his fourth phrase -- “As long as you’re doing what you need to do.”**

It was important to him to fulfill his role as a son, brother, husband, father, doctor and member of the Jewish community.

The fifth and final saying was advice he always gave me before I had a big speech and debate tournament, a job interview or client meeting: **“Make sure your shoes are shined.”**

Appearances count. I guess that makes sense coming from a plastic surgeon. He always dressed so sharply. My dental hygienist once told me that my dad was the only person who would come in at the end of the day with his shirt still unwrinkled and his French cuffs still sharp. I didn’t tell her that his secret was our housekeeper Sandra.

He took pride in things like his Montblanc pen, his medical bag and leather Hartman briefcase. My mom Judy can tell you he was always that way. When they lived in New York, dad was doing his residency at Columbia Presbyterian hospital. He was the low man on the totem pole, working the overnight shift. But every morning, he rode in the same elevator with the big shot doctors and hospital executives, who always had their leather bags filled with important papers.

Dad stood there beside them in the elevator with his leather bag – and he looked just as important – even though his contained a turkey sandwich and a change of underwear.

My dad was outstanding in his field and in every role he played – doctor, father, husband, son, brother and grandfather.

Do what you love.
Keep sanding.
Stupidity is its own reward.
Do what you need to do.
Make sure your shoes are shined.

Great wisdom from a great man. Thank you. I’m so proud that you are my dad.