

How Will You Be Remembered?

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On Tuesday of this past week, in May 2005, I was called and told my Nan had died in NFLD. She was 90 years old and it was expected, but it was not expected so suddenly. Just like with Gramps, who died 5 years ago in March, my cousin and I, along with our Moms would drive the 22 hours from Ontario back home; plus the 6 hour boat ride non-stop.

When Gramps died, my Aunt asked my cousin and I to do the eulogy and Scripture reading. We were proud to do it as we had always admired Gramps. But my Aunt asked us to do so the day before the service. So, just in case she asked us to do the same thing this time, we both started to prepare for the service as we made the drive to NFLD.

We both realized in a short while that although everyone was mourning the passing of Nan, everyone was also relieved and thankful that it was over. We thought we must be wrong in our conclusions and began to talk to as many of the relatives and friends of the family as we could meet with. They all said the same thing; "We do not wish to speak disrespectfully of the dead, but there will finally now be peace in the family. We didn't have to ask them why either. But it kept coming up in all of the conversations we were having; Gramps was a super-star for putting up with it for all the 60 years of marriage that he did.

Even the Bishop of NFLD said the same thing in his tactful eulogy. Yes, my cousin and I were greatly relieved to hear that the Bishop was going to give the eulogy. We just didn't know what to say without either lying or hurting our Aunts and Uncles. Don't get me wrong, we all loved Nan and we all put up with her demanding, belittling and pushy attitude. A "me first" attitude. We, as grandchildren, even made fun of it- as she had her way with each of her children. But as we all said our goodbyes to Nan at the grave site, we each shed a small tear and walked back to the limousines; relieved it was over. No more zingers; no more being made to feel guilty. And we all enjoyed the reunion of relatives that came from as far as BC and all points in-between. We sang and drank and told many a story and we all laughed until we cried. We visited as many of the old relatives as we could knowing this could most likely be the last time we see them alive. We visited all of the places we had heard about in our stories and we talked. It was a great wake.

Seven days after leaving for NFLD I arrived home; exhausted from the drive and the emotional ups and downs that one deals with at a funeral. I just wanted to sleep. However, my wife as well as my son and daughter were very upset.

Our dog Molly, which we had had for the past 16 years, was not well. By the next day I, too, knew she was in trouble. That afternoon my wife and I took Molly for her last car ride to the vet; crying all the way there. I carried her in and placed her on the examination table and both

of us were bawling. We patted her head and her ears as we said goodbye. My wife had to leave and asked me to stay with her until the end. I just wanted to get out of there and not cry in front of the vet staff... a vague attempt at preserving my dignity. But I realized I needed to be with my dog; the same one that would always be the first, and many times the only one, to greet me each and every day I came home from work. She always had a "smile" as if to say, "I am so glad to see you back home!" She was always excited when I would take her for a walk; she never held a grudge when I would punish her for having an accident on the rug or when I had to chain her up in the back yard. Even in her last year, whenever we came in the door, she would drag herself off the couch (that she now claimed as her own) and wobble out to greet us and have us pet her head and then she would return to the couch. There is nothing bad I can say about Molly. Not one thing. So, as I stroked her head and her ears and watched as the vet injected her with the needle, I cried like I had not cried in a very long time for my faithful companion. And, just like that, she was gone.

I carried Molly out in the same blanket she had laid and died on. Then I brought her home to where she had spent all of her life. My son and I dug a deep hole next to the red currant bush and gently placed her in the grave. I cried as I watched my son place the dirt back on her in a very respectful and mindful way so as not to hurt the only dog he had known all his life. When we finished burying Molly we placed a large stone over the grave. The whole time my wife watched from the bedroom window as she, too, cried uncontrollably. I then sat there by the grave for some time; thinking and sobbing at the loss of such a good and faithful friend. So, why have I put myself through this tortuous effort to write these events to you, all the while crying and sobbing as I do? It is because I wonder just how each of us is going to be remembered. How will I be remembered by my children and grandchildren? Will they be glad to be rid of me, or will they cry me a river of love like I have for Molly? I loved my Nan, but I missed my dog.

How will you be remembered? What is written in the book of life about you? Are you working towards the Kingdom or is this just another religion to you?

How will you be remembered? What will those who attend your funeral be saying? Will they be happy or sad? Will anyone cry a river of love for you?

How will you be remembered?

Joseph F. Dumond

Post-Script: View the following Movie <http://www.thedashmovie.com/>