

Sharon's Tribute to her Father – Papa Fred

October 21, 2006

As a forewarning, any of you who know Dad, knew that he had a hard time doing a reading at our weddings without breaking down. So remember – the apple never falls far from the tree...

How do you say good bye to someone like Dad?

He always seemed to be everywhere, involved and loving, cracking some Uncle Louie joke, looking for "trail dust cutter" because surely "it is noon somewhere" or exclaiming "barking spiders".

He was such a humble, simple man – ready to poke fun at himself at every turn. Who else but Dad would name his boat the "Good Ship Barley Pop" because he felt sailing was synonymous with – all the beer you can drink?

He took such good care of all of us over the years, always trying to ease our way through life's trials and triumphs. He was someone you could always count on.

Only on Dad's answering machine would he pretend to be a refrigerator that would place your message "with a silly little magnet for you" and yet, in his usual thoughtful manner suggest you call again if "the master doesn't return the call." It is hard to believe the master won't be returning any more calls.

He is so much a part of who we all are that we now feel undefined.

Dad unselfishly did what he thought would make others happy: like dressing as Santa Claus – with his beloved Mrs. Claus at his side, or sailing with Phil in a nor'easter off Martha's Vineyard. He used to tease me and say he thought Phil wanted to do him harm as he retold the travails of going over a wing dam in a canoe, where Phil wanted him to paddle for his life and Dad shouted back, "I'd would rather hold on, Thank You".

We discovered with trying to gather pictures of Dad for his wake, that there are few. The reason being he was the one always capturing the moment behind his camera. It seems almost unnatural to not see a camera around his neck now.

He was our modern day McGyver, always ready to jury-rig something with duct tape or string. He was adventuresome, unselfish and fun loving, a devout man whose faith defined all that he was and did.

We do not gather here to mourn the passing of one lovingly known as "Papa Fred", but rather to celebrate a life well-lived: Lived with great joy, powerful faith and immense love.

Without a doubt, this man was a character, who loved to laugh and bring joy to others. He delighted in the simple things of this world. This showed most vividly in his child-like trust in Our Lord to guide him through all of life's circumstances.

He was a devoted husband, cherishing Mom, the love of his life. One of his favorite things to do was to stop in his tracks, point at her, and say "Isn't she beautiful?" He'd always choke up when he did this, as if he couldn't believe his good fortune to deserve her love.

- 2 -He was an involved and loving father, grandfather and great grandfather, delighting in each of us, cheering our accomplishments, offering sage advice, or gentle comfort and strong support in our trials. He was a faithful friend.

Dad knew how to love and find joy in an unbounded, enthusiastic way. He gave of himself to family, Church, and community. Dad gave with a spirit of selflessness and generosity.

Even in these last difficult months, as he recovered from heart surgery and in his final moments, Dad worked to shield us from all he suffered. He would put on a smiling face and crack some "Papa" joke to deflect attention from him and make the feeling light.

He was a kind, humble, faith-filled man who was devoted to our Blessed Lady and particularly, to Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament. As a convert to the faith, you couldn't find a better example of "a Christian is as a Christian does." Dad lived his faith to the fullest—a golden thread in the tapestry of his life. We should all aspire to leave behind as many positive memories as Papa Fred, because a life so well lived, Lives Forever.

We have no doubt that at 8:19 am on Wednesday, October 18th, God opened his arms and said, "Come, my good and faithful servant. I have prepared a place for you."

Welcome Home, Dad.

We love you!