

HPK – A DAUGHTER REMEMBERS

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

As a daughter who lives far from London, I very much wish to thank the members of the UFL, the staff at Parkwood Hospital, my colleagues Joan & Teresa, and family members for the care and support given to our father, our mother, and me over the last 4 months. I have been enormously affected by your generosity and compassion.

ORIENTATION

In sharing my remembrances of my father today, there are a few general things that need to be said.

- 1 It goes without saying that I speak only for myself. We all know that in every family - in fact, in every exchange – each person has their own experience, affected by age, gender, personality, communication skills or styles, position in the family, opportunities to observe or hear, and other pressures or stresses, etc. You'll notice also, in remembrances from my childhood, I sometimes refer to my brother Norm but less frequently to Sue and Brian – Norm and I are close in age and therefore were together for some of the experiences I'll mention. Sue and Brian, being 7 and 20 years younger, respectively, experienced our Dad in different activities or situations than I.
- 2 What I have tried to do is put together some remembrances and to integrate them with some of Dad's values & activities & suggest how these may have influenced me over the years.

OVERVIEW

A few weeks ago, Dad answered yes when I asked him whether he would say his life had been “fully satisfying”. I fully expected this to be his response. Like most of us, Dad wondered – when I asked him – if he might do some things differently if he were to live his life again. His energy and cognitive abilities that evening were such that I could not explore this question further. And I didn't find another opportunity. So, some questions we (or I) might have liked to ask Dad remain unanswered.

Our gathering today gives all of us who care to speak an opportunity to share snippets of experiences or information gleaned about Dad, so we may all leave here with a fuller

understanding of who he was and what made him “tick”. Or, if you prefer, I invite you to record a memory or experience in the section of the website Brian created for this purpose. (The URL is on the back of the order of service.)

I know you will hear from others this afternoon – and most of you already know this - that Dad worked tirelessly most of his adult life for many causes. Recognizing this, Donna Jamieson asked me in August whether I thought Dad might have become depressed this spring because he worked so hard to create a better world and yet we remain faced with such huge challenges – global environmental degradation, war & conflict in many regions of the world, people living on the streets or dependent on food banks here at home, and the devastating conditions in some first nations territories. My own impression is that Dad's depression resulted from his physical ailments and the impact these had on his cognitive functioning.

I do not think that the state of the world depressed him any more in the last year than it might have all his life. When Dad spoke here at a Sunday service in the summer of 1997, he acknowledged:

Judging from the choices that I have made I find that all my endeavours are not marked with immediate success.

He went on to say:

As a Unitarian, I'm in a denomination that boasts only 1/10 of 1% of the population. ... Politically, as a socialist, I see that the greed and individualism of the neoconservatives seems to be winning most of the votes of the masses. ...

Economically I opt for a voluntary role and do not see a need to make my first million. Ethnically, I support the Native peoples The suicide rates of Native young people demonstrate that they do not have a comfortable psyche. I believe we share some responsibility. ... I hope that we can help more of their young people decide to choose life.

... [T]here are more wars today than there ever were. Freedom is elusive. You do not win it once and for all. You have to win it over and over again. Someone is always trying to take it away.

He continued:

Life since the crisis (he was referring to his own turning back from suicide in his early 20s) has brought me many rewards. ...

Fighting *The Plague*, in the sense of Camus's novel, is a challenge. It is demanding and often tiring but it has rewards.

He invited his audience:

Join with me in the struggle.

While I'm sure Dad would have been thrilled to see more changes in his lifetime of the type he worked so hard for, I'm confident that Dad was motivated throughout his life by the text about Commitment by Dorothy Day that you can find in Reading 560 in the song book:

People say, what is the sense of our small effort.
 They cannot see that we must lay one brick at a time,
 take one step at a time.
 A pebble cast into a pond causes ripples that spread in all directions.
 Each one of our thoughts, words and deeds is like that.
 No one has a right to sit down and feel hopeless.
 There's too much work to do.

DAD'S EXTERNAL ORIENTATION

Dad was fundamentally a hard worker – this may have arisen from some combination of:

- his Germanic heritage;
- his upbringing on a farm in the dirty 30s, where the manual work was relieved only by horses, wagons and simple machinery;
- his hardworking parents, including a father who bought run-down farms, improved them, sold them, and started again;

and perhaps some aspects of his Christian upbringing.

As a mechanical engineer, he had interesting and generally satisfying work. He was well-suited to this occupation: he was a tremendously curious person, interested in how everything mechanical worked, a good learner who (until quite recently) seemed to retain everything he learned. His curiosity was not limited, however, to things mechanical. As well as studying physics and engineering, he studied science, philosophy and comparative religions. As I was growing up, he read a little about classical music, feminism, anthropology, psychology, the occasional novel that had some connection with his socio-political interests, and numerous articles on the environment and economic and social policy. He taught himself computer programming and how computers worked in the mid-70s. In recent years, he read widely about first nations history, culture, and politics.

Dad's evangelical Christian upbringing in the 20s and 30s, his exposure to anti-semitism at his Toronto highschool in 1942-44 where the large majority of his classmates were Jewish, and the influence of the 5th and 6th Unitarian principles he embraced in the 50s – the value of the democratic process and the goals of peace and justice – all contributed to his

growing conviction by the 60s that involvement in political processes – whether running for public office or participating in other grassroots activities – was where he should focus his energies.

Dad had been quite consumed with work and Unitarian organizational activities during the 50s – working well into the evenings and on weekends. And, periodically his work took him out-of-town for weeks at a time. So I think it is fair to say that he spent less time at home than many fathers – even of that day. Some might say, then, that Dad was not “family-oriented” in the way we think of this term today. He was happy enough to be a parent, and proud of each of us, but, although quite an introverted guy, he was greatly oriented to a more external and public world while we were growing up. And for some years that is the path I myself followed and one I expect to embrace more fully from now on.

I don't think that Dad's external orientation had anything to do with him not liking family time or his children and wife. In fact, there were many good family times over the years and some of these you will see in photos that will be projected during the refreshment period or hear about in the next few minutes. Rather, I think:

- 1 to some extent, it may have been that Dad was just not in touch (at least until the 70s) with how important a lot of good family time might be for the emotional development of children – while perhaps not too uncommon for some men of his generation, possibly a little extreme in Dad's case;
- 2 more likely, I think, having the good fortune of being able to provide well for his family, Dad was driven to do what he could to help create a world that might provide such conditions (or, at least better conditions) for all families.

Before telling you some of about Dad's “external” (or, outside-the-family) activities, let me share a few remembrances about my “family” experiences with Dad.

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES – PATIENCE & PRECISION

While our mother took almost all of the responsibility for food preparation in our home – and very capably so, we would all agree! - our Dad was not without culinary talent. Mom would say that Dad taught her how to bake early in their marriage and we have all benefitted enormously from Mom's love of baking. Yet, although never a BBQer, I certainly remember Dad preparing meals or parts of meals on Mom's days off – Saturdays when we were young and she would head downtown in Toronto to shop or take in an afternoon movie.

As Dad exhibited elsewhere in his work and other endeavours, there was a certain methodicalness and precision – meticulousness, you might say - to his cooking contributions. He followed recipes well and had a lot of general know-how, no doubt from watching or helping his own mother, Dad being the youngest in his family of origin. And he understood the chemistry of it all – like why you had to mix flour in cold water initially to make gravy without lumps.

Mom also called on Dad at least semi-annually to help **prepare the dressing and stuff the turkey**. Dad's job was to cut the dried-out bread into little cubes, to remove the giblets and heart from the turkey and cut them and the onion also into tiny pieces so Mom could sauté them and mix them with other ingredients and herbs to prepare the turkey dressing. Every cube of bread would be of an identical size – perfect matching cubes. (The same was pretty much true of the onion and the giblets.) What's more, I seem to recall that all the crumbs from the bread cutting remained on the bread board – a talent I have never quite mastered. Once mother had done her magic with the various ingredients, it was Dad's job once more to actually stuff the bird and sew it up. Again, this was done carefully and with great precision. He was able somehow to tie those turkey legs together and tight against the breast so that they remained moist. While I am what might be thought of as a minimalist cook, this turkey ritual has given me the skills to deliver a decent chicken or turkey dinner anytime. How to make that great stuffing is imprinted in my brain, even though I rarely do so now in our mostly vegetarian household.

Dad brought a similar skill and precision to the making of **coleslaw**. When Dad was available, cutting the cabbage up and chopping it was a task that fell to him. He would sharpen the knife and then slice almost paper-thin layers of cabbage, essentially shredding it, always with a great result. Similarly, Mom would call on Dad to **cut up rutabagas** (which we call turnips in our family) – again, those perfect cubes!

Mother's family dinners always include wonderful desserts. The task of slicing up a **round cake or pie** was generally Dad's responsibility. Here he would take account of the number of people to be served – which could be an odd number like 5, 7 or 9, not just 4, 6 or 8 – and ask each person about the size of piece they would want – these would range, of course, from requests for very tiny 1 or 2” slices for the diet conscious to much larger slices for those with greater appetites or less will-power. Dad would then proceed to carve up the pie or cake in precisely the correct number of pieces and appropriate sizes. (There might be a

single small or large left-over section, if we were small in number.) It seemed Dad loved the challenge of this geometric problem. None of us ever really mastered this, so I imagine our pie slices will never be the same again.

The social worker at the hospital asked me a few weeks ago: **How did your father show his love?** I had to think about this. Did I feel his love was unconditional? I did, but it took some time for me to consider how this manifested itself. Perhaps, it was that he would **help me with anything I asked and with seeming infinite patience.** (Other UFL friends seem to have a similar impression – Claire van Daele and Wilf Canning recently told me that they experienced Dad in this way also – perhaps they'll tell you later.) I rather regret, however, that I was not always as loving in receipt of all that help and patience – I was prone to frustration and bad temper when I couldn't understand some mathematical or physics concepts he would try to help me with and when I was tired, which was frequently the case when we would sit down at the dining room table after 10 p.m. to complete my high-school homework.

As a child – and I'm sure many of us feel this way about our parents – there didn't seem to be anything Dad wouldn't do for me – OR couldn't do. I have memories of him taking Norm and me **skating** at an early age at outdoor neighbourhood rinks – lacing up our skates with his bare hands (3 sets of skates in total), pulling the sides of the skates tight to my feet and lacing them up even tighter, one eye at a time – none of those “open-end-of-the-finger” gloves in those days – no velcro closings on the skates, no indoor change rooms or trailers. When I skate on the Rideau Canal in Ottawa each winter, on the days when the ice is best i.e., when it's more than 10 below 0 - I almost always have a flash or two of those times when Dad was doing up our skates on those freezing cold days in Toronto. These days, I'm glad to be able to “lace up” in a heated trailer!

In the winter, too, Dad took us **tobogganning.** There was a ravine within walking distance of our house in North York – Hogg's Hollow. How I remember Dad putting Norm and me on the front of the toboggan, then he sat on the back – we flew down those hills – I was often terrified, but as I learned a few years later when we would toboggan with friends, it had been great to be with Dad – both for the speed and someone to pull that darn toboggan back up the hill.

And in the autumn, with those elementary school **“fall leaves” projects,** Dad would take us to the ravine, cottage country, or a conservation park to collect leaves – and then

help us press and wax them with Mom's iron. The latter action, not really contributing much to family harmony.

Dad brought his patience to every assistance and encouragement he gave me, such as:

- teaching me to skate and ride a bike – activities I still engage in;
- encouraging me in long-distance swimming – accompanying me in our canoe when I would swim across the lake at the cottage;
- teaching me to drive and how to change a flat tire, should the occasion arise – which fortunately I have never needed to do.

No matter what my frustration or fear, Dad hung in.

I benefitted from Dad's patience and precision in other domestic areas earlier in my life. Blessed with **skinny, straight hair** and a mother who was certain I'd look better with curls, I frequently went to bed as a child with pin curls or rubber curlers in my hair. While Mom usually helped me with this aspect of my personal care, there were occasions when she was out in the evening or perhaps occupied with Sue and, at those times, this task would fall to my father. Women here my age or older will recall that we did not have hair conditioners in the 50s and a little girl's hair was frequently full of tangles and knots after her bath or hair wash. As I notice with my own granddaughter, having one's hair **de-tangled** is not a little girl's favorite activity. I'm happy to report, however, that when my father did my hair, the experience was just fine. Dad seemed to have some super-human way of carving out a very small amount of hair, holding my head firmly and sliding the comb ever so gently and slowly to de-tangle the knots painlessly – periodically adding a little more hair until it was all combed through and tangle-free. When the task also involved curling, he also did this in a very careful, precise manner – the parting of the hair into appropriate sections was perfect and an even amount of hair was assigned to each curler or hair-pin curl, all tight enough to stay in place for the night, but none so tight as to pull at the scalp.

When I was younger, say between the ages of 1 ½ and 5, we lived in a tiny house in downtown Toronto. At the south end of the street was a large hill leading up to Eglinton Ave. - it was a cobblestone road made of red bricks. Before we had a car, Dad would put Norm and me in Norm's wooden **wagon on a Saturday morning** and pull us up the hill to the supermarket where he did the grocery shopping – I think we were glad not to have to trudge up that hill. On the return trip, we were evicted from the wagon to make room for the 4-6

paper bags full of groceries, precisely fitted and balanced in the wagon to withstand the downward voyage.

Dad seemed to be able to **build anything, repair anything, plan and grow** beautiful garden flowers, cultivate a fair-sized vegetable garden, keep lilac bushes pruned and blooming beautifully year-after-year, and maintain a delicious raspberry patch. Over time, however, as Dad became more politically engaged, most of these endeavours required more time than he could give. It has been gratifying to all of us, however, to see Dad's green thumb return in recent years – as a family we've been surrounded by beautiful plants year round when we visit Mom and Dad's home and we've also enjoyed the tomatoes and cantelopes they've grown.

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES – BROADENING OUR HORIZONS

Dad also sought to **broaden our horizons**, especially as he himself discovered new aspects of our world. For example, he bought a **hi-fi** at the same time as we got a TV in 1957 or so. He joined a record club and ordered a lot of classical albums. I'm not sure if this was his introduction to classical music, or whether he had had some earlier exposure, but he studied the information about each composer and recording as he listened to each new album. My attention span was not as great as Dad's, but my mother played these and other recordings much of every day (our home was full of music) and I found this an inspiration as I studied piano. I was somewhat over-challenged, however, when Dad bought me the musical score for one of our favorite Tchaichovsky Piano Concertos.

On or around August 1st in the late 50s or perhaps early 60s Dad took me along when he went to see a documentary **film about the atomic bombing of Hiroshima** at the end of WW2. I'm not sure what my age was – I would think I was not younger than 11, but I doubt that I was older than 13. I have 2 vivid recollections from this experience.

- 1 I have a powerful memory (almost 50 years later) of the images of ordinary people going about their ordinary lives in Hiroshima and Nagasaki on that fateful day in 1945 – making meals, cleaning the house, receiving visitors, doing errands, etc. - and how, suddenly and without warning, their lives and homes were either obliterated within minutes or they were left homeless, burnt or with life-long injuries and illnesses;
- 2 The other is that I saw tears run down my father's cheeks. So this was when I learned

that men can – and do - cry.

I suppose it was around this time that Dad encouraged me to think about starting a ban the bomb club at school. (My junior high principal was less enthusiastic about this idea and encouraged me to put that off until high school!) As a teenager in the 60s in Toronto, I was exposed through our church's US activist ministers, my youth group, and my father to the civil rights movement in the US, the international peace movement, and later the anti-war movement – against the War in VietNam. In practical terms, this meant that I would often accompany my Dad to a demonstration in front of the US Consulate on University Avenue. I suspect that there weren't many peace rallies Dad missed. In fact, a few years ago, here in London, Dan and I happened upon a rally protesting the Israeli bombing of Lebanon – we joined it and were not surprised to meet up with Dad. Even before his heart operation several years ago, his shortness of breath did not deter Dad from attending such marches – we found that he just marched a little more slowly than before.

Dad had joined the Royal Canadian Engineers (Reserve) during WW2. He said it was populated by veterans from WW1 and much younger men – boys – soon to volunteer or be drafted to active duty. He was tempted to volunteer. In later years he felt a debt of gratitude to his mother who had been a powerful restraining influence against what he later came to understand were the forceful news, media and recruiting campaigns of the day.

OTHER EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

Dad's commitment to doing good was integrated in all his life. It was certainly part of his Christian upbringing – he was devout in his youth and studied his religion seriously throughout his high school years. I'm sure he felt compelled to follow what he understood then to be the Christian values of loving one's fellow man, turning the other cheek, and caring for the disadvantaged, etc. This commitment was also very much part of the 60s concept that if you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem and was entirely consistent with the humanist principles he gravitated towards in Unitarianism.

When Dad believed something, he believed it wholeheartedly and he believed in acting upon it. Dad taught us, primarily by example, that there were little, as well as bigger, things you could do to make community life better.

On the little side: Dad never **littered** and – on this one - he made it clear we shouldn't. He picked up the litter of others and encouraged us to do the same, a practice I now follow

perhaps a little less seriously than I might. But what I do notice is that when I pick up junk lying around in a public place – like newspapers on a bus floor when I'm getting off the bus – is that sometimes others become motivated to do the same.

Dad was proud of being a **blood donor** – he was honoured for this after contributing for the 75th time. So many of us are unable to be blood donors (for example, I have small veins and I sometimes pass out, so the Blood Services folks have told me to stay away – I'm just too much trouble!), I urge you if you are under 65 and able to do so to be a blood donor in memory of my Dad.

On the medium scale: Dad would be proactive in situations of simple public inconvenience. I recall once as a youngster, the **checkout line-up in the grocery store** where we were shopping was extraordinarily long, people had carts of groceries piled high, and there was only a lone cashier at the counter. Dad left Norm and me with the cart and went to the counter to pack groceries for everyone in the line ahead of us. This was probably my first recollection of many instances in which I observed my Dad's proactiveness in helping others – usually without the self-interest that this grocery line-up presented.

Dad would take me along when he delivered **Christmas food baskets** to needy families. He greeted people warmly and cheerfully.

Dad would think little of interrupting what he was doing to help out in what might be a small-scale emergency. For example if the traffic lights were down at an intersection during a severe winter or rain storm and no police officer had arrived to direct traffic, there's a good chance Dad would park the car and **direct traffic** for awhile. At a busy city intersection in such circumstances, drivers are challenged and under a fair bit of stress. These efforts rarely had any direct benefit to Dad – in fact he would get pretty wet in a thunderstorm – but they made things easier and safer for other motorists.

Dad was also a volunteer with what was in the 50s and 60s the **White Cross Society**, essentially a group of volunteers with the Canadian Mental Health Association who participated in social activities with people who had been discharged from mental health facilities – the white cross being, until the 70s, the symbol for that Association. Whether Dad was motivated to do this because of the mental health issues he was aware of in his own extended family, the challenges he had faced as a young adult, or simply because someone had told him there was a need, I do not know.

During that period Dad was also involved with the **African Students Foundation** in

Toronto – a financial and social support group for students from Africa studying at the University of Toronto. In my late teens, when I started talking about going away to university, Dad encouraged me to go abroad – not to England or France, but to Africa! My parents did not see eye-to-eye on this matter and, in retrospect, although I gained much from this experience, it did carry some risks with it which I was not really ready for. My father probably didn't really appreciate these risks, or perhaps simply had confidence that I would survive – as I did.

By the time I was 12, Dad was heavily into electoral politics at all levels of government and encouraged me to help out on political campaigns. Dad worked for federal and provincial NDP or like-minded municipal candidates in every election I know of from the mid-60s, if not earlier, until last year. He was elected as a school board trustee in North York from 1972-78 and sought political office unsuccessfully municipally and provincially several times. We lived in a riding with very little NDP support, so these were all tough campaigns – not enough money, not enough volunteers. Along with others, Dad variously silk-screened election signs in a party member's garage, cut points on wooden stakes, put up signs in all kinds of weather, called and visited supporters to ask for financial contributions and help, wrote leaflets, found and organized the election committee rooms, organized canvasses, sign crews, and election day activities, found 100 people to sign formal nomination papers for candidates, knocked on doors (canvassing) himself, simply distributed leaflets in areas unlikely to be supportive, and frequently acted as treasurer. While I was never as enthusiastic or willing as Dad, I learned to do all these tasks in his company. Always available to go the extra mile, Dad would think little of driving to Hamilton, Sudbury, North Bay or wherever on a Saturday or weekend to work on provincial or federal bi-elections. No doubt all of this encouraged me to stand as a candidate in the 1974 and 1977 provincial elections, when Dad was no longer keen to run himself.

Dad was conscious of how he spent his time, particularly in recent years. Although he worked in a movie theatre as a student – in fact, that's how he met our Mom – he didn't share our mother's love of **movies**. It was virtually impossible to get him out to see a good movie – even if it was politically correct and socially important! The same was generally true for theatre and most concerts. He simply had other priorities. This was all the more so in recent years as his health was poorer and yet he maintained a full roster of community commitments.

Dad had been exceptionally active in the organizational life of the First Unitarian

Congregation in Toronto throughout the 50's and into the mid-60s. His intention when he settled in London in 1990 had been not to be active in Church affairs – rather to devote himself to **the concerns of First Nations people**. To what extent he succeeded may be a story that belongs to other speakers.

Dad began to become better informed about the history and oppression of first nations peoples, first in the US and later in BC, during our parents' 1989-90 post-retirement North American tour. When they got back to London in the spring of 1990, the military occupation of Oka had the spotlight in the news for two months. At that time, Dad decided that his future volunteer work would be devoted to assisting the Native peoples of Canada to, in his words, “work with them to salvage whatever possible out of the dismal state to which they had been driven.” His association with Dan and Mary Lou Smoke of Smoke Signals Radio and the London Chapter of the Canadian Alliance in Solidarity with Native Peoples are long-standing, and represent only some of his activities in this sphere.

In all these different ways – both in our childhoods and as adults -, Dad taught us to do what was good and helpful in our community, however we defined that. I attribute the origins of this way of living not just to his religious convictions (both those of his youth and his adult life) or his political convictions, but also to his rural roots, where people understood when he was young that they had to help each other out in order that they might all survive and prosper.

WHY DID HE DO IT and HOW DID HE FEEL ABOUT IT?

Among Dad's end-of-life papers was a photocopied page from a book published in 1959 called *The Illusion of Immortality*. It contains a passage that well expresses how Dad sought to live his life:

... We do not ask to be born; and we do not ask to die. But born we are and die we must. We come into existence and we pass out of existence. ...
Yet between birth and death we can live our lives, work for and enjoy the things that we hold dear. We can make our actions count and endow our days on earth with a scope and meaning that the finality of death cannot defeat. We can contribute our unique quality to the ongoing development of the nation and humanity; give of our best to the continuing affirmation of life

a On a Sunday in August ten years ago, Dad stood here and gave a short talk –

an autobiography that he titled “What Makes Harold Run”. Although I wasn't in London at the time, he kindly gave me a copy of his address. Having recounted the significant events in his life and his explanation of how he lived his life and why, which I have detailed a little more in my remarks today, he said “I am an emotional guy and have had many 'peak experiences' as philosopher Abraham Maslow has defined them”.

Dad also shared earlier in that talk how he had been plagued in his late teens and early 20s with philosophical, psychological, religious pain and chaos arising from crises in his life and his growing inability to maintain the faith of his childhood and youth.

Many of you will know that Dad's father committed suicide in 1939, when Dad was 14 years old. You may also know that Dad himself almost committed suicide around or before age 20, while suffering a broken heart. He remained conscious after his own crisis that he had “chosen life”. He was plagued by guilt after his father's death, as family members of suiciders often are. And tormented also by religious and other nightmares until he was in his mid-20s and became immersed in Unitarianism, where he found a comfortable home for his changing philosophical and evolving humanistic views. This, he felt, helped his mind to create a comfortable place for his psyche.

Some might think that a half century of community and political organizing, preparing so many posters, writing so many press releases, handling the finances for so many organizations, attending so many meetings, putting up so many election signs, knocking on so many doors, walking in so many rallies or demonstrations – rain or shine, hot or cold -, writing so many letters, and making so many presentations to various levels of government was a drag and not much fun. Not so for Dad - he seemed to thrive on this kind of activity and his relationships with those who were similarly engaged. While he didn't seem to refer to these as “peak experiences”, it is work he found rewarding, no matter how demanding and tiring. And hearing Tommy Douglas speak at Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto in the 50s and helping Marion Boyd and Irene Matthyssen get elected here in London in recent years were “charging”, if not “peak experiences”, for him.

While Dad was a humble person, and I thought of him as quite an ordinary person – although extraordinarily involved in community work and highly dependable – I believe that he was pleased to have his contributions acknowledged during his lifetime. Citizens in North York and Toronto recognized him at a special dinner in 1989. His efforts were also

recognized by speakers at our parents 50th and 60th wedding anniversary celebrations. And in 1992, the Governor General of Canada recognized Dad's community work by awarding him the Commemorative Medal for the 125th anniversary of Confederation, which he wore proudly on special occasions.

DAD'S LEGACY TO ME

Dad, with our mother, helped us develop a good set of values; honesty, community and family service, independence, self-sufficiency, the value of a dollar, and concern for the environment. By raising me as a Unitarian, I developed a love for my fellow person and a passion for social justice. By involving me in peace, social justice, and political activities during my youth, Dad helped me internalize the importance of fairness, kindness, tolerance, social justice and the need to do something about it. I like to think that I bring these to all my relationships and activities.

I became a teacher at the end of the 60s somewhat by default. Nevertheless, I soon came to think that this would be a great way to influence change in the world – 30 children at a time. Dad was a school board trustee during some of the years I was a teacher, so we had much to discuss in those days. When I subsequently became a lawyer, I advocated on behalf of low income individuals and groups – in the courts and before government bodies – again, a way to change the world. At first, I think my father was surprised (and possibly not very pleased) that I would go to law school (I suspect he may have thought most lawyers worked for corporations), but when he saw the potential for law reform and public legal education, as well as litigating for the disadvantaged, I think he began to think this was not such a bad choice. Although I find my current government job and family interests and leisure activities consume a great deal of my time, I look forward to retirement in 5 years or so and the opportunity to resume more community activities.

CLOSING

Perhaps, but for truly exceptional people, we have no way of measuring or really rewarding the value of loving, human service, whether it is carried out in the privacy of home or in the public sphere. In telling the stories of people no longer with us, we celebrate, we share, and we encourage one another – these are the rewards – these are what keep good living going.

I'd like to close with the text of the birthday card Dan and I gave to Dad this September – it's always great when you find something that expresses exactly what you feel:

For you, Dad.

A dad is someone
who listens with his heart
and teaches not by words,
but by example.
You've taught so much
simply by the way you live your life.
You've encouraged ...influenced ...inspired,
all just by being the man,
and the dad, you are.

Thank you all for listening patiently to my story about my Dad, as I understand him. I look forward to hearing your stories.

Marlene Koehler