

THANKS FROM A LIFE WELL LIVED

Not so long ago I asked my father how he felt as he looked back over a life well lived, and the word he used was thankful. He said he had so much to be thankful for. So as my tribute to him I thought I would make some thank-you's on his behalf as he is not here to do it himself.

Everyone

First he would want to thank all of you, not just for coming here today to pay your respects and acknowledge the fact that he has touched your lives. But my father was a humble man in the best sense of the word, and I know he was genuinely surprised and touched and at times overwhelmed by the outpouring of good wishes, support and real affection and warmth from so many people. He took great strength and comfort from all the letters, cards calls and visits. On one occasion my Mum went in to see to him and he was sitting with a tear in his eye. She asked him what was wrong and he said, "nothing is wrong, I just can't believe I'm surrounded by so much love". That is a wonderful way to feel at the end of your days and he would want to thank you all for your kindness.

He would also want to thank you for being such a good audience and laughing at his jokes. He was, as we have heard, a man of great good humour, a ready smile, a joy of the absurd and a lover of word play, puns and clever use of language. Adrian and I will inherit shelves of old joke books and the files containing all the old sketches Humphrey mentioned - comedy gold! Mind you some of his jokes were terrible and forever in our household, if anyone comes up with a corny joke or a dodgy pun the cry will go up "that sounds like one of granddads!" - and I think he would approve.

It is a wonderful thing to be brought up in a house full of laughter...and of course music

Choir

His second thank you would be to all those who enabled him to indulge his passion for music and singing.- all those choirs, choirmasters, organists and composers. He loved singing with the Lee Singers, he often guested for my Candover Valley Choir when we needed some tenor support but of course his spiritual home was the choir of St Mary's, Alverstoke, where he sang as a boy treble before being evacuated. When he came back he re-joined the church as a server, but one Sunday morning the tenors were all laid low by flu or a collective hangover and he was asked to help out and they then

realised he had inherited his father's fine tenor, and the rest is history.

My Brother and I both sang with the choir, were both head boy in our time. But for me, through the choir my father taught me a great lesson in life, not by words but by example. That lesson is of loyalty and commitment.

I suspect it is much the same now but when I was a chorister we had rehearsal on Tuesdays and Thursdays, weddings on Saturdays and 2 services on a Sunday, 52 weeks a year come rain or shine - I even remember walking to church in the snow from Privett Place one Christmastime. And I learned that, when something needs to be done, it's ok to say "No", but if you say yes you do it to the best of your ability and you keep going until the job is done. Don't let people down. And that has stood me in good stead through my life. So he would want to say "Thank you for the music"

Prices

He would want to say thank you Prices and for teaching. To all his colleagues for their friendship and support and to all the pupils who gave him so much intellectual stimulation and deep satisfaction at their progress. He loved to teach and continued after his retirement to help family friends, nephews and nieces and of course his grandchildren to fulfil their maths potential. 2 weeks before he died I popped down to see him after work and he was sitting poring over some papers. When I asked what he was doing he explained they had been emailed through from his grandson Ryan in Australia and he was having a look before he rang him back which he duly did. And weakened and tired as he was he spent 20 minutes explaining the answers and it is a great blessing that his intellect remained undimmed right until his death.

He would want to thank Ted and Humphrey for their love and support which I know he valued greatly and the family would wish add their own thanks and appreciation for their wonderful pastoral care.

Lots of other things he was thankful for - Gosport borough football Club. He used to take me every Saturday to watch the borough, where I learnt my love for sport, Bovril and the appropriate use of bad language. To compilers of fiendish crosswords, and writers of detective fiction (as long as it is not too gory).

Family

He was a great family man and would want to thank all his family for the joy and love they brought to his life. I would like to mention my sister Alison who cannot be here today but came over from Australia shortly before Dad died and spent a week with him. I know it meant everything to him and it was one of the happiest weeks of his life. I always thought of my dad as my safety net - that whatever happened he would always be there to catch me with words of wisdom, or a telling off if I deserved it.

He would do anything for his family and I personally benefitted hugely from his willingness to always put family first. My brother earned a scholarship to PGS at 11+ but 4 years later they were no longer available. My parents decided to put me through school at considerable personal hardship, then I chose a 5y degree in medicine on a minimum grant, and to cap it all spent an extra year to get a second degree. At no time was I made to feel I owed my parents anything or that I should work hard because of the sacrifices they were making. I did work hard, but it was because I wanted them to be proud of me.

Irene

And finally he would want to thank Irene, his wife of 58 years, who was his soul mate and the love of his life. He always said asking her to marry him was the best decision he ever made and do you know I think he actually meant it. I have never known a couple who kept their wedding vows better. For poorer then richer, in health then sickness, they loved and cherished one another. Right to the last my dad did not want to go, not in anger or bitterness or fear of death - he was quite content and at peace, but because being with my Mum made every day a good day to be alive. And at the very end he would want to thank her for doing everything right.

Lastly he would want to thank her for keeping her promise to outlive him, because they both knew she was a tough Yorkshire lass with a wonderful network of friends to support her, but my dad would have been a lost soul on his home.

So there we are. Thank you all on behalf of my dad, for your part in making his a life well lived. And I am sure you would wish me to thank him on your behalf for his gentleness, tolerance, kindness and good humour which has made all our lives richer just for knowing him.