

CELEBRATION OF A LIFE

Between ^{sure}
Tony +
me

WE ARE HERE NOT TO MOURN OUR LOSS BUT TO CELEBRATE WHAT WE
HAD. IT IS A PRIVILEGE FOR ME TO REPRESENT THE CHILDREN OF
ALBERT SHERER, KNOWN TO HIS GRANDCHILDREN AS ALBIE.

OUR FATHER WAS FIRST AND FOREMOST A ROMANTIC. AN ORDERLY
WORLD AT PEACE WAS THE ROMANTIC VISION HE SHARED WITH HIS
COLLEAGUES . . . BUT WE SAW HIM FIRST AS A DEVOTED LOVER AND
FRIEND TO OUR MOTHER. EACH EVENING THEY WOULD SIT TOGETHER AND
REVIEW THE DAY. WE WERE WELCOME, BUT IT WAS A SPECIAL TIME
DURING WHICH WE WERE REMINDED THAT SHE WAS FOR HIM THE MOST
ESSENTIAL PERSON IN THE WORLD. WE FELT SAFE IN THEIR GREAT LOVE
FOR EACH OTHER, AND IT MOVED WITH US EVERY TIME WE PACKED UP.

DAD LOVED AND ADMIRERD HIS ^{own} ~~own~~ FATHER. HE USED TO SAY, "I
LOVE TO WEAR MY FATHER'S SHOES, BUT I CAN'T FILL THEM." ONE OF
THE MAJOR LESSONS HE PASSED ON FROM THE ORIGINAL ALBERT WAS TO BE
PREPARED. FOR EXAMPLE, WE ALWAYS ARRIVED AT THE AIRPORT WITH
ENOUGH SPARE TIME TO GO HOME AND RETURN AGAIN AT LEAST ONCE.
UNDER DAD'S DIRECTION, ALL THREE OF US HAVE CHANGED TIRES OF

BRAND-NEW CARS AT NIGHT IN THE DRIVEWAY TO PREPARE OURSELVES FOR FUTURE ROADSIDE DISASTERS. WE HAD FULL-FLEDGED FIRE DRILLS AT HOME IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, COMPLETE WITH ROPE LADDERS AND PRE-ASSIGNED ESCAPE ROUTES. OONE OF OUR FIRST JOBS IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY WAS TO LEARN TO SAY OUR ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER IN THE LOCAL LANGUAGE. TONY, SUZE AND I WILL ALL TELL YOU AT THE DROP OF A HAT THAT "TRIZISCHE PIENCH WOVITSKA" WAS OUR ADDRESS IN WARSAW TWENTY YEARS AGO.

OUR VISITS HOME HAD THEIR OWN NATURAL PROGRESSION. EACH OF US REMEMBERS THAT DAD INSISTED ON PICKING US UP AT THE AIRPORT OR STATION -- USUALLY BY HIMSELF. THE FIRST HALF HOUR WITH HIM ON THE WAY HOME WAS A PRIVATE AND MARVELOUS TIME WHEN HIS QUESTION, "WELL, HOW ARE THINGS?" WAS A SERIOUS INQUIRY INTO OUR WELL-BEING. OUR RESPONSE ESTABLISHED AN AGENDA WHICH WE KNEW WOULD BE THOROUGHLY AND THOUGHTFULLY DISCUSSED DURING OUR VISIT. FAIR NEWS OR FOUL, THERE WAS AN ENORMOUS RELIEF IN HAVING PRESENTED ANY ISSUE TO DAD'S ALWAYS-INTENSE INTEREST.

A GENTLE MAN, HE COMPETED FIERCELY. IN OUR FAMILY GOLF AND

TENNIS GAMES, WE LEARNED TO PLAY WITHIN THE RULES. THE RULES NOTWITHSTANDING, HE TAUGHT US THAT PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE WAS O.K. AT TENNIS, FOR EXAMPLE, HE WAS VERY LIKELY TO ANNOUNCE "THIS ONE IS COMING DOWN YOUR ALLEY, AND THERE ISN'T ANYTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT." ~~AND HE WAS RIGHT.~~ HE WON MOST OF OUR GOLF MATCHES AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE, BEFORE WE EVEN LEFT FOR THE COURSE. HE WOULD SAY HE WAS OUR OF PRACTICE . . . OR HE WOULD SAY HE WAS OLDER . . . AND HE WOULD GUARANTEE HIMSELF A HANDICAP THAT WOULD CARRY THE DAY.

BUT AS IF TO SPARE US FROM COMPARING OURSELVES WITH HIM UNFAVORABLY, HE USED TO TELL US STORIES OF MISTAKES HE HAD MADE AS A CHILD. WE CALLED THEM BOOBY STORIES. ONE FAVORITE WAS ABOUT THE DAY THAT A WHOLE BOX OF CLARK CANDY BARS FELL OFF THE BACK OF A TRUCK IN FRONT OF OUR THEN-TEN-YEAR-OLD FATHER AND HIS BEST FRIEND, JOHNNY NEEDHAM. THE TRUCK SPED AWAY AT A PACE WHICH MADE RETURNING THE CANDY BARS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE. DAD AND JOHNNY WENT TO THEIR SECRET FORT AND ATE EVERY SINGLE CANDY BAR, WITH THE INEVITABLE CONSEQUENCES. WE ALWAYS ADMIRED THE CAPER,

BUT I THINK WE SECRETLY FELT THAT THE MORAL OF THE STORY WAS THAT DISHONORABLE BEHAVIOR WILL MAKE YOU SICK.

WORLD WAR II BROUGHT HIM TO DIPLOMACY. HIS COMMITMENT TO A WORLD AT PEACE OVERCAME HIS NATURAL SHYNESS. WE REMEMBER HIS ABILITY TO TRANSFORM RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE SIMPLY BY THE EARNEST ATTEMPTS HE MADE TO SPEAK THEIR LANGUAGE OR TAKE PART IN THEIR LOCAL TRADITIONS. *A Day when All 3 of us remember is a*

good example of what is in Talbot's story.

story book IT HAD BEEN A LONG, DUSTY DAY IN TOGO IN 1968. WE HAD VISITED A DOZEN VILLAGES TOGETHER AND EATEN GOAT AND VARIOUS UNIDENTIFIED DELICACIES. THE ENORMOUS POTHoles IN THE DIRT ROAD MADE TRAVELLING EVEN SHORT DISTANCES UNCOMFORTABLE AND TIRING. A SMALL VILLAGE CALLED TAGBLIGBO WAS OUR LAST STOP. THE VILLAGERS SAW US APPROACHING AND SEVERAL WOMEN WAVING LONG SCARVES DANCED OVER TO OUR CAR. DESPITE HIS FATIGUE, WE WERE ASTONISHED TO SEE DAD LEAP OUT OF THE CAR AND DANCE TO THE CENTER OF THE VILLAGE, HANDS ABOVE HIS HEAD, WAVING A HANDKERCHIEF LIKE THE VILLAGE WOMEN. ~~THEY LOVED IT.~~

HE DELIVERED HIS SPEECH WITH ENORMOUS ZEST, EVEN THOUGH HE

LAST NIGHT

HAD DELIVERED THE SAME TALK MANY TIMES EARLIER IN THE DAY. [↑] IN
HIS INIMITABLE FRENCH ACCENT, HE SAID "JE SUIS TRES HEAREUX
D'ETRE PARMIS VOUS AUJOURD'HUI," -- WHICH MEANS, IN CASE YOU
DIDN'T RECOGNIZE IT -- "I AM VERY HAPPY TO BE WITH YOU TODAY."

HE SPOKE TO PEOPLE AS THOUGH THEY WERE THE ONLY ONES ON
EARTH, AND NOTHING WAS MORE IMPORTANT TO HIM THAN THEIR WELFARE.
THERE WAS NO HIGHER OR LOWER STATION WITH DAD. THERE WERE NO
PEOPLE WHO DESERVED MORE OF HIS ATTENTION OR COURTESY BECAUSE OF
THEIR POSITION. ~~EACH PERSON WAS A POSSIBILITY, A VALUABLE PLAYER
IN A VISION OF LIVING PRODUCTIVELY IN PEACE.~~

HIS WORK WAS A DEMONSTRATION THAT DIFFERENCES CAN BE
RESOLVED, HUMAN RIGHTS MUST BE DEFENDED, AND THAT ANOTHER WORLD
WAR MUST NOT BE ALLOWED. ~~HE STOOD FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF GLOBAL
PEACE.~~ ^{THE THREE OF} HE TAUGHT ¹US THAT THE WORLD WAS LARGE ENOUGH THAT WE HAD
A RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW ABOUT IT, AND SMALL ENOUGH THAT EACH OF
US COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

^{his}
WE CHILDREN ARE GRATEFUL FOR HIS LIFE AND GLAD THAT WE COULD
[^]
SHARE HIM WITH YOU. THANK YOU FOR COMING.