

Mike Brossia's Eulogy by Tom Brossia

I want to thank Pastor Gail and the congregation for helping us celebrate my father. Dad always enjoyed this church and the people in it. Thank you for all you have done for Dad and Mom.

As a teacher I often ask my students who is a leader they respect. It is refreshing to hear how many say their parents. Even the shifty kid in the back row wants his parent's attention, affection, and guidance. Speaking for my sister and I, we definitely had that from our parents. Dad was a great man who enjoyed life and wanted us to do the same.

Dad was born in Ohio to Ken and Martha Brossia. He would tell you he was the best and favorite child, being the oldest of four. As kids it seemed like we were related to everybody in town and Dad lived a golden life, that his family was straight out of "Leave it to Beaver." And certainly there was truth to that. He lived down the street from his grandma and his mail route made it possible to deliver mail to her as well as other family members. Dad hung out with his cousins frequently and when we moved to Oregon he dearly missed his folks and siblings. That strong sense of family is something he helped pass along to my sister and I.

My dad married my mom when they were 19. They were married nearly 60 years. Dad was my mom's best friend and I know he thought the world of her and never wanted to leave her. They had different interests but each took part in the other's activities and they had a great relationship. It certainly has set the standard for what I believe a marriage should be.

As for the quip above, it showed his sense of humor which could be cutting. In our family everyone and everything was fair game. For instance, after his mother died, my folks flew back to Ohio and carried on a tradition begun by his dad of playing practical jokes on cousins. He and my mom, with the help of his brother David, used heavy machinery to pile up snow in his older cousin's driveway and dotted the massive mound of snow with discarded Christmas trees. It took his cousin a full day to dig out of his driveway. Dad loved playing games with all of us. He was a relentless trash talker and when he won gloated mercilessly. He was a poor winner and hated losing. He loved to tease people as he was winning and gloat when he won, a trait picked up by a few of us.

My father was a man involved with my sister's and my life growing up. I have always been interested in Native American culture. As a kid my dad and his sister and brothers took part in a local Indian dance club. After I was elected into the Order of the Arrow in Boy Scouts, Dad taught me how to build and care for dance regalia and would travel with me to powwows around Oregon. With my sister, Dad provided the means for and going to her horse shows in 4H and on the Quarter Horse circuit. Dad and Mom also came to many band and choir concerts and athletic events my sister and I participated in. We always felt supported.

My sister and I have two children each. Dad loved all of them and was proud of them. Each week during our phone conversations Dad would want to know what each of the kids was doing and loved talking with them on the phone. He attended many games and plays the kids were in. Frequently he and Mom would take the kids on trips and loved to spoil them. I know he wished he could have done more and felt like he never had enough time with them. He always carried their photos in his wallet and eagerly looked forward to getting a new one each year.

Dad taught us accountability. He and my mom wanted my sister and I to have good grades. Not too hard for Anissa, me on the other hand...It's surprising I am a teacher. If your grades weren't up to par he wouldn't let you participate in any activities until your grades were at least Cs. This accountability extended to losing jobs. Once when I was fired I found him right away on his route and told him. He said he was sorry and asked me what I was going to do about finding another job. Then, using his contacts, helped me find a job that I interviewed for and got. I know when Anissa likewise had setbacks, he was there to support her and help her see what she had control over and how to keep moving forward.

From an early age Dad liked cars and could tell you the make and model of most cars when driving down the road. When he married my mom they had a 65 ivy green convertible Mustang with rally wheels. In pictures it is a beautiful car. When Dad was in his 30s he purchased a bright red Austin Healy 3000. He loved the car, he also was vexed by its often breaking down. But when it ran it ran like a dream. One time he picked me up from a cross country meet and we screamed down the freeway toward home, the sun on our faces and the wind in our hair. It felt like freedom. Then in his 50s Dad was gifted some money from an aunt who passed away.

Dad found a 51 Chevy very similar to his first car as a teen and had it restored. He loved "Dorothy" and with my mom would participate in various car shows and cruises. With his friend Larry, Dad joined the Stray Angels car club and helped staff the car show at River Forks for a number of years.

Finally, Dad was a people person. He was well suited to be a letter carrier and loved talking with the folks who lived on his route. He seemed to know everyone, and sometimes if he didn't know a person he found something to talk with them about. One of my memories of him was when he would hang out with our pastor back in Ohio, Reverend Graham, smoke cigarettes and talk over the events of the day. As an adult, my sister and I enjoyed our weekly conversations with Dad, he was easy to talk to.

In closing, it is hard to speak of all the things my dad was to our family: best friend and husband, dad and confidant, friend. He loved life and those who shared his life. He embodied the best of what we feel our family was and could be. Words cannot express the love we have for him and the hole he has left through his death. But, I count, as I know we all do, every day we were able to spend with him as a gift and look forward to when we will all once again gather around the table to tell stories and laugh. And be a whole family once again.