

Gordon Grosh

Oct 22, 1929 - Nov 27, 2011

Eulogy delivered by Martin Grosh

December 2, 2011

On behalf of my mother Sondra, my sister Miriam, my wife Fazula, and Gordon's granddaughter Winona, I'd like to thank everyone for being here to pay your final respects to my father Gordon Grosh.

He touched so many people lives and meant so much to all of us...he will be missed.

I'd like to share a bit about my father and the values he lived his life by.

He had an amazing passion for life, a passion to learn and teach, and a true and genuine curiosity for the people and world around him...these passions made him a great father, great husband, great grandfather, great friend, great member of his community...a great, great man.

For a man some might describe as passive at times ...my father was distinctly a **man of action** and a man who led by example. When preparing to speak about him today, I thought long and hard about specific nuggets of wisdom, or a moment to share when he sat me down and told me how best to live my life...yet what I kept coming back to was how he was such a constant and consistent role model and led not by telling me what to do but by showing me what to do. How he lived his life, how he handled himself in difficult situations, and his consistency in adherence to his values stood out more than any specific example. It was a complete body of work and body of actions that defined him and ultimately taught me and others around him.

The past week was very tough on my family, particularly being so far from home. Everyone's phone calls and emails of support made it easier to deal with my father's passing. I was amazed at the similarities in the comments about my father and how he lived his life – frequently describing him as kind, gentle, selfless, positive, and always helpful. My wife and I were reflecting yesterday, that he never ever complained about anything, would do anything to guide or help anyone, and genuinely focused his attention on how everyone around him was doing. This made him very easy to be around and why so many were drawn to him.

My father, the man of action, the man who led by example...always found a way with his actions to demonstrate the right balance between 'responsibility and duty' and 'living life to the fullest'. This was his greatest lesson to me and everyone around him...he always took the time to "stop and smell the roses" and did so without taking anything from anyone else.

Gordon Grosh was a **lifelong student and teacher**. He had a vigour and passion to learn something new every day...and this went well beyond scratching the surface. Reflecting back on his dedication to

always learn and teach something new, it now makes sense to me how he had such a diverse set of experiences and pursuits:

Academics and career – my father achieved a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture, a Master's degree in Cereal Chemistry, a Master's degree in Business Administration, and a Teaching and Performance degree with the Royal Conservatory of Music. He had many careers - from owning and running a grain business with his brother, to working as an economist with Economic development and the Departments of Agriculture in Manitoba and Alberta, to a business school lecturer and instructor at the University of Alberta and a number of local colleges, and ultimately to his post retirement career working with CESO travelling the world with my mother and sharing western economic principles in developing markets.

My father had a deep passion for **music and arts** – my father loved the theater, opera, the symphony and truly loved music. He would be able to listen to or describe a piece of music and truly embody the composer's intent and sentiment. This is something I never could fully understand, but always admired. When he was a young man, he was known to be a great pianist and teacher...described by many that he had reached a point of mastery. With my father, his pursuits were not about seeking mastery as a destination, rather it was continuous learning that was his objective, and later in life he set piano aside for other passions....a passion to start a family, a passion to travel, and a passion to contribute to his community.

My father was always a **great teacher and student of Judaism**. He was dedicated to his faith and was particularly interested in sharing with his family the historical connection between Judaism and our customs and rituals, and how Judaism shaped, and was shaped by the people, places and times throughout history.

My father had a great passion for **community and charity**. Along with my mother, he was very dedicated for a large part of his life to ORT, The Society for the Retired and Semi-Retired, and the Beth Shalom Synagogue where he served as a board member for many years. Beyond his own commitments, he was also always there to help others with their charitable work.

He also had a great passion for **Travel and Politics**. He wanted to learn and debate everything about the world around him. He really wanted a firsthand perspective and, always found ways, with limited means, to travel the world and explore and learn about other's cultures.

And of course his **passion for his family** was limitless – simply put, he would do anything, at any time, under any circumstance for us.

He had many other passions and interests – he loved to swim, garden, cross country ski and sail to name a few...yet with all of these personal passions, he pursued them not only to enrich his own life but to inspire his family and share their passions. He even found a way to fake a passion or two...he really tried hard to develop a passion for the Oilers for the benefit of my wife and I. My father was not in any way a hockey fan and we are very big fans of the Oilers.... he often would call us on the phone after a game where he must have quickly read a game summary on the internet, and he would let us know how great

it was that “Magnus Hall” scored tonight or how the Oilers were now closer to making the “finals” in a “shoot-up”. He tried so hard and did this for us...for this we are grateful.

I would like to share a couple of stories that best demonstrate my father the student, my father the teacher, my father the man of action and role model, and his philosophy of living life to the fullest:

When I was 12, my parents thought it was about time that I got a job to help pay for my comic books and teach me about responsibility. I got a job delivering the Edmonton Sun, one of the few jobs that 12 year-olds could have. At the time, the Sun was also the only morning paper in Edmonton and was sporadically subscribed to. The route I had included all of Crestwood and it took a very long time to cover such a large area with only a few homes subscribing. After my first few attempts, I really wanted to give up and pushed hard to quit. My dad decided he would help make my paper route fun and came up with an idea that I would cross country ski between the homes, he would follow in his car with the trunk open and full of newspapers. This plan had lots of flaws and I think in the end he ended up delivering more of the papers than I did, but he did more than give me great advice or words to get me to live up to my commitment. He led by example, and he helped me find a way to make my responsibility fun while sticking to my commitment...he accomplished what he set out to do, I have been employed ever since that first job and I still try hard to find ways to always add a twist of fun to my work to keep it fresh.

And finally, as sad as the past week has been, it also represents in so many ways how my father choose to live his life and how much we all have to learn from him. For the past decade my father spoke about how much he really wanted to go on a Mediterranean cruise and see the Pyramids in Egypt. When he wanted to do something or learn something new he found ways to let you know this well in advance. He also knew it was going to be tough to go at this stage in life, particularly after his health had deteriorated some in the last few years from bypass surgery and a minor stroke 9 months ago.

After he fell ill in Egypt, my wife and I were nearby in Sicily and were able to quickly be with my mother and father in Alexandria. For those who know my mother; she is not a light packer so we were sitting with my mother at the hospital one day helping organize a few things and came across some papers...and I am not sure why she decided to bring with her on this trip a folder full of letters that my father wrote to his father back in 1960 when he was 31 years old. At the time, my father was working on a fellowship in Germany, conducting milling technology research on weekdays and exploring Europe on the weekends. Although I never had the chance to meet him, from what I understand my grandfather was very focused on ‘duty and responsibility’. He and my father were corresponding about whether my dad should cancel the remainder of his plans in Europe and come back home. Taking into consideration that the letters only told my father’s side of the story...one of the letters my dad wrote was in response to his father who must have written to my dad something along the lines of “...don’t you think it is time you stop this foolish exploring and trying to find out what you want to do with your life? You should come back home, take life more seriously, and start work in the family business...”

My father responded respectfully in his letter (and I quote) ***“The opportunity is here for me now. Life is like a one way ticket and once you’ve gone past a point, you can’t return. I realize that this***

opportunity will not present itself to me again and I want if at all possible to make use of it...good for you dad....good for you back in 1960...and good for you now.

After his stroke, we were constantly encouraging him to slow down and in some ways to “stop smelling the roses”. I’m glad he did not listen and stuck by how he wanted to live his life. He got a chance to learn one more thing, see one more wonder, and set another example with his actions.

This great man, defined by his actions, will absolutely be missed and loved by all whose lives he touched. I know my family and I will try every day to live up to the example he set for us.