

In Memory of My Father (Ernie Cristall)

I begin by thanking you all for being here. This afternoon my father is smiling from ear to ear seeing you all here together. He is sending his love to each of you and it is a beautiful thing because that love is no longer distorted by the pain and agony his cancer so viciously burdened him with these last couple of years. I know that I am speaking for him now when I say thank you for coming here today to honor his life, to remember the precious moments you shared with him on your journey together and now to wish his soul a sweet journey to God.

We are all here today to honor my father in his many roles and relationships while on this earth.

Dad, we are honoring you today as a husband. My father was married to my mother for nearly 60 years. It was important to him throughout their lives together to honor the vows he made to his beloved wife. Together my father and mother sustained each other through good times and difficult times, through sickness and health while raising a family and moving through all of the stages of life together. Dad, you set a wonderful example of commitment and faithfulness to your life partner for all of us here today.

We are honoring you today as a father. I cannot begin to review all that you have done for my sister Linda and myself. You unquestionably did all that you could and more than was necessary. Words cannot tell all that you have done over and over again to try to make our life journeys as smooth and as good as possible. And even when we stumbled because of our own limitations, you were unquestionably there ready to be present and help again. As with mother, your love was truly unending.

We are honoring you today as a grandfather. I believe that you can see each of your four grandchildren here today. Without taking the time to tell each of their stories, they each know that you played a special role in their lives. You truly helped them get to the good places they find themselves in today. You always stepped up to the plate in helping their mother Maureen and myself when more was needed than we could give.

We are honoring you today as the baby of the Cristall family. You were the youngest of eight and your seven older sisters have predeceased you. But what is remarkable is that their children have come from different parts of Canada to be here today to honor your life. Why are they all here? They have come because they each have a final thank you to communicate here today. You honored their mothers, them, and their children. You made their family journeys important to you, and you made a positive difference.

We are honoring you today as a friend in the Jewish community. There are so many people who are here today because they were friends of yours and mothers. They have journeyed with you and mother for many of the 60 years you have been together sharing in the tasks of raising children, helping with grandchildren, and simply being good companions and friends sharing the ups and downs of life's journey. With many of these friends you helped in your own way and time to build the Jewish Community in Edmonton. You made a commitment to the Talmud Torah, the Beth Shalom synagogue,

and the Jewish Community Center, and more. You did it quietly and with much humility and your friends who participated in that with you honor you today.

We are honoring you today as a mensch. I went to the Tailor the other day so I could wear your suit to the funeral. I was struck by how much the Tailor cared about you and honored you. It was clear to me that you had touched his soul. I went to your Barber the other day to get my haircut for your funeral. The Barber had tears come into his eyes when he heard of your passing and expressed what a super human being you were. I went to the condominium manager the other day to get the community room ready for your life celebration after the funeral, and once again I heard how you touched her life simply by taking the time to visit and truly care and take an authentic interest. I've heard many other similar stories this week.

We are honoring you today as one of the boys. You loved going for coffee with the boys in the morning, and I know that they loved having you there with them. You were interesting, interested, and your joy in sharing in the journey of life here in Edmonton made your lives richer. A good life is good companionship and you were a good companion indeed.

In creating this eulogy I realize that you, Dad, have taught me something of vital importance. It is this -- it does not matter so much what you have accomplished, how much money you've made, how big a building you built, how high up the ladder you were, or how famous you were. What matters is how you lived your life in relationship to others, and there is no question Dad that you truly excelled in living well in relationship to others.

I think each person here today has come to honor his or her unique and special relationship with you. I know you added greater meaning and joy to each person's life that sits here today. To see you all here today makes my heart burst with joy and love for my Dad that I cannot fully comprehend let alone express.

Finally, in closing I would like to speak to my mother and then to my son.