

Maurice Peters - by Gary Filman

THANK YOU – JOSIE, EDDY, HANITA & SARA FOR THE PRIVILEGE & HONOUR OF CELEBRATING & PAYING TRIBUTE TO MAURICE.

TO YOU & BROTHER HENRY & ALL THE PETERS FAMILY ALL OF WHOM HAVE TRAVELLED LONG DISTANCES TO BE HERE WITH US – ON BEHALF OF JANICE & OUR FAMILY WE WANT YOU TO KNOW HOW MUCH WE SHARE YOUR SENSE OF LOSS.

WE ARE ALSO GRATEFUL THAT ONLY A MATTER OF WEEKS AGO WE SHARED A VERY HAPPY TIME TOGETHER IN WINNIPEG WHEN JANICE WAS HONOURED BY B'NAI BRITH.

SO, FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DON'T KNOW ME, IT'S NOT BECAUSE IM THE BLACK SHEEP IN THE FAMILY, IT'S BECAUSE I'M FROM MANITOBA. I'M JOSIE'S COUSIN & IN MANY WAYS WE'RE CLOSER THAN COUSINS BECAUSE OUR PARENTS – JOSIE'S MOTHER & MY FATHER, WERE SISTER & BROTHER – JUST OVER A YEAR APART IN AGE AND LITERALLY JOINED AT THE HIP. THEY LEFT THEIR FAMILY BEHIND IN ROMANIA – AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND CAME AS TEENAGERS TO CANADA, SETTLING IN WINNIPEG, WORKING & RAISING THEIR FAMILIES. THEY REMAINED VERY CLOSE & EVEN WHEN JOSIE & HER MOTHER, MY AUNTY HELEN, MOVED TO

EDMONTON & BUILT THE MOTEL AT RADIUM HOT SPRINGS, WE CAME WEST FOR OUR HOLIDAYS EVERY YEAR AND I SPENT EVERY SUMMER FROM GRADE 7 TO GRADE 12 WORKING AT THE MOTEL.

IT WAS THERE THAT I FIRST MET THIS TALL HANDSOME, OUTGOING MAN THAT JOSIE HAD MET & MARRIED & BROUGHT OUT WEST FROM MONTREAL. MAURICE, OF COURSE, A PRODUCT OF PARENTS FROM EASTERN EUROPE FIT IN WELL AND LOVED JOSIE'S MOTHER, MY AUNTY HELEN – OF COURSE EVERYONE DID.

MAURICE WAS THEN, AS HE ALWAYS WAS, LARGER THAN LIFE. HE HAD WORKED IN A DEPARTMENT STORE IN MEMPHIS AND SERVED IN THE CANADIAN ARMY. HE HAD THESE GREAT BIG HANDS, WAS STRONG AS AN OX. HE COULD LIFT & CARRY & FIX THINGS – TO A 13 YEAR OLD, HE WAS AN IRON MAN, AND IN RETROSPECT, HE ALWAYS WAS A STRONG PHYSICAL PRESENCE – HEART ATTACKS, CANCER – NOTHING SLOWED HIM DOWN. AND MAURICE WAS EVER THE SALESMAN – NO MATTER WHERE HE WORKED, MAURICE WAS SELLING. HE LOVED PEOPLE – HE LOVED THEIR STORIES – WAS INTERESTED IN THEIR FAMILIES. AS MY DAUGHTER ALLISON SAID WHEN WE WERE CHATTING LAST NIGHT, WHEN UNCLE MAURICE ASKED “HOW ARE YOU?” HE REALLY WANTED TO KNOW “HOW ARE

YOU FEELING? HOW ARE THE KIDS?" EVEN IN NOVEMBER HE WAS TELLING ME ABOUT HIS "CUSTOMERS" AS HE CALLED THEM. IT'S NO SURPRISE TO ANYONE WHO KNEW HIM THAT HE WENT INTO WORK EVERY DAY – EARLY! – TILL THE DAY HE DIED. TO MAURICE IT WASN'T WORK. IT WAS WHAT HE ENJOYED DOING. I KNOW THERE ARE MANY HERE TODAY, WHO MET MAURICE THROUGH WORK AND WERE HIS CLIENTS. I KNOW THAT HE STILL HAS FRIENDS WHO HE DID BUSINESS WITH IN WINNIPEG WHEN HE WAS IN THE SCHMATTA BUSINESS WHO STILL RECALL HIM FONDLY.

MAURICE WASN'T AVERAGE IN ANY WAY. HE ALWAYS HAD TO HAVE A BIG CAR. WITH HIS SIZE, HE COULDN'T GET COMFORTABLE IN A SMALLER ONE. SO WHEN THE AUTO INDUSTRY STOPPED MAKING BIG CARS BECAUSE OF SOCIETY'S CONCERN FOR FUEL CONSUMPTION & GREEN HOUSE GASES, MAURICE DIDN'T BUY THE NEW COMPACTS, HE JUST KEPT THE OLDER BIG CARS LONGER. HE JUST WOULDN'T CONVERT TO A COMPACT NO MATTER WHAT AL GORE OR DAVID SUSUKI SAID.

MAURICE WAS DIFFERENT – HE LIKED BURNED TOAST. TO THIS DAY, IN MY FAMILY WHEN WE BURNT TOAST, EVERYONE ASKS "WHERE'S UNCLE MAURICE?"

MAURICE LOVED HIS FAMILY DEEPLY. IVE ALREADY MENTIONED HIS DEVOTION TO AUNTY HELEN.

HE HAD STRONG VALUES AND EXPECTATIONS OF HIS CHILDREN AND I KNOW THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO MEET THOSE EXPECTATIONS AND PROBABLY TIME WHEN THERE WOULD BE CONFLICTS OVER UNMET EXPECTATIONS, BUT THERE WAS NO QUESTION THAT HE LOVED EDDY AND HANITA, AND OF COURSE HIS GRANDDAUGHTER SARA ALWAYS HAD A SPECIAL PLACE IN HIS HEART. MAURICE SHARED HIS LOVE FREELY WITH ALL HIS FAMILY. WHEN I PICKED UP JOSIE & MAURICE AT THE WINNIPEG AIRPORT IN NOVEMBER – BECAUSE WE HADNT BEEN TOGETHER FOR OVER A YEAR, HE GAVE ME A BIG HUG & BEGAN TO CRY & SAID HE LOVED ME.

BUT, IF EVER THERE WAS A LIFELONG LOVE AFFAIR, IT WAS MAURICE’S ABSOLUTE DEVOTION TO JOSIE. SHE COULD DO NO WRONG IN HIS EYES AND FROM THE MOMENT THEY MET, HE WOULD DO ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING TO PLEASE HER.

AS JANICE SAID, WHEN JOSIE & MAURICE WERE STAYING WITH US IN NOVEMBER, I HAD GONE OUT WITH HIM FOR A SHORT WHILE & WHEN WE RETURNED, HIS FIRST WORDS WERE “WHERE’S JOSIE?”

JANICE SAID SHE WAS UPSTAIRS RESTING. HE SAID "I'LL GO UP & SEE IF SHE NEEDS ANYTHING." IT WAS TRULY A MARRIAGE AND A PARTNERSHIP MADE IN HEAVEN.

WE WILL ALL HAVE OUR FAVORITE MEMORIES OF MAURICE -- AS A BROTHER, A HUSBAND, A FATHER, AN UNCLE, A GRANDFATHER, A FRIEND -- AND THEY WILL HELP US THROUGH THIS DIFFICULT TIME -- THIS SENSE OF LOSS.

AS I SAID EARLIER, MAURICE WAS ALWAYS LARGER THAN LIFE AND HE HAS LEFT HIS MARK ON ALL OF US.

THANK YOU.