

MEMORIALS

Eulogy spoken by Margaret Wolfensberger

GOOD MORNING. I am Margaret Wolfensberger Sager, the oldest child of Wolf and Nancy. On behalf of my mother and sister and brother I want to thank everyone for coming today, especially those who have travelled from great distances, including our dear friends, Oxana and Marika Metuck, who surprised Mom last night by appearing from England, and my father's goddaughter, Paula Spera Burton, who also surprised us by travelling from Memphis. Dad credited Paula's father, Paul Spera, for teaching him how to be an American.

I also want to give our heartfelt thanks to those who came to the vigil service at All Saints last night. So many people, including my sister and brother, made beautiful remarks and told so many wonderful stories. We would also like to thank Ray Lemay for his beautiful remarks just now. Merci.

It is hard to put into words our gratitude to the All Saints Gospel Choir, of which my mother is a member, for the beautiful singing that they provided to us today and last night at the vigil service, and also for their and Father Daley's support generally.

Finally, I am particularly thankful that my children were able to be witnesses to the remarks about their Opa last night and today. My father was so pleased that my son, Tate, could read the Brahms Requiem in German today. My father had Tate practice with him a few weeks ago. Dad would have also been so pleased that Jennifer shared his sister's letter with us today.

As noted at the end of the pamphlet, we invite you to a reception after Mass at the Century Club. There are sheets with directions to the Club at the entrance of the church and I apologize that they are printed on fresh un-recycled paper and do not feature freshman Psych I term papers on the back.

You know that this means that you will need to reuse those sheets.

In 1957 when my father attended Peabody College (which is now part of Vanderbilt) he met and became friends with two other students, Jimmy Mann and Rolando Santos. By every indication these three men could not have been more different from one another. Jimmy was the good ole boy from Mississippi, Rollie was a Fulbright Scholar from the Philippines and Dad, of course, was the still freshly minted German immigrant. They did not have a dollar among them. They became fast albeit unlikely friends and their wives also became great friends. These friendships—and marriages—have lasted a lifetime. When two of them got together, they always delighted in telephoning the third—and reversing the charges.

Jimmy and Kitty will meet us in Indiana for Dad's burial this coming week. Rollie and Karen, who live in California, could not make it today but Rollie sent us a lovely a letter—most of which I could not repeat in church. But Rollie, who is also my godfather, wanted me to read some excerpts from his letter. I really had to pick through the rollicking naughty vignettes recalled to great effect by Uncle Rollie.

It goes without saying that if the Cathedral lent itself to overhead projector use, I would be projecting the 10 most salient points of the letter on an overhead. But I will soldier on without that necessary tool.

Dear Nancy and family ... I met Wolf 54 years ago (!) and can remember the many happy and, sometimes, exasperating times we had together. The first time we met was at a Newman Club meeting off Vanderbilt campus. We somehow found common ground that ... sparked a friendship that, eventually, lasted almost a lifetime ... A

few months later, after finding out that I didn't know how to drive, he decided to give me driving lessons on Murfreesboro Highway. He was so frustrated with my ineptness that he thought it would be safer for us and for others to go off the highway and resume the lessons in a nearby cemetery. I lost control of the car and ran over a couple of headstones and almost killed a couple making out behind one of the headstones! I could have sent the couple straight to hell not having given them time for repentance! After a few more minutes of futile driving instruction, Wolf gave up. He said, "Rollie, you are a verbal genius but a mechanical moron!" That did it! I never tried driving again for the rest of my life, convinced that I was indeed a mechanical moron! ... Wolf, for all these and many more memories, thank you ... I really share your sorrow and Karen and I send you our deepest condolences. Rollie

Now I will turn to some personal reflections.

It was rarely dull in our household growing up. Both of my parents provided a type of excitement. On a family outing, my father would often say "wherever I go, excitement attends." And he was right. I always felt that I had the best of so many worlds growing up. Although Mom and Dad shared a German heritage, they came together in 1959 with very different life stories. Throughout their marriage they valued and honored the other's back story and made both of their stories and their story together our story as well. Our parents gave us an expansive variety of all things, which in turn opens so many doors to us every day. Although a common thing today, we grew up very much aware of the bigger world we live in. Because we had so many visitors from all over the world staying at our house, I used to make the comment that I grew up in the International House of Pancakes. We have been so very fortunate, and due to our

parents we realize and appreciate how fortunate we are.

Was WW an easy-going father? Of course not. But, really, how much fun is easy? I could go on for hours, but today I have chosen as my primary theme my IN BOX.

How many other kids have an IN BOX at home? It really was not until a few years ago that I realized that it was not typical to have an IN BOX at your parents' home. The other day it dawned on me that my IN BOX is now empty and that I will really, really miss my IN BOX. I know that many of you had an IN BOX with Dad, or at the least received from him clippings and articles and cartoons that he wanted to share with you.

As an adult, checking my IN BOX on visits home, I marveled at how much effort my Dad expended on our IN BOXes. Not only did certain items in our IN BOXes reference our inside jokes, but they were evidence of so many other things. For starters, I knew that when Dad read something, and tagged it for me and possibly for my siblings, that Dad was thinking of us. It was like a special secret conversation.

There were recurring themes in the IN BOX. Some of those themes were common to all three of us children, and—as in the case of my siblings' respective boxes—some were particular to me and often to a specific phase of my life. There were occasionally items marked for discussion, and ranked P1, P2 and P3. I often wish that I had saved in chronological order all the cartoons Dad put in my IN BOX. They would in many respects represent the story of my life—told in wry and funny ways.

I THOUGHT THAT I WOULD share eight of the primary recurring themes from our IN BOXes:

1. *Cats*: In case you are wondering, Dad included the reference to "cats and song" in his obituary. My favorite recent cat clipping was a man's eulogy for his recently departed cat. My father never stopped missing our beloved Siamese Gustav and then Felix.

2. *Food and Drink*: Last night at the vigil service, Paul beautifully addressed Dad's love of food in particular, and I cannot really add much to that. However, I will say that my mother delighted in cooking for our father. He was always an appreciative food audience—but, of course, as a result of my mother's outstanding cooking, he and we became quite spoiled about food.

3. *Manners and Comportment*: We needed it. And then my children needed it. And we all still need it. In fact, it did not escape our notice that sometimes even Dad needed it too. As a pre-teen I started collecting books on this topic. I note that Dad has squirreled away suitcases of books for each of us so that we will have birthday and especially Christmas gifts from him for years to come. As my husband noted so well last night, my father absolutely loved Christmas.

4. *Many Tips on an Enormous Spectrum of Topics*: And yes, some of those clippings later appeared in Dad's newsletter TIPS. Sometimes the clippings would prove his advice. For example, one should not wear high-heel shoes or, worse yet, backless shoes—because in an emergency you could not run for your life. In case you are wondering, a remarkable number of newspaper photographs of various disasters will show empty shoes on the roadside and perhaps even the hapless victim, often a woman, running shoeless over glass and bodies.

5. *Word Play*: Of course. Clippings often included annotations with words invented by our father.

6. *Tools to Help Us Live by the Concept of Decision Theory*: Decision Theory was often featured (and propounded) by means of lists and various approaches to help one think ahead and plan for all contingencies ... Because we know that what can go wrong often will go wrong, and so we must be prepared. Working on the various arrangements this week, I often said to myself: "decision theory dictates that I add a few more back-ups or have a

few more copies." But then I would find back-ups in the files Dad created for us for the necessary activities of this week.

7. *Travel Tips*: Dad travelled the globe. I believe that my parents' trips were the consistent high points of their marriage after we were grown. I loved travelling with Dad. Dad was the hardest working person I have ever known. So it was terrific to get Dad away from home and away from work. He was fun, prepared (of course) and he always had a plan—and a few back-up plans as well. Of course, during our trips his boundless energy and curiosity would often wear us out, but then again he was always willing to stop for a meal or ice cream or tea and dessert to keep us going. In 2004, my daughter Jennifer and I had a wonderful time in Switzerland and Germany with Mom, Dad and Aunt Hady for the Hitz family reunion. We were joined at various times by Dad's brother, Hanno, and his wife, Gisela, and Hanno's son, Hanno, Jr., and his wife and son. That trip is a jewel of a memory.

8. Finally, a recurring theme was *How to Be Prepared for When the End Comes*. "When the end comes" ... What kind of end? Perhaps war, including even nuclear war, or a natural disaster. Did you know that a Grundig radio operates on tubes, unlike a transistor radio, and therefore can be used even in the event of a nuclear attack? We have two of them. One here and one at the farm in Indiana. And speaking of which, we had a family plan in such event to rendezvous at the farm in Indiana, realizing that we may have to get there in terrific difficulty, but knowing that due to all the information from Dad and his clippings, and all the lists that he had given us, that we would hopefully be sufficiently prepared to make and survive the arduous journey. You can imagine that when we were children, all this talk about "When the End Comes" caused a little eye rolling. However, given our father's experiences in WW II Germany, we knew that he had witnessed events that did not make even a nuclear

attack seem impossible or even anything other than probable.

I was much older before I realized that the other 'end' that Dad was often addressing was death. Many clippings in the IN BOX reinforced Dad's admonitions to live life in a state of grace and peace with God—because you never knew when the end would come. He worried about our souls. Regrettably, we have often given him reasons to worry.

So it is only fitting that now that Dad has entered the portals of heaven, we will take him to our safe house at the farm to be buried in Indiana. Certainly Dad did not view death as the end, but for those of us left behind it is indeed a type of end. The farm is where Mom and Dad met and fell in love, and it is from that point that my mother met the great love of her life and my Dad met the woman who made it possible for him to accomplish the good that he was able to effect professionally and at the same time to have a loving and devoted family.

We pray for his soul.

Thank you.

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Eulogy spoken by Ray Lemay (Canada)

I WILL NOT BE USING OVERHEADS—but I do have my 3X5 index cards. Dr. Wolfensberger tried to teach me many things, but I should warn you that I missed the 4 day workshop on brevity.

I should start this eulogy by telling you the end of this story, because I think it is the first thing we should know about Wolf Wolfensberger's life. Dr. Wolfensberger often started with first principles that often illuminate the purpose of the thing. And this is the sum of it: There is a heaven and Wolf is now there.

I know this because over the past few days, I've heard the rumblings of heavenly reform. This reform will now have apprentice angels follow an

elaborate training ladder of very in-depth workshops. And all of this will lead to a new level in the hierarchy of angels; just below archangel, and just above guardian angel, there will in the future be change agent angels.

I've also heard that there have been rumblings of very recent innovations beyond the Pearly Gates. Angels are complaining about overly busy overheads and the use of 3X5 index cards. However, with Wolf there, I'm confident they are safe from PowerPoint for a while yet.

WOLF WOLFENSBERGER has now been taken from us, and we already miss him dearly. But then, his passing is not surprising, for he has lived an incredibly full life; he was a man for all seasons, and he lived fully through all those seasons. He was a man of his times, but also a man for all times.

Wolf lived in a unique and inspired way that few of us would have the temerity to follow.

As most of you know, the idea of social roles was central to Dr. Wolfensberger's teaching and his Social Role Valorization (SRV) theory (Wolfensberger, 1998). The roles that we are given and choose to play—teacher, father, policeman, book-lover, neighbour, and so on—affect in a crucial way how other people will relate to us and what they will do for us, or even against us. Let us for a moment consider the roles that Wolf Wolfensberger was given and chose to play as best he could. And this is but a very incomplete list, I'm quite sure you could think of many others:

War survivor, refugee, foster child, immigrant, student, scientist, researcher, scholar, learned man;

Author: 47 books, 63 chapters and partial monographs, 231 articles, 27 reviews and 6 poems. And innumerable manuscripts; 2 books that are just recently ready for publication;

Reformer, prophet, historian, benefactor (often in secret), hiker, cat lover, song lover, beer lover, chocolate lover, poet, protector;

Collector of books, antiques, post cards, stamps, human service buttons and pins, toy ambulances, and much else;