

The Last of the Titans

By John Steiner

He exhibited so many divine qualities one could mistake him for Zeus, though we call him August, Augie, Henry or Dad. Among these were strength with temperance, intellect with wisdom, pride in his achievements yet always humble. He adhered to equitable justice and practiced boundless generosity.

Those of you who shared his career as a cable splicer for the phone company witnessed a heroic work ethic and treasure those stories throughout your lives. To me also he was a working class hero. Every morning he rose at six sharp, and dutifully woke up his kids with a knock to the door. I can only recall a handful of days he missed, and from his work he unerringly provided for his family.

My Dad's sense of service stretches wide, and inspires many people to this day. He served in the United States Air Force, and he served his church through genealogical research and database entry. Beyond that, he reached out on an individual and personal level, lending a hand to anyone in need. His insight into finding and resolving necessity was a marvel to behold, to become the guiding principle by which a W4 Chief Warrant Officer of the U.S. Army, and my lifelong friend instills into those under his command.

Dad gifted to us the need to think for ourselves, and showed profound patience when we did. I cannot imagine five kids who pushed the limits of human, indeed superhuman patience more. He took care of us, and taught lessons of personal responsibility. From him we learned to balance life's high wire and he was there to catch us if we fell. In his extraordinary life and his graceful departure I found what could be his greatest lesson.

Dignity.

I tell people that cats live and depart wholly on their own terms. My father demonstrated this for as long as I can remember. Yet it was not until the very last that I understood how strongly he adhered to this principle. All the while his central concerns were for us, as we bore witness to his final breaths. By whatever moral code we assembled hold dear Dad is worthy of our highest praise.

The word August means inspiring reverence, admiration and supreme dignity. My Dad is August in all these ways. Though I am no Apollo or even a Perseus, I will be guided by his starry example for the rest of my days.

August Steiner has earned his place in the heavens.

August H. Steiner: November 23rd, 1939 – September 13th, 2012

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