

Ryan German's Eulogy, for his Father Carl German
Immanuel Church, Wilmington, DE August 29, 2023

My dad didn't want to tell me he was going, and I didn't want to believe that he was — but there were signs.

First he gave his golf clubs to Micah, then he merged his iCloud and iMessages with Elly's. Then he sent me a list of all his passwords. — and it was still lost on me — that he would soon pass away. — I was thinking all these signs were just contingency planning — planning for a worst-case scenario.

— but then I noticed he started cutting his grass at the lowest setting on the lawn mower — which in my dad's eyes is the absolute worst, most horrific mistake someone could make — he did it because he no longer had enough energy to cut the grass every 4 days — that should have been my clue that his imminent passing was real. And our additional time together here on planet earth was short. But even that lawn cutting clue went over my head. I missed it or I didn't want to understand it.

Kenny — my dad loved and admired you so much — you're his little brother but he looked up to you and was so proud of you thank you Kenny and Aunt Melba — thank you.

Debbie — my dad loved talking to you on the phone — and getting you your first iPhone so you could FaceTime together — Your calls and time together meant the world to him.

My dad was prickly at times and particular in some of his ways and habits — he always showered at least 4 times a day. And some days more. He flossed his teeth and used mouthwash until the cows came home.

My dad was often too private, too guarded, too quiet, too reserved, too much of an introvert but he would enjoy a gathering with friends as long as someone else planned it, he was too shy to plan a get-together on his own. My dad would very much enjoy the company of you all today, he would be super happy to know the comfort you are all giving Elly.

Elly, I love you so very much. Thank you so much for everything — Peter and Micah and I are here for you. Every day we are here for you. I imagine we will eat many, many meals together. And I can drive you after dark. Since you would always ask my dad to drive at night. I'll do that now and Peter will help

me. Elly — Maybe on school days you can help me get Brady out of bed and dressed. Dylan and Skye are always up and ready. Braden says the night is too short and he can use some extra sleep.

In hospice care, I told my dad he could let go, he could go, that Micah, Peter and I are here for Elly and he did not need to worry. He could let himself go.

My dad smoked tobacco just like the Marlboro Man. Well maybe slightly more than the Marlboro man. Cigarettes are, I suppose, bad. And they certainly do cut life too short. But they also gave my dad time to sit outside and relax and reflect. And decompress. Time he needed. Almost like meditative time.

My dad and I spent last Christmas Eve in the Emergency Room at Wilmington Hospital. We watched the Eagles — Cowboys game.

I was having a hard time getting ahold of my dad — I figured he was at church — otherwise he would pick up on first ring. Unless he was taking to aunt Debbie. And he would call me right back.

— I wanted to ask him to feed crickets to my son Dylan's lizard — Dylan's bearded dragon. — which my dad was well-versed at doing, he was good at it. 8 to 10 medium crickets twice a day and Some dried vegetables.

— My dad would also bring in any mail/ packages, water the lawn, prune and edge my flower beds, pull weeds, tend to the garden — every time he came by. He spent the last year telling me there would come a day when he couldn't do it any more, I didn't believe him.

My brother Micah and his wife Sara — daughters Aubrey and Izzy live in Michigan.

— Micah says gosh you are lucky you have dad next door. I have to do all my own yard work, run my own errands, be my own handyman, pick up my own crickets...

On Christmas Eve my dad walked in to that hospital under his own power and he told the nurses he came in because — in his words — he was having — a “tiny bit” of trouble breathing.

X-rays showed one of his lungs was completely collapsed — but he was still getting 85% oxygen from his one good lung Doctor said — Carl — I can't believe you haven't had a heart attack — I can't believe you're still standing. Doctor asked my dad if he smoked? cigarettes — my dad said nope — Doctor seemed puzzled — you don't? My dad answered — I quit — 11 days ago on my 71st birthday.

Doctor said it didn't look too good. My dad's Cancer was all over his lungs - doctor said that the micro cancer my dad had was a bad cancer. It's fast and aggressive. The doctor said my dad was living on borrowed time — and to make it 100 times worse the cancer had spread outside his lungs and was all over his brain.

My dad was sad to hear to the prognosis, I was too. We cried a bit together on Christmas Eve. But then my dad got to work right away. He started cancer treatments and medications right away — he didn't miss a single one — and on March 8 my dad told me by text message, so I have it quoted word for word: “U know, I think today is the day I woke up and things feel better. And my doctor seemed to indicate to me that we are gaining life span time.” The message made me feel happy. Made me super proud.

April and May and June were pretty good for my dad — he felt good. He dined out some. He and Elly traveled down state, they visited with friends, they hosted friends at their home. They made it back to attend church in person. My dad bought some new hats — he had many hats/ caps but who couldn't use a few more.

My dad grew up as a farmer. Farmers can fix everything. My dad believed that Everything can be fixed, that...there is always a solution.

Farmers also believe — There is always something to do — no time should be wasted. Waste not want not. Not just for material things but life's most precious commodity — time. These farming beliefs were ingrained in my dad and helped him with his cancer diagnosis, prognosis and treatments.

My dad was a cooperative extension specialist at the University of Delaware. He followed the Chicago board of trade and helped farmers know when best to sell their crops.

Commodity markets go up and down, my dad emphasized to family farms “making your own market” — regardless of commodity pricing is most important to the farms bottom line — make a family brand — distinguishing and setting your farm apart from others. — make a farm stand, a produce stand — a full-service farm market — differentiate it — make it your own. — Invite customers to pick their own berries, host farm-events, serve homemade farm-fresh ice cream, make kettle popcorn fresh to order — have harvest festivals and maybe even a butcher shop right on the farm — although that meat-cutting approval process is somewhat involved.

— my dad encouraged and helped farmers diversify away from just their cash crops — commodity crops and helped them create their own unique brands and boutique markets — he helped farmers make the most of their harvests. Realize more of their hard-earned dollars by allowing farmers to sell some of their crops at retail prices directly to consumers rather than all their harvest wholesale.

— My dad also helped spearhead the local farmer-in-the supermarket trend that has been widely adopted and even pretty much expected by today’s consumers.

— my uncle Kenny says, “make hay when the sun shines.” — Which I think means strike while the iron is hot — and don’t complain about being too busy at work when you are busy at work because being busy at work is a good thing and because there always could be a time when there’s a drought or moments when business isn’t so busy or so good. I think it also means try not to pass up opportunities, Seize them. Go for it. My dad liked to say Carpe Diem.

Life gets super busy, sometimes stressful — but if you can find a way to grow hay when the suns out and push through the busy-ness — there will be other moments in life you can take advantage of a much-needed comforting break. Sometimes farmers are able to sneak this break in January.

I tried to vent to my dad once about being too busy/ stressed/ overwhelmed with too much work — he responded — well “you cut down a lot of hay, now you have to bale it”. Which I interpreted as — keep-on, see-everything through and everything will work out — it will be ok — and in fact it was.

We are the lucky ones here today because we aren’t dead, Life is precious.

Fair to middling is how my dad always said he was — I originally interpreted that to mean ok — or fine — or Mediocre — or even not so good. — But I've come to realize it was my dad's measured way of saying he was pretty good, he was alright but he wasn't going to take anything for granted He wasn't going to count his Chickens before they hatched My dad was a problem solver, he found creative answers, he was eternally steadfast and optimistic - but in a measured, humble and realistic farmer's way — he believed and he instilled in Micah, Peter and I and his grandchildren “there is Always a solution” Farmers can fix anything and apparently so can a crop marketing specialist who was an ex-farmer even if he hadn't lived on a farm in over 40 years.

Agriculture is the basis of civilization — we could not have society without farms. Farming teaches the values of commitment & hard work. And not taking a moment for granted even though that's easier said than done. I miss you dad. In addition to “making hay” “bailing hay” “time to hit the hay” “until the cows come home” “and don't count your chickens....” Farmers also say — “good food can fix bad moods”

Elly has arranged food and drink downstairs in the hall for everyone. Please come down stairs and join us for lunch.