

Services for Mark Frankfield

Good morning everyone. Sun has asked that we use the Celebration event to share memories of our time with Mark. So, this occasion will be our chance to say "See you later" to Mark.

While we are gathered here, I will offer some words to try to sum up what we probably all think and feel about Mark and also to honor his family and closest friends.

Events like these are always difficult but especially so when the loss is of someone so young. Life is so precious. Life is fragile. Our time here, by definition is short in the playbook of God's plan - whatever God you pray to, serve, worship or just think of from time to time. But even though our time here, in this form is short, our time is never-ending. Lemme go straight nerd on you for a few minutes.

If the first law of conservation of energy says that energy can neither be destroyed or created only changed in form, then Mark's energy is still with us. And the second law of thermodynamics says that there is loss in every expenditure in a system then everything we do in, or that our bodies do, takes closer to our next state being. But our energy never ends, it carries on in some other system. It started somewhere and continues someplace else. But It took an act of will beyond our present laws and limitations to bring Mark into being. So Mark's being here in our present state was a decision....a decision beyond his parents decision. He was given to us. And all the things Mark did and was able to do while he was here with us in this present form, his parents could not have planned...that none of us could have planned.

Most of us like things to be planned and to have certainty. We like nice straight, predictable lines from point A to point B on our way to our goals and desires. We want trendlines and extrapolations, linear regressions and 2 dimensional certainty. But straight lines don't occur in nature without our interference. Even a blade of grass or a stick can't promise one. So, we are left then with a path of twists and turns that sometimes takes us **through** trouble and disappointment rather than around it. And other times our gnarled journeys weave a series of steps that had to happen in just such a way to bring us inextricably to this moment or the next. I don't know why Mark was taken from us so soon but I do know that the time we had with him was a gift.

Mark was given to us. Therefore he was a gift.

Some say that it is because our time here is so short and so fragile that makes our time so much more precious and so much more important to make the most of the time that we are given. I can say that Mark did not waste his time with us.

Our beginning here is a gift. That is the first moment of our identity. And while we are here, in this present state, we each have an opportunity to continue that in our own giving - to continue to allow that to be our identity. Mark did that. I didn't know him as well as many of you here but I will go as far as to say he still is a gift and he still is giving to us even now. He's brought all of us together - Republicans and democrats, conservatives and liberals, techies and non-techies, people with strong, rough hands and people whose hands blister easily, people from different cultures, races, religions and places around the globe. This moment is a gift. To put aside petty differences and come to honor a man who loves us unconditionally.

So let us, for a little while, not talk about our friend, our coworker, our husband, our son, our brother, our nephew, our uncle Mark in the past tense anymore. Mark still is...a gift.

Let us use the present tense as we talk about Mark because everything I've seen and heard about him doing has a lasting effect. So let us say that Mark GIVES US his all. HE is still giving us his all even now.

When I go home today I will see a computer at my house that Mark gave me spare parts for to build. Another PC at my house that I have repaired, more times than I want to think about, he showed me how. There was a time in my life that I could not see beyond my work life and I came to realize that as much as Mark seems to know about everything at work he knew even more outside of work. I've heard stories about how Mark solved some problem for someone but never stops there. When you ask Mark to help you with a problem, he solves not only that immediate problem but the next two or three that you didn't know were coming after that.

Mark IS complete in his giving. Mark strives to be Complete in his knowledge of things. Mark is complete in his sense of integrity. He is complete in his teaching and mentoring. Mark has an amazing ability to remember all kinds of things and USE them at the right time. But he doesn't need you to know how intelligent he is or how much information he has retained. He just uses it to help you when you need help. When you are doing something with Mark you know he's got you. You feel safe. You feel protected. You have assurance. You have peace. Mark gives us peace by his very being. This is a gift. Mark gives of himself to everyone.

I used to have this prayer I would do that I got from some movie. God give us the mind to know what is right, the will to choose it and the strength to make it last. That's something I have to do on purpose and not necessarily very well a lot of the time. What I know about Mark tells me that prayer would never occur to him because it's just his way of doing things...it's his way of life.

Mark gives because he, innately, honors his own identity with God. He still blesses us today because the things he does he does in a way that lasts.

All of these things that Mark gives to us are an expression of Love. Mark loves us. He loves all of us. He doesn't care what race you are, what religion you are, if you have no religion. He doesn't care if you ride bikes or not, you're good with computers and technology or not. He just gives as you need and as he can. This is love. Love is so much more than how you feel or even what you do...it's the standard by which we live.

We feel his love from our individual experience with him but also from our shared experience with him. Mark's life tells a story - but the most wonderful thing is, we have the privilege of being a part of that story. We contribute to his story and we benefit from his story - we are blessed by his story. That blessing extends even beyond us because of the things he set in motion. That ripple in the pond caused by doing good things encourages each of us to make our own ripples in the pond.

Mark is a unique expression of love. And his life's story pleads with each of us to use what God has given us to our fullest potential - to earn that gift that you were given.

I am reminded of that scene in the movie, "Saving Private Ryan" when Tom Hanks character says to Private Ryan in his dying breaths.... "Earn it". Earn the sacrifices that were made to allow him to have his place on this earth in this earthly form. Mark earned his place and time here with his love, his laughter and his giving. I've heard people say that wasted potential is a sad thing. We all know without a doubt that Mark doesn't waste his potential. He lives his life fully. I know in my heart that he is still giving in some other kind of way.

Therefore, Mark is one example we can follow. His story, that lovingly includes us, does remind us that God loves us. We love Mark and we love each other but God loves us more. God loves us so much that he loves each of us through each of us...through all of us in the way that Mark exemplifies through his very being.

Just as all matter must eventually break down and change form, Mark has changed form. He lives on in a different way. He's moved from this vehicle. Now he doesn't need to slow down on any curves. He'll never run out of gas. He lives free of pain now.

I can still see that faint smile of his with his tongue rolling between his teeth that I now know means...."You think you understand what I said but you'll probably be back." He won't have to explain any more solutions he provided for the third or fourth time. I can still see that light shining in his eyes when talks about Sun, his family or his dogs ...or riding.

So, I challenge myself and each of you here today. Give your best today and everyday. That's why we are here. And Mark shows us how easy it can be. I believe we will see him again...just in a different way. But I'll still know his spirit because it was unique. Just like each of ours.

I would like to share with you a poem I wrote that I hope adds to our celebration of Mark's life.

EVERLASTING GIFT

I know in my heart of hearts that God understands your loss
Your eyes still wet with anguish and filled with teary gloss.
And well as a dull sadness, which began growing so long ago.
To draw your tears from hidden places you'd prefer to never show.
You planned, you fought, you prayed - you gave all to exhaust
You begged to God and you pleaded, agreed to pay any cost.

And yet beyond this moment of sorrow, looms a glory yet untold
I know neither the hand nor the dice from which it is rolled.
But there is strength knowing virtue, shown to me in this man
A man who values knowledge and giving as best he can.
Then finds joy in the after, facing whatever is to unfold
Now expressed to us in freedom with his immortal soul.

This man who believes that problems are simply riddles to unwind
Taking pleasure in the solving and adding to strength of mind
For simple aims of supporting family, friends and coworkers alike
People of all inclinations, to ride or not ride a bike
His spirit is everlasting, with laws of physics to bind
His energy now expanding, new limits now to find.

This man who sees beyond our faces. Loves beyond all races.
Solves problems leaving no traces and travels to new and scenic places.
He loves the things that are just as the people in his life
His precious friends and family, his coworkers, his dogs, his wife.
This man set for us an example. All challenges he embraces.
New problems he now seeks to solve. New tracks with new chases.

Though you may be weary, perhaps even dismayed
And fibers of your spirit battered and probably a little frayed
From the loss of this man who provides so much
Either from a far, nearby or even through a touch
His spirit lives on, beyond our ability to see.
And one day like him, we too will be free.

We will see you again my friend, my colleague.

Now we will have reflections. You are welcome to come to share but our time in this facility is limited so I will ask each of you to be considerate of others who also want to speak. I will ask you to limit your time to about 2 minutes. There will be more opportunity and more freedom to speak at the celebration to share with each other.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: On behalf of the family, I greatly appreciate your kind expression of sympathy for their great loss. Also, all of your thoughts and efforts are appreciated. I will now turn the occasion over to the director for final instructions.