

ROY PASINI

August 1, 1927 to November 5, 2005

EULOGY

Delivered by
WILLIAM PASINI
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ON BEHALF OF MY MOTHER and the rest of our family I'd like to thank everyone for honoring my father today.

I inherited many things from my Dad, which unfortunately, did not include his love of an open microphone and public speaking. On his way to give one of his many talks to one group or another I asked him if he had prepared, or written anything down. He said, "No; I just make it up as I go along; BS a little, tell them what I think and throw in something that will make everyone feel good about themselves."



He was born a proud native of Albany in the East Bay. As a boy, he liked to help his father make wine in the cellar of their house on Curtis street. They used to have to carry him to bed after he was bleary from the fumes inhaled while crushing the grapes in the large oak "tina."

He attended school and played baseball and basketball against young tough guys like Billy Martin, who he was never very fond of, and particularly disliked with the advent of "Billy Ball." He was part of a core group of five friends, enough for a basketball team nobody seemed able to beat, which doubled as a formidable infield in the local league. When he spoke of those days he referred to himself as "Charlie Hustle;" a term he later adopted for every over-reaching hot dog he watched play.

He inadvertently showed early glimpses of what would blossom into his famous sense of humor. Inspired after a viewing of *Guadalcanal Diary*, and much to the chagrin of his parents, he joined the Marine Corps right out of high school. The heroic Marines were renowned for their amphibious beach landings in the South Pacific. Dad survived boot camp, but somehow managed to avoid learning to swim. Once again, he was "winging it."

He was to be part of the invasion force of mainland Japan when Truman dropped the bomb (an act for which Dad was somewhat troubled, but personally thankful). He claims he was deploying on a ship out of The Port of Oakland at the time, when their orders were canceled. He was thereafter considered a proud veteran of what we came to call the "Battle of the Faralon Islands."

His unique luck held throughout his life as evidenced by his uncanny ability to always find a parking place right in front of any restaurant or store. We couldn't believe it. "Clean liv'n," he'd say.

After his stint in the service he attempted to improve his social standing by "marrying up." He found a girl from, as he would say, "the other side of the Bay." She would make certain he would not forget his humble beginnings for the next 56 years.

As a Cal Berkeley alumnus he endured what seemed like the longest losing streak in the history of rivalries when Cal lost a successive string of Big Games in the nineties. Ever the optimist, that never stopped him from repeatedly buying season tickets, or fully enjoying the Big Game Lunch he graciously hosted each following year as payment for losing a running bet.

He had many accomplishments in his life but the two he valued most were his family, and his business.

As a parent and grandparent he provided an example which I strive to live up to every day. He created a home where anyone and everyone was welcome, and eventually, very comfortable. We met all kinds of folks at our dinner table and no one was above his chiding. Ready or not you were his straight man. You knew he wasn't all that fond of you if he didn't find something to make fun of, and he didn't waste a lot of time trying, if you didn't get the joke. Mom fed the stomachs, Dad fed the one liners, often to her dismay.

I never had to worry about bringing anyone home. He was generous to a fault. His house became a home for too many to mention.

I may have inadvertently dealt him the cruelest blow by marrying a Stanford graduate; but eventually he thanked me for giving him an easy target.

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When it was presented to him, he seized the opportunity to build a family business. My Mom, my brothers and I, and many of our friends, all worked for him at one time or another. As publisher and editor of Underwriters' Report, he evolved into what is quickly becoming a vanishing breed: an honest, objective, unbiased journalist who wrote about what he observed; then wrote what he thought, felt, and believed about it, keeping his own council. He published NEWS, every week, Wednesday deadline. "It all happens on Wednesday" he used to say.

Professional relationships more often than not became enduring friendships. This was beautifully expressed in a letter Mom received a few days ago from Dad's longtime friend and colleague Russell Miller, the cofounder of the Insurance Council of Northern California for the City of Hope, a charity they devotedly developed:

Barbara: I have just heard about Roy's death and am so sorry. As you know so well – I admired Roy even as my Dad did before me. He was one of the "true blue" people in my business career that always was honest and straightforward.

I remember so many wonderful days when we both were trying to earn a buck. Each of us relying on the other to forge ahead. Each telling stories to the other to make them laugh or be outraged at the many ups and downs of business life – but

when we adjourned to Jack's for a meal it was always a continuous barrage of joy and laughter! Two battling "immigrants" Irish and Italian against the snotty "big guys."

Charlie Gagan has told me that the last few years were very difficult for him (and of course for you), but I know that he was strong in his faith so hopefully that is some consolation at this very tough time.

Barbara I wish I could be with you and the family for his services. Even though I won't be able to be with you, I hope that my good wishes and many hugs bring you some consolation. Roy, my friend, now in heaven, makes me smile even now.

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Outside of work, Dad had a huge appetite for simply enjoying life. From Polish sausage at the Coliseum to Filet at Fior's, it was all good to him. Not that he didn't have discerning taste. He never met a cracked crab he didn't like.

I tagged along with him on a business trip to Hawaii once. On an afternoon off, wearing his "I worked hard for this body" tee-shirt, he pretty much dragged me up a rugged trail, through low tunnels and narrow paths, to the top of a dormant volcano once used as a military outpost. I was hot, tired, and afraid of heights. He was just enjoying the astounding view.

He gave me other heroes for life. He took me to Candlestick to see Willie Mays, not to see the big home runs or spectacular plays, but to show me how Willie never missed touching first base on his way in and out of the dugout. It was as though he knew Mays and his idiosyncrasies personally.

When I was about eight years old, he took me to a political rally at a local shopping center. As the crowd closed in around us he hoisted me up and thrust me over the cheering throng to grab hands with presidential candidate Robert Kennedy as he threaded his way past us, eventually on his way to tragedy in Los Angeles.

It's not that his life was all, as he would say, "fun and games." He faced adversity, but you were never sure when. He hardly showed it. There were only two things I'm aware of that really set him off: Cable news networks and The Stanford Band.

My brother Mike described his approach to his failing health with a baseball analogy: He wasn't one to leave or give up before the bottom of ninth. Every at bat, every pitch, every swing, was another chance. Failing was the chance you took, but not the issue. You did the best you could.

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It's really not that tough to describe Dad. He was basically pretty simple; extremely intelligent, brutally honest, and deeply caring, with a style all his own. If you knew him, you came to love him. Anchored by an incredible sense of humor and quick wit, he seemed able to deal with any circumstance with grace and dignity, and always a good laugh. It was hard to get a straight answer, but there was always truth in the punchline.

He had many regular quips and witty sayings, but there was one salutation he would often end our weekly Wednesday night conversations with. I came to think of it as his kind of blessing. After

listening to my griping about one issue or another, he would invariably cheer me up, and simply say:

“Pace, Pace!”

