

## Mike Patterson Eulogy

Dad was never one to turn down the chance to make a speech. He would want his funeral to be no exception. So here we give voice to dad, taken from his speech at the Napa Institute 2015 Conference. In it, he quoted the great poem, "What Will Matter", by Michael Josephson.

"So what will matter?  
How will the value of your days be measured?

What will matter is not what you bought  
but what you built, not what you got but what you gave.  
What will matter is not your success  
but your significance.

**W**hat will matter is not what you learned  
but what you taught.  
What will matter is every act of integrity,  
compassion, courage, or sacrifice  
that enriched, empowered or encouraged others  
to emulate your example.

**W**hat will matter is not your competence  
but your character.  
What will matter is not how many people you knew,  
but how many will feel a lasting loss when you're gone.  
What will matter is not your memories  
but the memories that live in those who loved you.  
What will matter is how long you will be remembered,  
by whom and for what.

Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident.  
It's not a matter of circumstance but of choice.  
Choose to live a life that matters."

I am here today on behalf of my mother, sisters and brother to celebrate the exceptional life of a remarkable man, Michael Patterson. For many, he was a dear friend, a cherished colleague, a member of our large extended family that spans the US, Canada, and the Philippines. To us kids, he was this larger-than-life man that we were honored to call "Dad".

His gifts were many. He generously gave of his time, talent, and treasure to come to the aid of so many friends, family, and worthy causes – particularly as a Champion of the Catholic Church and Catholic

education. Dad was blessed with professional success based on many years of hard work. Yet, he never forgot how far he and his family had come. "Education", Dad said, "is the great equalizer". His education was a platform for his success, and he used his to make sure others had access to the same opportunities. He was living proof that a relentless work ethic, solid education, and keen intellect are a powerful combination.

Dad taught us one of life's most important lessons: show up. Show up for those you love, show up for others in need, and show up when they need it most. We are continually amazed at the letters and testimonials we have received of those who have witnessed or benefited from his generosity. Hundreds of children at home and abroad have access to education and medical care they would not otherwise have, thanks to Dad's generosity.

His generosity translated to our sporting events growing up, where he offered referees and umpires helpful life tips like, "Get your eyes checked" and "have some integrity". He had a formidable, magnetic presence and exuded confidence. Anytime he entered a room, anytime he showed up, you knew he was there...except when he wasn't, like on the rare but no less embarrassing occasion when he received a technical foul from the stands – yes, **from the stands** - or was thrown out of a game. In a battle of wits and words, he was unmatched – an inconvenience for us kids growing up. He was a trial attorney and argued for a living, which put us at a particular disadvantage when we would try to argue our points. Any time we tried to wriggle out of answering a difficult question, he would say, "move to strike the answer as non-responsive. Answer the question." We didn't stand a chance and he knew it, flashing that wry Patterson grin. That was Dad.

He had a way of connecting with people and staying connected. He loved getting to know their stories and entertaining them with his, often hijacking a conversation to do so and adding his own unique style of hand gestures, voice inflections, and staring pauses to drive home his point. He often posed questions that he'd answer himself before you had time to respond. He lived for the reaction. (Kristian impression: "What do you think of this wine? Huh? HUH? Pretty good, huh?"). We can drink in so many memories of his trademark smile, infectious laugh, and zest for life. He had a certain charisma – a way of bringing people in from all walks of life and bringing them together – a way of inspiring excitement at all the possibilities life has to offer and encouraging you to realize your potential. He did things his own way and had no bones about it. For example, we'd be at the airport and he would say things like, "I have to make a phone call. Run up ahead, honey, and tell them to hold the plane." We'd flash him an incredulous look, and he'd say, "They'll do it. I'm a million miler."

He had a fun and adventurous spirit too. He never did anything halfway or small. If the Patterson family did have a motto, it would be, "Go big. Now go bigger." Fireworks displays on 4<sup>th</sup> of July were legendary, with Dad buying out supplies of huge (not exactly, "street legal") fireworks to ensure a great show for the family. Dad had a great sense of humor, and you always knew he was up to something when he flashed his impish grin as he conspired to prank a friend or simply when he revved his Maserati and

peeled out of the parking lot after a family dinner. We can still hear his infectious laugh, and it's hard not to smile. Dad had character, and he was a character.

He was an "all in" kind of guy, and that passion, boldness and drive translated to everyone he cared about and everything he did. He worked hard and played hard. He was a "human tornado", always on the go. Any time there was a weekend or a day off, we were gone, all 7 of us, out taking on the world in another Patterson family adventure, from vacations in Mexico and Coeur d'Alene to hiking through the rainforest of Australia to enjoying fine wines in Italy. He gave everything he had to make sure we wanted for nothing. That was his way of saying "I love you". He took care of us and provided for us. He was our anchor, our calm in the storm, always there to assist with each challenge life lay before us.

He was masterful at taking control of difficult situations. He could look at a problem, ponder it for a moment, then say, "Here's what we're gonna do ...". That was when you realized that despite whatever challenge you faced, everything was going to be alright – because Dad was in your corner as a powerful and loyal ally. And he was always going to show up for you.

If Dad had a personal motto, it might have been "the more the merrier", and "life is too short to drink cheap wine." He insisted on the very best, and never was that truer than his choice of life partner, our mother, Emma – the best decision he ever made. Her selflessness and devotion to our father epitomize the commitment of marriage – "in sickness and in health, until death do us part." Mom lived her vows with faith, courage, and hope. She always believed in Dad. It moves us deeply and brings great comfort to know that hers was the last loving face he saw in this world, thanking him for us children, and drawing forth his last earthly smile. No doubt he was loved unconditionally, and he could not have chosen a better partner on his journey through life. Thank you, Dad, for the extraordinary blessing of choosing such an exemplary woman for our mother.

We are the product of our choices. Some are good, some are bad, and my Dad was no exception. A testament of our character is not only when we avoid mistakes, but what we choose to learn and do when we make them. It was a strong testament to our father's character that in his darkest hour, when faced with the news that his life would soon end, that he was able to journey the uphill battle to find his true center again; to prioritize his life with a laser-sharp focus – putting family first, and choosing to protect the time he had left to spend with his wife, children and our families, especially his 8 grandchildren. He chose us, and we chose him, keeping constant vigil, night and day. Evenings were often chaotic, with kids running circles around their "Papa". At times we worried that it was too much, but he said he loved it. He loved the family chatter and children laughing. He loved the camaraderie of each precious minute we had left together.

The experience was profound and taught us much. We learned never to take loved ones for granted; never to give up hoping; and that even when the end is near, when it seems there are no more options

left, that you can still choose how you face it, and do so surrounded by loved ones with gratitude for God's great gift of life. We learned the importance of making the extra effort to be together; to be present; to show up. Dad loved to celebrate every milestone, showing up at the hospital for the birth of every grandchild, sending flowers and cards on every birthday, and hosting every dinner.

Facing a world without him seems almost too painful to bear; but we promised him we would be OK, and we will remain true to our word. So to Dad, we simply say this -

It has been an honor to be your wife, daughters and sons, and to spend our lives with you. We cherish every moment and every memory. We are so grateful we had the chance to say goodbye and to tell you how much you mean to us. All of us here are deeply grateful for everything you did and gave to support us. We are privileged to carry on your legacy. We thank God that you are no longer suffering, no longer in pain, but free to watch over us, to be with your wonderful loving parents, and to continue to provide for us, even in death; for death is not the end. Even now you continue to love, for love is eternal. You will continue to live on in our hearts and in the hearts of all those who love you. And we know that one day you will be there to meet us again.

In your final hour, you mustered every bit of energy you had left to say "thank you", your last words to us. Now it's our turn to say, "Thank you, Dad. Thank you for giving us life, for raising us, protecting us, making us feel safe, providing for us, for serving as an example of service, generosity, perseverance, determination, accountability, faith, family, and so much more. You could not live here forever, but you forever changed our lives.

We love you now and forever.

**Thank you for living a life that matters.**