

**David E Mills**  
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Naples, Florida  
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Dad

The mere utterance of the word. That name that I called him all these years, Dad, fires off a kaleidoscope of images, thoughts and emotions that cascade in and through my mind, heart and soul. He and I caused, encountered and shared the best of times and the worst of times. No single person has had a greater impact on my life.

For those of us here who knew him and those who could not be present, I feel confident in saying that his presence and touch did not go un-noticed.

From the beginning Dad taught me what to do and sometimes showed me what not to do. In the 5th grade I was overweight and Dad wanted to whip me into shape. One early fall afternoon in Dallas after work he took me down our street to the field behind Reinhardt School. We proceeded to do a series of wind sprints until Dad put his toe in a gopher hole and broke a couple of bones in his foot and ankle. We managed to get home with dusk closing in and to the hospital from there. The following week was a tax court docket and he was off again on one of his adventures to prosecute the offenders of truth and justice – only this time - adorned in a baby blue signature cast from foot to knee. I was honored to be the first to sign his cast. The experience served as no deterrent in his calling to be a demonstrative coach and give instructions in the future.

Dad was a student of life and never without a firm opinion on any topic at hand. He was an officer of the court and carried the badge of the Treasury Department. One of his older brothers, Walt, who you saw in the photos, had come for a visit after a recent business trip in the Caribbean. Walt told of catching this prize Wahoo fish and being exhorted by his companions to have it mounted. After his return to New York, he went on to tell Dad, he received a bill for \$500 for the mounted fish and that there was no way he was going to pay \$500 for some stuffed fish. He went on to report to his little brother that he turned in an expense reimbursement to his employer, Kiplinger, for the \$500 and other incidentals for entertaining a Chinese emissary, Mr. W.A. Hoo. Dad was not amused; outraged in fact, as he listed the litany of laws

Walt had broken while impugning Dad's integrity as an officer of the Treasury by telling him. We are not sure that the event occurred as Walt had presented it but all who heard the story were greatly amused - except for Dad. As many of you know, Dad grew to despise the tax code he had so ardently served and came to believe that nothing short of its total dismantling and rebuilding could be good for our country.

Dad loved to argue a point more than any human I ever met and he took on all comers. Here I will simply let you recount your own stories.

I here tell, as we say in the south, that in the love of Betty and the warmth of Naples he mellowed and some of you escaped the experience. I extend both my congratulations and regrets.

One last reflection that I would like to share. Dad spent little time reflecting on the past or planning for the future. He was passionately focused on the present moment. Trained as a prosecuting attorney he was more apt to focus on what was wrong with a circumstance than what was right. His personage, I think, was forged more by the external than the internal. Syracuse, Rochester, India, Wilmington, Washington DC, Dallas, Cincinnati, Greenville and Naples. Always moving forward and now to the great unknown, where only God's Grace can guide.

So Dad I blow you this farewell kiss. We didn't finish everything I thought we might, but we got done what we could. And while I know you are uncomfortable with most expressions of intimacy, I send you these thanksgivings of mine.

- For your part in bringing me to life
- For the games we played and the songs we sang
- For all our many competitions
- For staying close and letting me go
- For your sense of quest and adventure
- For introducing me to such glorious family and friends
- And for teaching me when and where to run and that the how would be up to me

I close with a poem that I think describes his (our) passage.

## The Ship

I am standing on the seashore.

A ship at my side spreads its white sails to the morning breeze and starts for the blue ocean.

It is an object of beauty and strength, and I stand and watch until at length it is a speck of white cloud just where the sea and sky come to mingle with each other.

The someone at my side says, "There! It's gone!"

Gone where? Gone from my sight, that is all.

It is just as large in mast and hull and spar as it was when it left my side, and it is just as able to bear its load of living weight to its destined harbor.

Its diminished size is in me, not in the ship. And just at the moment when someone at my side says, "There! He's gone!" there are other eyes watching his coming, and other voices ready to take up the glad shout, "There he comes!"

Author Unknown

Dad, for those of us on this side, we will miss you.