

Eulogy for Emil R. Gatti



It's very easy to allow my Dad's health conditions to overwhelm your memory of him. After all, he had his first heart attack at age 44. He suffered with diabetes and a heart condition for almost 3 decades and more chronic conditions were added to the mix throughout the years. There are a lot of people who would have let their health dictate how they lived their life. Instead, my Dad chose to live life the way he wanted. Sure, there were restrictions to

his diet and activities, but he didn't let it hold him back. We went on family vacations. He helped with school projects. He went to school functions. He did everything his health allowed. He even worked well beyond the time many people would have given up and retired. When he did retire, he still didn't let his health stop him. He continued traveling with my Mom. A month long tour of the country and trips to visit family in Georgia and Indiana were a few of those happy times for him.

I will never remember my father as someone whose health conditions defined him. Life with my Dad taught us all that being flexible and doing what you can, when you can, is the right way to live. If you don't feel good today, you don't cancel plans; you just postpone them until tomorrow. And more times than not, you'll find tomorrow is a sunnier day anyway.

What I believe kept my father going strong for so many years was the fact he did things his own way. He didn't worry about what others thought and went out of his way to impress no one. Yet everyone who met him had incredible respect and love for him. He taught us all that you can make an impact just by being yourself. He freely expressed his views and loved to discuss and debate those views in the most passionate and animated manner you could imagine.

Through everything that happened in life, he never lost his sense of humor. His smile and laugh were infectious. He touched not only our lives, but those of everyone he met.

You also can't talk about my Dad without remembering that he had a deep love for all living things whether they are plant or animal. The birds in our yard are still the best fed and bathed on the block and the neighborhood wildlife always knew there'd be something for them in our yard. Anytime there were animals outside, my father was sure to be watching them and probably teaching us something fascinating about them that we'd never take the time to learn otherwise.

Most importantly, he truly loved his family. He wanted nothing more than for us to be happy. I've never seen love as strong as that which my parents share. It's a love that will not end with his death.

Dad, you said that you wanted to be buried with a headstone so there would be proof that you existed. If you were here today to look around this room, you'd see more proof that you existed than you could ever imagine.

- Michael Gatti