

Owen Eulogy

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By James Collins

There is a quote from the Bible –The book of SIRAC- Faithful friends are a sturdy shelter, Whoever finds one finds a treasure. I hit the jackpot; I had Owen as a true friend. He was a gift from God. Owen Francis Patrick McKeon has been my best friend since I was 12 years old - that is almost 65 years. He has been a friend, compatriot, brother –in – law, and a second brother to me. He was smart, honest, truthful, brave, compassionate and the most thoughtful person around. You could depend on him when times were good and especially when times were bad.

. Owen belonged to the NY National Guard for about five years and said that he never again wanted to spend time lying on the ground in the mud or in foxholes. At the end of high school, Owen tried to enlist in the Navy, then the Marines, the Air Force, the Coast Guard and finally the army. For each submittal Owen spent a couple of days going to Governors Island in NY harbor for extensive tests and in each case he was disqualified from enlisting because of albumin in his blood. Owen finished college and eventually he selected the Navy and received an officer's commission.

Just prior to Owen's first Navy tour ending, he decided to apply for duty in Vietnam. At that time, the Navy only had a few specialists supporting activity and his MO S was not a discipline that they needed. There was also a cap on the total number of people they could have there at that time so again they turned him down. Then he personally went down to Bureau Personnel in Washington and applied again. Again he was turned down. After five submittals and rejections, Owen decided to leave the Navy and go into commercial work. The following year the Navy was grabbing everyone they could and drafting others to ship them out to Vietnam. Casualties were enormous. God apparently decided he did not want Owen to die in Vietnam.

When I got married, Owen was my best man and, looking back, I figured this was a part of God's big plan. At that event, Owen met Marie and four years later, they were married. All the McKeon children and the grandchildren you see here are a result of that union.

Owen's life and mine were inexorably intertwined. With my brother and my sister, I share a common mother and father. With Owen, I share a common mother-in-law, father-in-law, and brother-in-law. Owen's children are my nephews and nieces, and my children are his nephews and nieces. We also were godfathers to each other's sons. The relationships continued to grow each passing year.

Humor is the reaction to the unexpected. With Owen and his unpredictable decisions, events that occurred are remembered. When Eileen and I returned from our honeymoon, we opened the envelopes from all of the people who attended the reception. We opened one and it stood out as a card covered with red, blue, and yellow balloons and said happy birthday you are four. Both of us immediately cried out “Owen”. When he came back from this particular sea voyage, I asked Owen, “What was your reason for the unusual card?” Owen rushed down from Norfolk Rhode Island to be the best man and stopped at two locations to get us a card. The first place had no cards at all and the second had no wedding cards. Therefore, Owen decided to get a card that would get our attention. After 52 years, that is the only wedding card, I remember.

. The police in Waldwick New Jersey stopped Owen as he rode his bicycle down the middle of a busy local road. When Owen insisted that the 2-inch spacing between yellow lines in the middle of the main road in Waldwick New Jersey was his bike lane. The town prohibited Owen from riding a bike in that town ever again. Since Marie was the court officer, that ruling was officially supported.

My Guardian Angel and Owen's guardian angel must be best friends. Many times events turned deadly when the two of us were together. We survived three major riots, and a couple of shootings. We were attacked by armed pairs of men on several occasions and when the events ended we were unharmed. Owen has saved my life and I have saved his. Unfortunately, stage four lung cancer is an enemy you cannot defeat. It took Owen in October 2013.

Owen loved life, loved his wife, loved his family and his extended family. He loved to dance, loved to laugh and he lived to make everyone around him smile and laugh. We all loved him and I loved him. We must all remember him for these traits. We may not see his like again.

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