

*Louie let me know how grateful she is to me for hosting this ceremony. She has told me that her sorrow is too great for her to speak – she says many of you know how easily she cries. So, I am honored to share these words with that she prepared with great care, affection and tenderness.*

David has been the biggest part of my life for almost 40 years. People may have thought we were very different...and to outward appearances we were: he was outgoing and made friends with everyone, while I was more shy and reserved. But we made it work, by being best friends, and having respect for each other.

We moved from Ohio to Florida as teenagers, and it speaks volumes that my parents let me go with that skinny, long-haired boy after meeting him only once. They obviously saw his promise, and they were never disappointed with the way he cared for me and his family.

Together we did many wonderful things, certainly the most wonderful was bringing our sons Cory and Cody into the world. Family meant everything to David, and he was very proud of them both, although he seldom found the words to say it.

My family has stayed in Ohio and David's family has become my own. This is another gift that being married to David has brought in my life. He was so happy to have his mother living next door, and his sister and brother near by. He enjoyed people, and had many, many friends, and his shop was always open for anyone to drop in. A consummate host, he made everyone welcome, and he loved to cook and feed his guests. He would do whatever he could to help anyone – many have been the beneficiaries of his generosity, although he often found it hard to accept the thanks and praise.

As a youth he was enterprising and busy, finding ways to earn money to buy the first of many motorcycles, cars, trucks, boats and other interesting machines. He was one of a rare breed who could do just about anything he had a mind to. He was not afraid to tackle any project, usually learning as he went. He was inventive and capable – a combination that made anything possible. He was endlessly creative, and always had a million ideas in his head. If at first he didn't know how to proceed, he would ponder and nourish the ideas until he came up with a solution, which was often unique.

His creativity showed in many ways in his life. He started and ran two businesses: South Island Landscaping and Buzzard BBQ, both of which allowed him to be creative and constructive. He had many hobbies: cars, boats, construction projects, land work, and just about anything that needed done. There was often not much distinction between work and play – he was always busy with something, and loved the parts of his work that let him be innovative.

Honest and down-to-earth, he was independent and self-sufficient, preferring to do for himself as much as he could. Indeed, we lived “green” long before it became a popular catchword. We raised and preserved our own food, and he hunted and fished to fill the freezer, finding much satisfaction in providing for his family with his own hands.

He loved being outdoors, and we moved to this area because of the hunting and fishing possibilities. Although he complained of the cold and rain, he didn’t stay inside if he could help it.

He always tried to keep a good attitude, and especially his sense of humor. Teasing and joking were his ways to deal with stress and difficult situations. He was not comfortable with silence, and always found something to say. Whether it was true or not! Once, in some one-up-man-ship contest, after trading barbs back and forth, the other person said, “Bullshit!” And David replied, “I invented that!” No one could think of anything to top that, and it became part of his legacy. He was a master story-teller with a fertile imagination, and could entertain for hours, embellishing as he went. Many of the subjects of his hunting and fishing stories grew larger with every telling.

Was he easy to live with? No more than any other man. He could be gruff and grumbly, opinionated, easy to take offense. And stubborn. Did I mention that Shellenberger trait? Just as I learned over the years how to live with this part of him, I know that those of his friends who had their ups and downs with him always found a way to see the bigger picture.

One of his favorite sayings was, “I feel so much better now that I have given up all hope.” That may sound harsh, but what it really meant to him was that he wasn’t responsible for everyone and everything after all. Once he remembered that, he could step back and let things happen as they would, and concentrate instead on the things he COULD change.

He showed us all true courage in his battle with cancer last year, enduring surgery and harsh treatments, and attempting to live as normally as possible with his new limitations. It was painful, debilitating and stressful, but he still showed his humor and generosity to the world. We were both extremely grateful for the tender care he received from the medical profession. He was also very appreciative of the help and support his friends provided then, and now, as am I.

I will spend the rest of my life wishing he were still here to share the miracle of each day with me, but I know the way that David wants me to live my life and I know he continues to encourage me to be myself, and I will be holding close to that in the coming years.

He was an important part of a lot of people’s lives. I know he lives on in us – and yet we are somehow a little quieter, a little less than what we were, without him here. But now it’s time for us to move on, and get to the business of celebrating the life of this amazing human being who touched so many. And from author James Clavell; *“Isn’t it only through laughter we can stay human?”*