

For Dad's (Robert A. Reid) Celebration of Life Service – July 30, 2010
by Randall Reid

I know that you have heard a lot about Dad's musical talents today, because he had many. Indeed, music was always in our house. Under Dad's directorship (no offense Mom, but this is his day), we would sing around the piano, in the car on road trips, and on any other occasion that we could think of. We certainly had our fair share of family concerts. My Dad could play the piano, blow a trumpet, ring a handbell, strum an autoharp, and whistle like a bird. He could compose, arrange, and transpose music with ease.

While music was woven into most, if not all, of the things my Dad did, it was certainly not the only defining thing of this great man's life. I have spent many hours over the last few days reflecting on my Dad and the impact that he has had on my life and the lives of others.

My Dad was a Christian. He loved the Lord. He devoted his life to making music for the Lord. He would study theology and would read various doctrinal books. He would spend time thinking about what a character in the Bible must have really been thinking. He was not afraid to challenge the main stream. He was a free thinker, but was always open minded and grounded in tradition as well. He served countless churches through the years. Of course, he and mom always made sure that we were at church and that we were raised to know the Lord.

My Dad was a son and a brother, and he loved his parents and sisters. He loved his hometown of Gonzales. We would go several times a year. We had family there, lots of family. We also had land. He had a connection with a particular piece of land, called the East Place. It was a matter-of-fact name, given I'm sure, by his matter-of-fact father. He loved taking us fishing on the East Place. He taught my brother and me to drive on that land. It was the place where his father was born and the place that he worked after school and during the summers. He loved the beauty of the land that God created. He even told my daughter, Maddie, that he learned how to whistle from a mocking bird in Gonzales. If you ever heard him whistle, you would have believed him too.

My Dad was a friend to all. He could make just about anyone less productive. Trips to the grocery store could often be twice as long as necessary because he could (and would) talk to the checkers. There was no

shy bone in this man's body. He befriended many along the way. People that were of different circles and shouldn't have crossed our paths, somehow did, because Dad found them. He wouldn't just find them. He would practically adopt them. Of course he had his friends in church, the neighborhood, school, etc. He was there for them all and was always ready and willing to talk. He would do anything for his friends, and that made it easy for them to reciprocate.

My Dad was a lover of history. He loved to learn about where things came from and how they worked. He would watch documentaries and would read voluminous books. While I would tend to read the sports and business pages, he would often send me clips from the letters to the editor or some other obscure part of the paper that I never got to. My Dad challenged me. I often marveled at his thirst for knowledge. He loved to think deeply.....often too deeply. He would talk about politics and the economy. He never thought that he knew it all or had all of the answers, but reveled in the discussions and pursuit of the truth.

My Dad was a jokester. He loved to laugh. As much as he loved knowledge, he loved comedy. In one room he would read deep theological subject matter, and in another room, and I won't say which one, he would read Calvin and Hobbs, Hermann, and the Far Side. He introduced me to movies like Airplane, the Blues Brothers and Animal House. He loved Night Court, the Andy Griffith Show, and Frazier. He was quick with a one-liner and he wouldn't spare his humor on anyone. To this day, if I make a corny joke around my house, my wife and kids will say, "Oh, Robert!"

My Dad was a sports enthusiast. He loved the Oilers....then the Texans. He hated the Cowboys almost as much as me. We watched countless games together through the years. He was the type of fan, like me, that could watch any football game. It didn't matter who was playing. We talked about our teams during the off-season, pre-season, regular season, and post season, and then we would start all over again. The only football related thing that he couldn't wrap his mind around was fantasy football. Of course he loved the Rockets, too, and we got to enjoy the euphoria of winning a couple of championships. Dad even had his arrangement of the Star Spangle Banner sung at a Rockets playoff game during one of the championship runs by Billy, his nephew, and a couple of other members from whatever Broadway musical Billy was singing with at the time. It really was spectacular. I don't know what excited him more...the fact that he was arranging it for a

Rocket's playoff game or the fact that he had three Broadway singers that he was writing for. Of course he loved Baylor sports, too. In fact, he was such an enthusiast that he even got into women's college basketball. He tried to talk me into that one, but I always resisted.

My Dad was a teacher. He loved his work. Sometimes I think that he loved teaching music more than the music itself. It was certainly intertwined. He worked hard to bring out the best in his students, whether at the college or in his choirs at church. He delighted in their accomplishments. I had Dad only as a music director and a house tutor, never as a teacher in a class room. My wife could have had the pleasure, but dropped the class once she found out that Dad was teaching it. She told me (and him) that it was just too much pressure for what was supposed to be a blow-off music appreciation course. No class was a blow-off for my dad. Those that had Dad as a teacher talked about him with affection. It was clear that they learned more in Dad's classes than they did in others. That was because he challenged them. He wouldn't let them rest on their laurels. He wouldn't accept poorly written papers just because they were music majors. He poured his time and energy into his students and I am confident that they are better people today because of him.

My Dad was an admirer of my mother. He loved her. While growing up, he would tell me that he couldn't understand how he ended up with Mom. She was the beauty queen from the doctor's family and he was a small town music geek (my words, not his). He took great pride in her accomplishments. He respected her talents and he valued her independence, because he, too, was an independent person. They could go their own ways, and then meet up to swap stories at the house. He found a partner that could stand up to him, support him, and love him, and for that I am sure that he was grateful.

My Dad was G-Daddy. We have to take credit for that one. Maddison Anne Reid is his oldest grandchild. She couldn't say granddad, so we shortened it to G-Daddy. He was a little hesitant at first, but after a couple of days, he practically shouted his new title to everyone. I know he was proud of his doctorate, but he may have been even prouder of his title of G-Daddy. He was hip and cool. He loved all of his grandkids, Maddie, Sam, Royce, Leiah, and Luke, each one in his own unique way. G-Daddy was fun. He played the Wii, took them fishing, built a play-house, gave them gifts, made them DVD movies of their favorite programs, talked to them on the phone,

and just loved on his grandkids. Rumor has it that he even changed a few diapers.

My Dad was, well, my Dad. He was my father. He was my Pa. Dad was the best! My Dad was a great dad because he was there. When I say that he was there, I mean that he was there. He was present. I'm sure he missed some stuff along the way, but I couldn't tell you what it was. I don't remember my infancy, but from the time that I remember, he was there. He was there taking Chuck and me to our summer yard jobs. He was there, throwing up ugly left handed hook shots at the house on El Sereno. He was there, taking us fishing. He was there on vacations, at Christmas, and at church on Sunday. He was there through all of our car accidents, break-ups and screw-ups. He was there at our football games. He was there at our concerts. He was there at our graduations, our weddings, and when my kids were born. He was there to help with school papers. He was there to guide us when we needed advice. He was there, in person, on the phone, via email. He loved Chuck and me and we loved him. He was proud of us. He was our mentor, advisor, teacher, comforter, friend, father, and our children's G-Daddy. To me, though, he will always simply be remembered as Dad.