



In Memorium
Nathan Paul 1919-2005



Eulogy

While what I'm about to say may sound clichéd or overly sentimental as the occasion warrants, I want to make it absolutely clear to those of you who may not have known my grandfather very well that what I have to say may in fact be an understatement. There may not be a way to overstate the qualities that made this man.

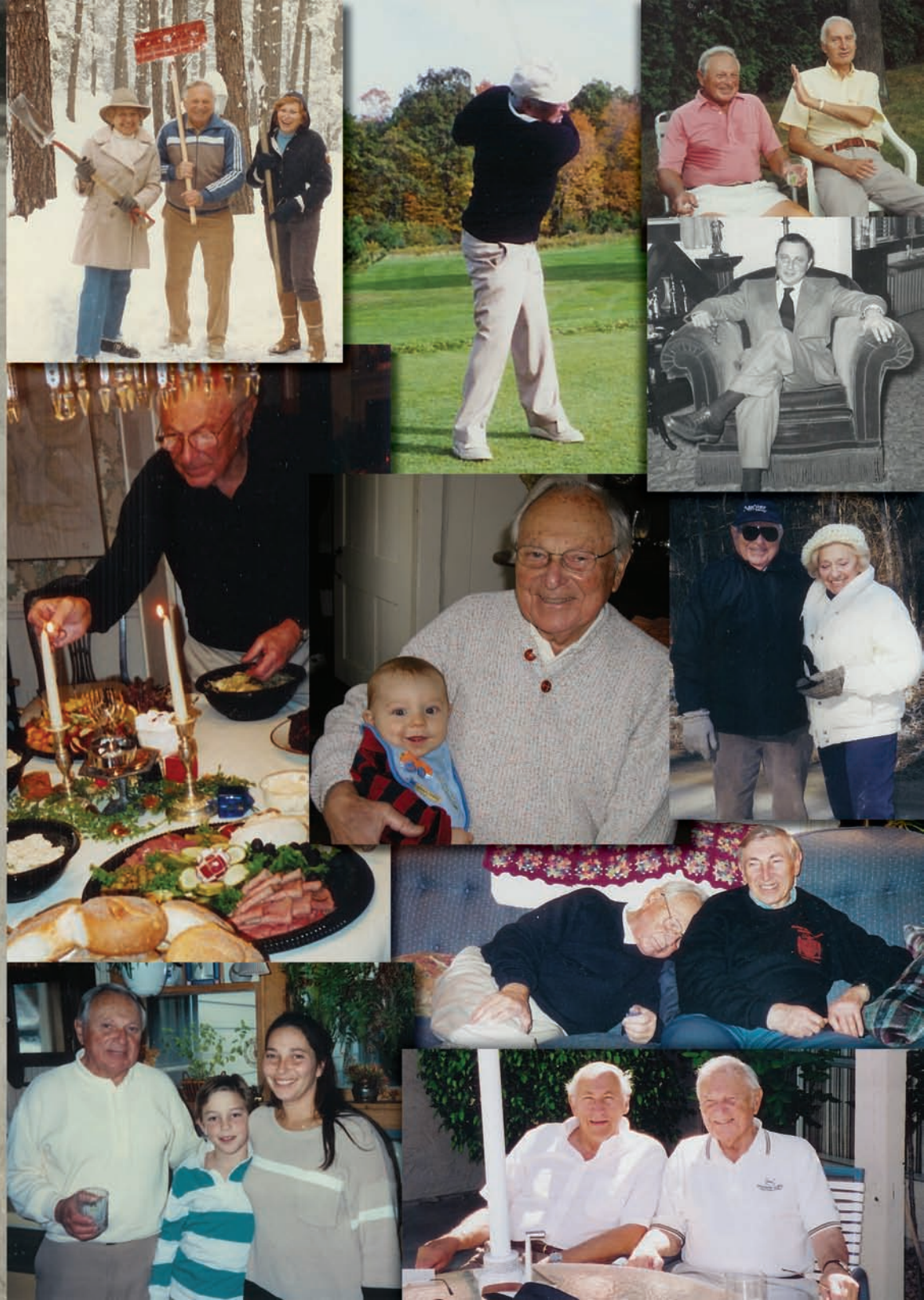
On the plane on Saturday, my father remembered getting a root canal from an area dentist several years after my grandfather had retired from dentistry. In the middle of the procedure, apropos of nothing, this dentist stopped what he was doing, set down his drill, and looked my father in the eye. "Jeremy," he said, "I want to tell you something." Then he took his glasses off and set them down. "Your father is the finest man I've ever known."

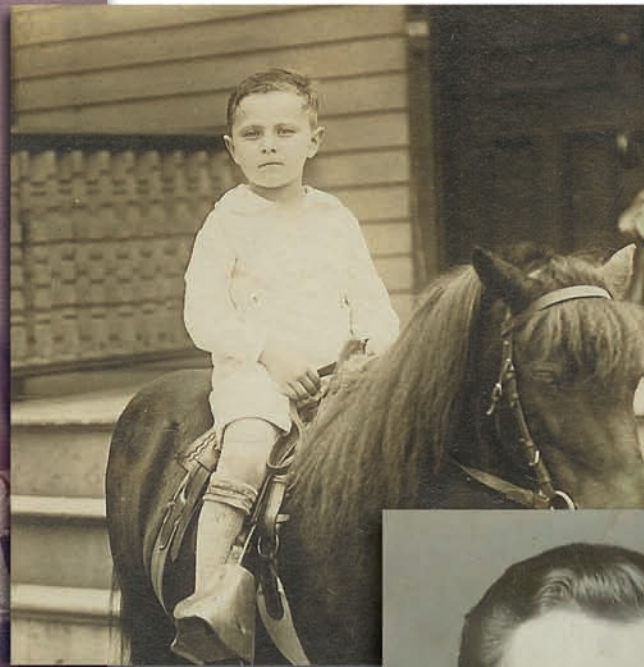
I nodded when he told me this story. I'd heard others just like it before.

He was a hero, a role model,
a gentleman, a charmer, an
athlete, a leader, a husband,
father, grandfather, great-
grandfather, brother and
uncle.

He was, in addition to that
list, a friend.

The dearest of friends.





He grew up in an immigrant household speaking Yiddish before he spoke English. He was smart and tough and, as he would for the rest of his life, he loved his family above all else.



My grandfather was the most decent man I'd ever met. Not only was he kind, he had a seemingly bottomless compassion for anyone he cared for. And he cared for so many. From his sister and brother to his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren to just about everyone in his extended family to the hundreds of patients who sat in his dental chair, my grandfather was the most careful of men. He was full of care.



It's impossible to discuss my grandfather without discussing teeth. I could never understand why statistics showed dentists having the highest suicide rate of any one profession because my grandfather so loved what he did. He literally brought a smile to so many faces.

As a joke, someone had once given him a gift of an old-timey brass plaque that read 'Painless Dentist.' He hung it in his office for a chuckle, as if he were pulling teeth in some gold-rush town. But having been a patient of his myself until I was in my twenties, I can tell you it was true. I don't ever remember a moment of pain in his chair.

When he retired, a steady stream of patients came to my grandfather weeping, asking what they'd do without him.

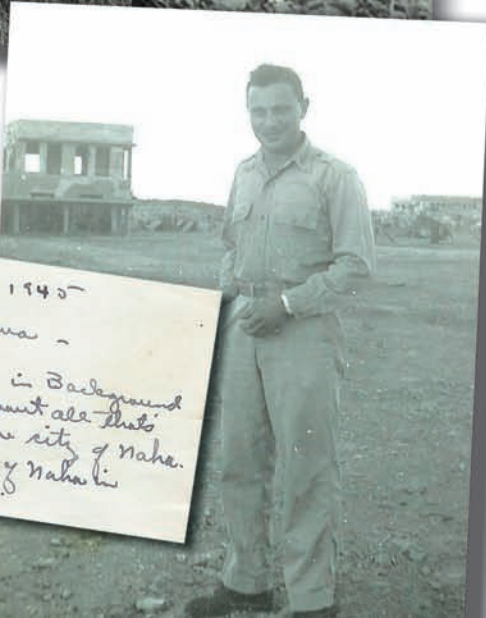
Over the years since he retired, every dentist I've been to asks if I'd like to replace the two fillings my grandfather put in my mouth decades ago. I close my mouth immediately and ask if there's a problem with the fillings that are there. "No," they say. "Actually, they're perfect. But you can see them." "Good," I respond. "Let's just keep it that way."



CAMP ELKO'S
MAY, '64

My grandfather was the funniest man I'd ever met. He could tell a story and a joke like no one else, spinning it out with an artist's flair, withholding punchlines until just the right time. He had the uncanny ability to see the humor in just about everything.

Though he saw a great deal of tragedy in Okinawa, where he served honorably as a medic, he was gratefully never on the front lines of combat. But when, after the war, the children of the family would ask him about it, he'd show them his hernia scar and explain the knife fight he'd gotten into with the enemy. After his Achilles tendon was reattached years later, the story grew another chapter for the grandchildren, with the 'Japs' getting him in the calf before climbing up his legs to his abdomen. It was just the kind of baloney I loved as a little boy.



Aug, 1945
Okinawa -
Buildings in Background
are just about all that's
left in the city of Naha.
University of Naha is
right near.



Okinawa
Sept - 1945



Okinawa
Naha R.R. Station
Sept - 1945



He could take a joke as well as he could tell one. When his beloved Yankees were trounced by the Boston Red Sox last year, Terry and TJ made sure to induct him as an honorary lifetime member of their Red Sox Fan Club. With over-dramatized discomfort he posed for pictures a year ago wearing a Red Sox ball cap, holding the Sports Illustrated special edition with the Sox on the cover.

No matter how much he moaned, we knew he loved it because it delighted all of us.



He had that quality often identified in the world's great leaders of being able to make you feel like you were the only person in the room. (my grandmother, not suprisingly, shares that quality).

He simply made you feel good about yourself, while making you want to be better.

We have been so fortunate to have him in our lives. Because there wasn't a day that went by in his long, rich life when he didn't feel the same way about everyone here today.

I remember him telling me once that one of his friends hadn't seen his grandchildren in years. Grandpa just shook his head gently and said, "That poor guy has missed out on one of life's great experiences."

Same goes for that poor guy's grandchildren.





He and my beautiful grandmother made an unbelievable duo, their partnership enduring from their teens, when they were clearly from different sides of the tracks. On an early date, she naturally ordered steak while he quietly stuck with a glass of water. But for the rest of their lives together he continued to sweep her off her feet.





To give you a small idea of how rich their relationship was, you need only ask my grandmother about the 'French Fry Incident.' It happened well before my time, but was legendary by the time I came along.

Suffice it to say it involved French fries, the police and one of them sticking her tongue out at the other from a speeding car.



Their partnership survived, though, with their love for one another a shining beacon to anyone who thought such a triumph as 64 years of happy marriage an impossibility.



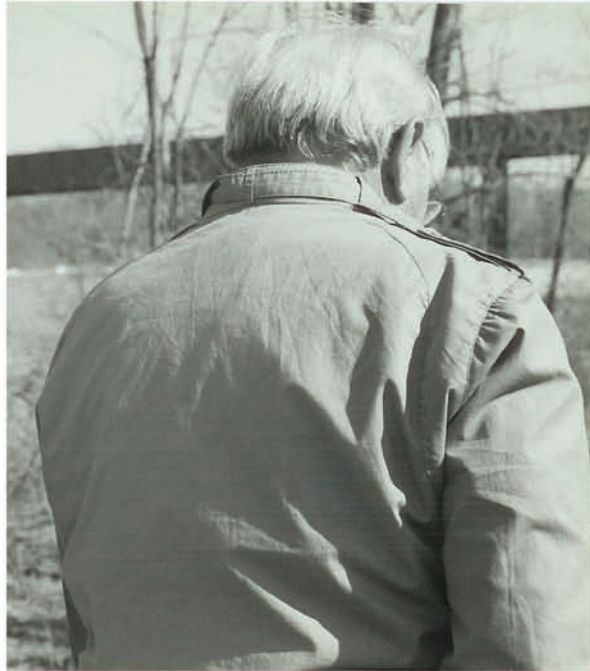
And during that time, they built an amazing family, who then built their own families, spreading their love and good humor to three generations.





I believe my grandfather is the greatest man I've ever known. And perhaps it will take a long time to accept his absence because while he was with us, he was so fully alive. He was to me a Grand Father in the truest sense of the word.

He's left us – all of us – a legacy of kindness which I, for one, am proud to carry on in his memory.



I hope that you all are able to do the same.

I love you, Grandpa.