

A Tribute to my Father

For as long as I can remember, I have always told people that my dad is the smartest person that I have ever known. Sure, he earned a Masters degree in civil engineering and a PhD in electrical engineering from Stanford University. Of course, he designed and built 5 family homes in his spare time while maintaining a full time job as an engineer for over 40 years. Naturally, he built furniture, kitchen and bathroom cabinets, and even the kitchen table where we ate as a family for so many years. Obviously, he did all of these things while raising 4 boys who one day he would put through college. But, the smartest thing he ever did was marry my mom over 68 years ago. She was always there for him, supporting all of his endeavors while at the same time providing balance to his work driven life. And her casseroles provided him the energy he would need to tackle his next project. My dad played so many important roles in my life. He was my teacher. For so many years, he tutored me in math, a subject that he had mastered during his extensive scholastic career. When I struggled with calculus, my dad was there to help, even though it had been nearly 40 years since he had taken a similar class. It always amazed me that he still knew it all. For several years, my dad was my baseball and soccer coach. Considering he never played either sport, it was remarkable how much he knew about each one of them. As one parent once said, "here's to you coach Hyver, the best coach ever found." My dad was my 7 am alarm clock on weekends. I dreaded the knock on my door and the words that would always follow, "Todd, its time to get up." It was on those weekend days that my dad became my job foreman. He coordinated my duties for the day and evaluated the quality of my work upon completion. If it was not to his satisfaction, my job was not done. Some of my duties included, but were not limited to, going to the dump to dispose of garbage cans full of sawdust and wood scraps from his workshop, pulling weeds, mowing our overgrown backyard, and hauling concrete in buckets for numerous projects around the house. But the one assignment that I despised the most, was painting any surface that

my dad had applied stucco to, and there were many of these surfaces, including our house. His stucco application was thick to say the least, making it difficult to get the paint into every little nook and cranny. Paint brushes didn't stand a chance against my dad's stucco. Neither did I. My dad was my mechanic. When my Corvette engine was giving me problems, my dad diagnosed it as a faulty cam shaft. He then helped me rebuild the engine, which was no easy task. I remember thinking, how does he know how to do this too? My dad was my carpenter. After buying a new condo, my dad built all of my furniture based on the design of the model home's furniture. This included a bed, dresser, and 2 nightstands, as well as a desk and a coffee table. After I bought my house, my dad built cabinets for a 3-bathroom remodel. Even after a stroke slowed him physically, my dad helped me build a Cal King bed by talking me through the process. His mind still sharp as a tack. Finally, and most importantly, my dad was my mentor. Whether by spoken word or example, he taught me so many valuable life lessons. As a teacher, coach, weekend alarm clock, job foreman, mechanic, carpenter, and as a mentor, my dad provided me the blueprint for how to live a productive, hard-working, family-oriented life. I am so lucky and proud to call my dad the smartest person that I will ever know. Thank you for everything dad. You will be missed. Your son, Todd.