

Hello, my name is Mark Troilo. We are here to celebrate the life of my best friend of almost 40 years.

This feels a little strange for me, because the last time I was up in front of so many Lebanese people was when I was entertaining them by roasting our friend here, Dr. Joe Steven (I feel like I should put on a pair of funny-looking glasses with a big nose). Over the years, Joe & I have had many conversations (if that's what you call them) about our heritages, since he is full-blooded Lebanese and I am full-blooded Italian, and it's always bothered him, that if I was going to try to pass myself off as a full-blooded Italian, I should at least look like one. (I couldn't grow a beard because it kept sliding off).

Even though Joe and I had different heritages, Joe & I always were made to feel like we were family, by each other's family. My children always call them Uncle Joe and Aunt Sandy, and just the other day I got an email from Jasmin addressed to Uncle Mark. Mrs. Esther Steven, you & your children have always been so kind to me, because of Joe, maybe with a little grief thrown in for good measure, but I was always made to feel like family.

And I think you all know how he felt about his family. It was the most important thing to him in the world. Sandy, all you girls (Jasmin, Shae, Harper and Lola) and John, I know, you know how much he loved you. It was his reason to live.

I've got to switch gears a little or I won't get through this. Whether it's a good thing or not, I probably know more stories about Joe than anyone. And don't worry, Joe, most of our secrets are safely locked away in the vault (as George on Seinfeld would say). But some are priceless.

1. Trip to New Orleans.
2. Never Singing.
3. Eating raw eggs.
4. First Scuba diving adventure
5. Lock ourselves in our hotel room, playing Dr. Mario for money until late into the night.
6. Cape Girardeaux
 - a) lost our luggage, got in late - 6-seater plane
 - b) finally got a van to come and get us
 - c) took us to Wendy's and then to Walmart
8. Joe and I did a lot of things together, from playing poker, scuba diving, making movies, snow skiing, among just a few. On one of both of our fondest skiing memories, we were going down this slope, of course always trying to outdo the other. Well, we decided we needed to make a little yellow snow, and after we accomplished our task, decided to ski the trees. I took off, Joe following. I saw this little rise in front of me and decided to jump it.

Unfortunately, when I got up in the air, I realized I was right over a creek. I'm yelling at Joe not to follow me, he wipes out, losing his skis in about 4-5 feet of powder and I'm suspended on the ends of my skis in the middle of this creek. It took forever to finally get me out, and after doing that, I can remember we just sat on the edge of that creek exhausted and talked about all kinds of things, from dentistry, family, wives, you know.....all the things that best friends talk about. It was something we never forgot and have always treasured in our hearts.

We could all learn a lot from Joe. He had a servant's heart. He was loyal, kind, and compassionate. He was passionate about many things, but with dentistry, he took passion to another level. We talked almost every day, sometimes for hours, late into the night, about how to do things better. Even when he was dying and knew it, he was writing things down on a yellow note pad of things to do at the office. We spent an hour one evening 2 weeks ago doing what we've done for almost 40 years, bouncing ideas off each other & seeking the other guy's advice. Our friendship started & ended doing the same thing.

He was one of the most creative & imaginative people I ever met. He always tried to build a better mousetrap. His genius was always on display, and for me, I just sat back and admired him at work. He fought for the average guy in dentistry, the group of people in the dental world he called the silent majority. Our profession has some problems, and he wanted so badly for dentists to serve the

needs of the patients we treat, not the needs we dentists wanted to have for those patients - and trust me folks, there is a huge difference.

And this is another reason why he was so loved by so many people. He knew how to touch all our lives, no matter what our walk in life. He was kind to everyone and treated everyone with respect. He was genuinely interested in the other person. (Comment on elderly patient who showed up at mortuary)

And what a sense of humor. My gosh he was funny. Doing a seminar with him was so much fun, and I think we had more fun than the people we talked to. He could ad lib as well as Johnny Carson. All his wonderful traits showed up in his humor, and the hours upon hours he had Sandy, Cella, Lori, friends, and audiences laughing - how can you not love the guy?

1. For instance, Joe had this thing about his hair. I mean, it had to be perfect. When one little hair was out of place, he'd get all bent out of shape. So one day, we are out of town getting ready to do a lecture the next day, and he convinces me we need to slick our hair back and go out. I'm looking at him in total disbelief, but we did it. No pictures, didn't know a soul, but we looked real studly. Of course, I don't know how studly you can look if you are laughing the whole time.

- do Joe's imitation of Craig.

Joe, you have left a huge hole in all our lives and we will all miss you terribly, but I for one will always smile when I think of you, for all the funny, zanny, weird, creative genius things you did (like swallow 2 raw eggs whole, just because I challenged you to for \$20). You made me a better person & you've made the people around you better. Dentistry has learned more from you than it will ever know.

And I'd like to put something to rest. Joe, you always got tons of crap from your brothers because you were named Joe Junior. They would say, "Why was he the golden child? Why was he so special?" Guess what Joe - it's OK!! You can finally rest in peace knowing you are special, because all of us here know you are. You earned the name Joe.

And like your dad, you did life your way, affecting everyone with that magic touch of yours along the way.

Joe and I believed that we can always learn something from everyone. This is something I'd like everyone here to reflect upon, because Joe's life mattered. If Joe teaches you and I something we can use in our lives (just like everyone else taught us) to make us better human beings, then in my eyes at least, it's part of his legacy. Do you know that in all those years, we never had one fight about anything? We disagreed about things, dentistry, politics, social issues, even religion, but in the end, it wasn't about being right, it was all about the relationship. We were best

buds, no matter what. Maybe today, through Joe's life and death, he can teach us all how to be better people, by having better relationships, better marriages, (pause)better and richer lives because of the friendships we have with the people we know & love. Little things don't matter. God, family, friends matter.

My son Nick called me on the night Joe passed away, and I mentioned to him that we had been friends for 40 years and best friends for most of that. I told him that I felt special, and I know Joe did to, because we had all that time together. Nick reminded me that that wasn't only special, but was a rarity few people on this earth will ever get to experience. Nick was right, and Joe & I were blessed to have had that. While I may have felt cheated that I didn't get as many years I could of had with Joe, since he died so young, in retrospect, if I would have been told 40 years ago that I could have 40 blessed years with Joe as a true best friend, I would have taken it (and so would have Joe) in a heart beat. We were truly blessed.

I was walking down a country road on Saturday in Missouri, all by myself, and I looked up to the sky and asked Joe out loud, why did you leave me here all by myself? After I did it, I thought maybe I should look around to see if anyone was looking at me with a strange look. Folks, it's just a fact - Joe has left a huge hole in our hearts and our lives. When I miss him, I will think about one of a million instances where he has made me laugh, and then I think I can help fill that emptiness. You see,

even though he is gone, he can still touch all of our lives.

Joe, thank you for that privilege of being your good friend. You are gone, but we will never forget you. Learn the ropes up there in heaven so you can show me around when I get there.

Joe, I love you so much. Rest in peace.

And all God's people said, "AMEN"!

John 11:35....."Jesus Wept" (for his friend Lazarus)