

Emily Ulcar Eulogy

Good morning everyone and thank you for attending the service today

I would like to start with this short anecdote:

Once there were 3 bricklayers.

Each one of them was asked what they were doing.

The first man answered very gruffly,

'I'm laying bricks.'

The second man replied,

'I have to work to earn money to feed my family'

But the third man said enthusiastically and with pride,

'I'm building a cathedral.'"

And so it was with Emily, everything she did in this life was done with enthusiasm, excellence and pride.

Emily's focus was on the bigger picture and the end result, and that provided her and others the motivation to continue in some difficult circumstances, and with that attitude, inspired solutions to many challenges.

Emily Mary Mihevc was born on December 30th 1955 in St. Michael's hospital in Toronto to very typical Slovenian family parented by Ana and Joze Mihevc. The middle child of 5, younger than Anne and Joe and older than Johnny and Mark.

She was born with a dislocated hip that caused her to go to Sick Kids to be put in a body cast for a length of time as a young child to have her condition corrected. This physical setback would not deter her future sport endeavors.

She was a good Slovenian girl. She sang in the well-disciplined church choir led by father Zrnc. She went to Slovenian school on the weekends and danced as a

member of the Slovenian dance group through to her late teens. Not to mention the summer Sundays spent at the Slovenian farm.

Throughout her youth and teenage years she excelled in school, sports and piano. She balanced her time doing schoolwork, representing Loretto High School in track, basketball and volleyball, as well as playing piano at the Kiwanis Music Festival.

She attended University of Toronto studying Physical Health Education and continued her love of sports representing UofT on the Varsity Squash team.

All these activities did not deter her from finding romance and marrying a husband to whom she would be married for 43 wonderful years. She is the mother of three children, Chris, Greg and Stephanie, three in-laws, Diana, Ariana and Nabeel, and two grandchildren Luka and Yara.

As with many mothers, she would protect her brood fiercely and made sure that they were well taken care of and fulfilled their potential.

Not always an easy feat.

Emily loved and pushed everyone to reach their full potential and personally felt failure if even a small amount of that potential was squandered. We all benefitted from her enthusiastic push and determination for us to excel and have enjoyed the fruits of those successes. Even in the end when we were visiting her in the hospital, she was still looking for signs of improvement in us. 😊

After her undergraduate degree, Emily went on to teacher's college. She taught for ten years focusing on grade school and in particular the special education class.

What a true calling.

Emily had such a soft spot for the marginalized and the disregarded. She spent many evenings preparing her class programs to help these students shine and feel a sense of accomplishment and belonging. This compassion continued past her teaching years. Emily believed, and proved, that however difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at it.

In our early years of marriage we had three wonderful children: Chris, Greg and Stephanie and oh how Emily loved to mother them. She guided them through their infancy through to their post graduate studies. And she did this with great engagement and efficiency from her couch.

As you are aware, in 1989 Emily was struck with a disabling condition that rendered her quite immobile and in constant pain. Despite her condition, Emily was undeterred. She refused to succumb to her condition. She just decided that, rather than feeling sorry for herself, she would stay engaged with her family and friends from her little office which consisted of her 16 x 16 inch table, her iPad and her phone. It was remarkable what she was able to accomplish from there. She could have run a small country with all her files and spreadsheets. Among other things, she organized renovations, tax planning, financial planning and gift purchasing.

Emily Loved a good deal. There was nothing more exciting than getting an item on sale, plus a coupon added, plus a friends and family additional discount

She had so many accomplishments all while still juggling her own daily pain, medical care, many doctor's visits, six surgeries and ongoing therapies. It was so unfortunate that, because of her immobility, many were not able to socialize and get the chance to know Emily better:

to see her tenacity, her humour and so many other wonderful traits.

Even in the later years, she was able to manage her father's and mother's health care. She monitored their condition, their medical needs, their medications and many doctors' phone calls. Inasmuch as her mother passed away earlier this year at the almost age of 99, Emily was very involved in keeping her as protected and as comfortable as could be possible.

It was also comforting to Emily, that even though our children had married and moved out, they were only a phone call away and minutes from coming in our front door... and they never disappointed her.

Emily shied away from the limelight, however, she was the one who organized the many family and large Christmas dinners of over 37 dinner guests, as well as our annual SpringPong tournament with up to 40 participants. But it wasn't just about the organizing, it was making it into an event. Weeks prior to our parties, Emily

would send out emails with pictures, poems or other items to all the participants building the excitement so that the mood and enthusiasm was set before everyone even entered our doors. She happily let everyone else take the glory for the success of these events. This also applied to a number of other get togethers like birthdays, anniversaries and our cottage weekends with our friends. There were many other acts of kindness and love as well.

How lucky was I to have the great honour of being Emily's husband and the privilege of having a front row seat watching Emily in action and in all her creative glory?

Throughout her life, through her acts of kindness and generosity, brick by brick, Emily was building her cathedral.Mission accomplished!

Life may have to end but love doesn't.

Emily, It seems like only a moment you stayed, but what an imprint your footprints have left on our hearts!