



Memories of Ed Remsey

As told by his family

March 9, 2017

Ed was about six and a half years older than I. I remember when we were growing up, Ed had a bedroom to himself. Because he had asthma, he had to burn some medicine at night to breathe. He was also hard of hearing and went to the public school because it could accommodate his hearing problem. Noel and I went to a Catholic school.

Ed always seemed to be working on a car engine in the back yard. He was very mechanically inclined and liked to drive. Right after the Second World War, dad bought a 1941 Packard 120 with a straight 8 cylinder engine. Ed was driving it one time and the folks were in the back seat. I was in the front and noticed we were going over 100 miles an hour. I didn't say anything.

During WWII, dad worked for the Army Corps of Engineers. Shortly after the war, he went to work for the City of Tulare and Ed moved with him and went to Visalia City College. In 1950, dad went to work for the Long Beach School District and I moved to Long Beach with him. Ed was pretty much on his own by then.

Our mother was living with Ed and Mary shortly before she died. Ed got most of her mementos. They included letters, pictures, and other items about her brother, Noel, who was the only person from North Platte, Nebraska, killed in the First World War. A VFW Chapter was named after him. We went to North Platte to give them copies of his letters, pictures and other items. While there we visited the home my mother was raised in. Ed remembered being there when Mom went home during the Great Depression with him and Noel to give birth to me. While there our grandmother died. Ed remembered the house and showed us the room our grandmother was in. That trip revealed much of our heritage to us.

Ed had been there a few years earlier when the house was for sale. He saw the real estate agent who mentioned the house at one time was a whorehouse. In actuality it had been a convent and was moved from its original location near the Church to its present site. I am sure Ed set the agent straight.

Ed, thank you for being my brother. May you rest peacefully.

Joe



Most of us kids were fortunate to drive an “extra” family car in high school. I remember driving my dad’s 1969 Chevy Impala for a few years, or as it was known at my school, “the land yacht”.

Shortly after high school, I believed I had saved enough money to buy my own car that wasn’t quite so.... obtrusive. Having only driven “practical cars” and having limited funds, I figured a basic fuel efficient car that was the way to go. I spent months looking, and finally found one I could afford. It was a 1981 4 cylinder Chevy Tempo. I asked Dad if he could come with me to check out the car before I actually purchased it. I figured with the great price tag, clean interior, and unassuming boxy shape, he would approve.

We drove out to the lot, and he immediately started walking around looking at various cars. I called him to come over to look at the one I selected. He opened the hood, crawled underneath it, and got inside to start it up. Those 4 cylinders purred.

Finally I asked him, “What do you think?” He looked at the car and said, “Well, it’s OK, but why don’t you look at this car over here”. He was pointing to a metallic grey Chevy Camaro.

I was somewhat shocked. Immediately I saw that the price was outside of my range. I asked him “Do you think this car is better than the other one?” He said – well, it has a bigger engine, and I think you might like it better. When I told him I could not afford the asking price, he agreed to loan me the difference. I drove off the lot with the Camaro.

Dad gave me all kinds of advice over the years, but I could not thank him enough for being cooler than me that day and preventing me to spend my college years driving a Tempo. I drove that Camaro for the next 12 years, and it remains one of my favorite cars I ever owned.



There was another truck in my dad's life. I mean, in addition to the 33 Ford that he cherished. He was also fond of his Datsun truck. Dad was driving that Datsun truck the first year I attended Bishop Amat high school, as a transfer from Pomona Catholic High School. His car pool included his friend and co-worker Bill John, to and from work with him; and myself, home from school after cross country practice.

Dad was an average sized man however in comparison to Bill, he was small. Bill was massively tall and wide, at least that was my opinion when I climbed in the cab between them. It was a tight fit. I didn't mind because I told them all about my new cross country team. I think Dad could see that I was happy that I had transferred schools, and he and Bill were a captive audience to my explanations of every days' goings on.

Sometimes they arrived right at the end of practice, and other times they arrived before practice ended and they watched us do sprints and drills or finish a long run. I would look for them to be there and if I saw them I ran a little taller. I stopped looking for them and usually assumed they were there toward the end of practice, which helped me to run stronger at the end of practice so that I could show my dad what kind of runner I was.

My dad was at most of my races too, which felt like a big hug. When he couldn't be there, I could imagine him and Bill in the Datsun truck as my private audience, and that helped me run strong.

I have continued my running career. I can still imagine my dad at my races as well as watching from the Datsun truck as clearly as when I was 15.



I still feel like the thirteen year old girl who wrote this tribute to my father forty five years ago.

"My Dad

Hurray, Hurray, for the man of the year,
Who works so hard, till he's up to his ears.
He works everyday, from May to May,
And even on some Saturdays!
In Math, he is number one;
He won't rest until our homework's done.
A true camper he is,
With Patty, Mary, me and Liz,
He makes the most of the means,
Even though our menu consists of beans.
Improving the house, he never fails;
He is always seen with hammer and nails.
A broken radio and screen door,
He fixes them, and then finds more.
Let's hear it, let's hear it for the man of the year,
Who is loved by everyone of his dears.

Fathers Day 1972"

I will miss you terribly.

Cathy Lee



I love you Dad! I miss you so much--your house will never be the same without you. Thank you for your love and support and your wisdom and wit. Your enthusiasm for college ball has rubbed off on me--go UCLA! I will miss our talks about politics (boo Trump!) and history and life.

Good bye Dad. You will be in my thoughts and prayers forever.



Daddy,

Thank you for being my rock. All the best parts of me exist because of you. Your support, unconditional love and acceptance were the building blocks for my ability to love others.

Loyalty, devotion, and compassion guide my actions.

I learned it from you. You took me out for a rootbeer float the day I became a woman. Because you honored me, I became an honorable woman. Your legacy continues through my precious grandchildren.

Your smiles and 'I love you dear's fill my heart and mind.

You live on dear daddy.

I am your daddy's girl.

- Patty



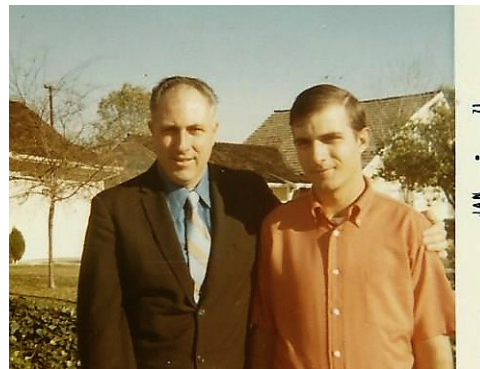
I have wonderful memories of our family vacations. These vacations were almost always a camping trip – to either Jenks Lake in San Bernardino National Forest, Jackson Lake in Angeles National Forest and sometimes to Bass Lake and the Kern River near Bakersfield. The funniest times were when I either splashed or pushed my siblings into the water. I credit these camping experiences as helping to form my interest in the South West as an adult.

There was a special bond between Dad and Johnny – Dad loved him unconditionally. That love became readily apparent after John experienced a life-threatening bone infection. Dad built a wooden bed with handles so he and I could carry John room to room to join family activities.

Dad entrusted his 1933 Ford truck to me many times when I was a teenager. It was a joy to drive it. Sometimes I would take Patty, Mary and Cathy for a drive – they would sit in the truck bed. I probably traumatized them as I drove over bumps and swerved to jostle them.

Several years ago Carolyn and I took Dad to visit Joe and Linda. It was wonderful to listen to Dad and Uncle Joe recount their childhood experiences.

I am very thankful to have a recent precious experience with Dad. At the finish of the hospital visit he took my hand and held it to his heart.



I married Ed's oldest child, Michael, in 1996. His family calls him "Mike", but he asked me to call him "Michael". He was named after an angel, after all, and he has certainly been that in my life.

When I first met Ed, I asked if I could call him by his first name. He was barely old enough to be my father, and I felt too old to call anyone "Dad". He smiled. "Sure", he replied. "It makes me feel young". When I said goodbye to him last week, I told him he would be going to Heaven soon. His illness had left him confused, but he nodded and reached for my hand. I squeezed his hand, and Marcus, his amazing caregiver, joined me in saying The Lord's Prayer at Ed's bedside. Just when I thought we had made a special connection, he said "Thank you, Cathy". I could do worse than being mistaken for my awesome sister-in-law.

Today is the 17th birthday of Ed's eldest great-grandchild, and our amazing grandson, Damian Santana. My own father's wake was held on my 30th birthday. When I look at Damian, I see a bit of Michael, and a bit of Ed. In the faith we share, the day we die is a day of rebirth. So, we are here to celebrate. Ed is here in our midst, with Peanut in his lap, watching an Angels game, eating a vat of rocky road ice cream, and laughing at the antics of his amazing family.



Grandma Mary Remley always told me that I was #1 (firstborn) from a #1 (my dad Michael is also firstborn) from a #1 (Grandpa Ed was firstborn). I must have heard that a zillion times. Grandpa Remley just chuckled, and never told her to stop saying it. In fact, especially as Grandma got older and started forgetting things and repeating the same stories over and over, Grandpa was patient. Over the years I noticed that his family was very important to him. He was there for people when they needed him, whether with a car, a place to stay, money, or other support. When Alex and I bought a condo after Damian was born, Grandpa gave us all of his how-to-fix-things-at-home books (probably because I always loved going into his workshop with him). Growing up I loved going into the garage with him and watching him work with his tools and smelling the sawdust on the floor. We grandkids loved the teeter totter and swing set he put in the backyard for us, even though it gave us splinters. I can't wait to relive all of that when we get to see the home movies. Even I remember him standing there recording our family gatherings when I was a kid. You created a great family, Grandpa, and I'm glad you recorded some of it. I'm especially glad to be a part of it.



All the best to you and to Grandma

Theresa Remley, granddaughter

I love you, my grandfather. Being the second oldest grandchild along with my older sister gave me a deep feeling of belonging when we visited and stayed over memorable nights at your beautifully crafted house. Although you did not talk a lot, what you did say made a positive impression upon me. I knew that you always loved me, and you helped me when I needed you.

I remember your eyes lighting up when showing me your awesome train set and other hobbies, and you excitedly took me by the hand to show me your classic car. You were a talented builder and also a very good dancer! I admired your intelligence and many academic books, and you respected my intelligence as well.

I will always appreciate your presence in our big family and how you have loved all of your grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Thank you for your love, kindness, and generosity, Grandpa. I will always cherish you, and I will stay connected to you as you live onward.



When I was younger, I was REALLY afraid of dogs. Whenever I went over to Great Grandpa's house in Covina, he always protected me from Peanut jumping on me or licking me. He would say, "Peanut!" and make Peanut go over to him so I could get safely in the house. Whenever I would cry because I was scared, Grandpa never made me feel bad for being afraid of dogs. I remember that he loved Peanut and always petted her and took care of her. Great Grandpa also loved ME and hugged me, gave me snuggly kisses, and took care of me when I was scared. He was a GREAT Great Grandpa.



I just want to tell you how much I loved you. You have always been there. From strawberry waffles to libraries to driving to walking me down the aisle. Your presence has been a backbone for our family for as long as ALL of us has been alive. Thank you for loving me, in your quiet way.

The cousins teased me because you once said I was the favorite, but I believe we all know the truth. You loved us all. So stinking much. You didn't judge, you didn't butt in. You were just there for any of us. We all have our drama. Our beliefs. Our views on education, politics, Jesus and Grandma's cooking. But none of that mattered to you because you loved us all anyway.

I have to be honest. You taught me a lot. Without using words, you taught me how to accept people, and how to make peace with a world that would steal your pension. You taught me that family matters. And probably most of all you taught me that what we do matters. It doesn't have to be big. It can be as "little" as supporting your family for 67 years constantly and without complaint. Thank you Grandpa. Thank you for showing me that it isn't about grand gestures but about the little things.

I keep thinking about what we are going to do now that you are gone. Especially those who got to see you everyday. I have never felt so sorry I wasn't in Cali. We are definitely going to cry. And talk about how you loved basketball and ice cream. We won't be the same. I believe ALL of us are better people because of you. Because you were there.

I have faith that we will honor you by loving each other now more than ever. I have faith that we will overlook the little things that don't matter, just like you did and we will support each other. I have faith that the things that mattered to you will matter to us. I have faith. So again, just in case you didn't hear me. I love you Grandpa.

Ed Remley Is my Grandpa,

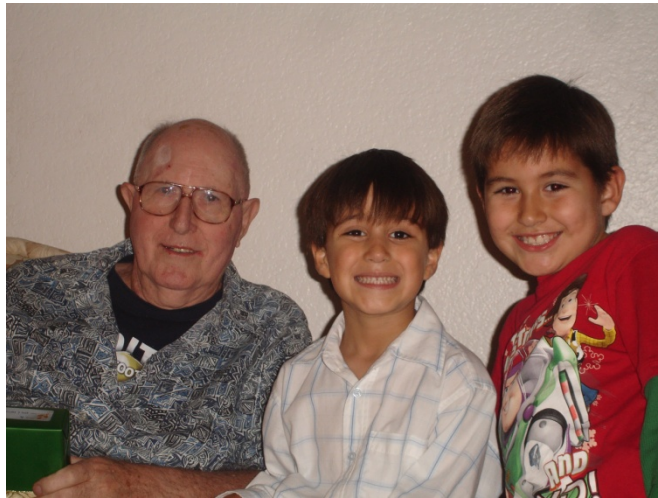
I remember when I was young and he took me to get milkshakes. I don't remember a single thing that we said to each other or that we said anything at all. I was just happy that he wanted to take me and spend time with me. His loving actions spoke so loudly. I remember telling him when I was getting married and that she was Irish. After asking advice on how to handle an Irish woman he said "well... you can't." and he then just said, "Hold on." I had never realized how quick and funny he was.

I love you, Grandpa. I will miss you. Without you, people I love very much would not even be here.

Love, Your grandson

Josiah

Although I did not see Grandpa active very much, I still remember some things about him. When I was about 9 or 10, I remember Grandpa teaching me about his stamp collection and how to put them into books. I saw that he had so much happiness and he was enjoying himself. Another memory was during Thanksgiving when I would ask him which ice cream he would like, but I already knew the answer, it was chocolate or rocky road. The thing I remember most was whenever one of us grandkids would come over to say hello, he would smile. Even if he was in pain, he paid attention to us and listened to us. I will always remember Grandpa, and he is in happiness with Grandma.



I am so grateful to have gotten to know my Grandpa as an adult because I have a much greater respect for him as a family man. He was a great patriarch who loved, accepted, and cared for every member of his family. Five years ago I was in a terrible car accident with my baby. My mother was out of country and my husband was at work 1.5 hours away. Grandpa met our ambulance at the emergency room and waited there until early hours of the morning, refusing to leave until he knew we were okay. I will always be grateful for him giving me comfort at such a frightening moment, just knowing that he was there to watch over us. He has shown me what it means to take care of a family and the importance of being there for someone. Thank you, Grandpa, for always being there for us.



I will miss sharing “Grandpa cookies” and chocolate protein shakes with Great-grandpa, and also watching movies with him. I hope my Grandma will still buy his cookies forever so I will always remember him.



My name is Clarice Perrico. My Dad, Pat Diggins, was one of Mary Remley's big brothers. I am proud to say that I was the first born grandchild of Frank and Gertrude Diggins.

Mary and Ed used to babysit for me when I was little. This is what they did on some Saturday nights when they were dating. Uncle Ed was tall, had dark hair, and was very soft spoken. I can remember Aunt Mary always shushing me to keep quiet so Uncle Ed could get a much needed nap. I was impressed by the fact that he was a "rocket scientist".

When I was about 8 years old, my Dad turned on the TV to watch Uncle Ed in the stock car races. I think they were held in Irwindale at that time. I can remember hiding my eyes because I was so afraid there would be a crash and Uncle Ed would be killed!

The last time I saw Uncle Ed was at my Dad's funeral. My health isn't very good, and it will prevent me from traveling from Ohio to attend the funeral. If you ever come out this way, Rick and I would love to have a visit!