

The following is the eulogy delivered
by Patrick Terence McArron,
At the memorial service
For his father
Terence Bennett McArron
(July 3, 1921 - January 17, 1998)
On Thursday, January 29, 1998
Salli Lynn Chapel, Greenwood, San Diego

My Dad

I was one of the lucky ones. My dad was someone who cared for me, watched out for me, put up with me, shared with me, and loved me.

Dad was born in a small rural farming community in Missouri, known simply as Long Lane. He was the last of nine children. The first child had died at the age of sixteen just 3 years before dad was born in 1921.

Let me share with you, in his own words what he had to say about his birth and why he managed to live to the age of 76:

"It turned out that my birth had never been recorded, but correspondence back to Long Lane, MO disclosed that Dr. Talbot who had delivered all nine of the McArron children was still living and at 82 years of age claimed to remember the necessary facts. He should have remembered the time he was called out to the farm when I was only two or three years old, to administer to a very sick child who had located the granary where newly harvested raw peanuts were stored. It seems that I had gorged on them and was near death from acute indigestion.

Doc. Talbot finally gave up saying nothing more could be done so when my aunt came out to help prepare me for burial next morning I must have protested enough to change the plans.

It seems that dad had taken over where the doctor left off and worked my arms and legs until recovery was begun. I've always felt that I have enjoyed a lot of 'borrowed time' since that. At any rate, My Uncle Ray McArron, who was County Treasurer, then took care of the necessary affidavits to produce a birth certificate 21 years after the fact. I guess the Doc was a bit tired after the previous eight trips to the McArron homestead. Yes, I was number nine and the last of the brood. No wonder either, that Mom, upon learning that she was pregnant with another at age 41 told Dad: 'Fred, I just don't see how I can love this one'. But she did in spite of it I guess."

My dad was someone who once upon a time like so many others fell in love, married, raised a child, worked hard and played hard. Back in 1945 in Sioux Falls, SD dad and mom decided to get married, giving the local chaplain very short notice. In dad's own words: "When we approached the Catholic Chaplain, he made it perfectly clear that he was not about to unite a Catholic girl and a Protestant Officer upon such short notice when the appropriate Catholic preliminaries had not been observed. Obviously we would have to go to Plan B (although up to this time there had not even been a Plan A). With a lot of help from our friends...a plan B was formulated. The amazing part of the whole episode is that we actually were able to get it accomplished and while the Judge's wife played the organ, the Judge performed a nice ceremony which seems to have been quite effective (after more than 50 years)."

My dad was someone I am very proud of and someone I loved deeply.

Dad was a planner. As a young man and throughout his life he planned for his future and for that of mom and me. And he was a very good planner I might add.

My dad was the kind of guy who epitomized the ideal of a provider for the family. In a recent letter to his WW II co-pilot, Wilbur Ford, he wrote: "I sacrificed a great deal of "family time" to build up retirement security. Always worked extra jobs. Managed to get in enough work outside to qualify for minimum SS requirements. Attended my Reserve Training, got real estate license, bought old fixer-uppers and rented them after fix-up." And I can remember the many times that dad & I rehabilitated some of those fixer-uppers, after school and on weekends.

Dad was a builder. Literally. He built our very first house at 841 I Ave, Coronado. And he, along with one of his brothers Paul, helped build the home where his parents, Fred and Mae, lived after moving to San Diego.

Dad was a patient man. And Lord knows there was many a time when mom and I would try his patience, I can tell you. I will never forget the time when, as a teenager, I crashed my car on Interstate 5. That is a story in itself. Dad drove all the way to Oceanside from La Mesa late at night in the rain to retrieve me from the hospital. I was a bit mangled and he was not only patient with me but also worried like crazy about me that night.

Dad was a generous man. If he could provide it, he would do it.

Dad was an adventurous man. He loved to travel and see the sights. As many of you know dad and mom and pepeigh the poodle would be on the road for weeks on end travelling all over this continent with trailer and boat in tow.

Above all, my dad was a kind, gentle and loving man. He loved his wife as dearly as a man can. There was nothing he would deny her.

And Dad had a hidden talent that some of you have been privileged to observe and in time many more will come to enjoy and learn from. Dad was a writer. Not just any writer. He had a way with words. His days spent in the Army Air Corps during WW II were thankfully shared with the rest of us when he sat down to write about that period of time in his life. That story as told by him will be published into a book as a final tribute to my dad.

My dad touched the lives of almost everyone gathered here today in one way or another. Some of you had the fortune to know my dad on more than a casual basis. He was someone you were proud to call your friend.

Together we racked up a lot of great memories. Mom & I will miss him dearly, but at the same time we know that he will be with us throughout the rest of our lives in the memories we will always hold dear. He left a terrific legacy in the life he lived and the friends he made.

And you are all proof of that.