

Eulogy for Gabriele Miceli- By Umberto Miceli

Good evening, everyone. I'd like to begin by thanking everyone for coming here tonight.

It is indeed a privilege and an honor to have you all here united to celebrate Gabriele Miceli's life. I have to say, it was very difficult for me to prepare this Eulogy. Since I am the teacher of the family, I guess I was voted in as the designated writer. I've always had a difficult time public speaking, to adults not kids because I teach them every day at St. Alphonsus School, so please bear with me and I hope I don't flub this up.

Our Father was a great man... the best. He was generous, hard-working, humble, selfless and had the best sense of humor. He was a beloved husband, father, nonno and a true family man. He was kind to everyone, compassionate and always well intentioned. Anyone who knew him knows there was nothing more important to him than family and that he was a gentle, caring human being.

Gabriele was born on December 27, 1930, one month and ½ half after our mother. His mother, Nanna Chiara actually went to register him Jan 2, 1931 because that is what they did in those days and so every year, we celebrated his birthday Jan 2. He was born in Cosenza Italy and he was the second child of Chiara and Francesco Miceli. His brother and sisters are Melina, Ida, Elvira and Alfredo. He married Maria Esposito on June 4, 1955 and they have three children, Francesco, Umberto and Chiarina. They also have 6 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

Our father and mother have known each other since they were small children. Our mom lived upstairs of a two-story building with her mom, dad and 7 brothers and sisters and my father lived downstairs with his family. They played in the same courtyard in front of the building and went to the same school. When they were 24, when they got married. They celebrated their 67th anniversary this past June.

I will always remember how on dad's last days at the hospital with little or no energy, mom approached him and asked him to kiss her and although he was out of it, he did a number of times to please her. He also was concerned about her and asked her how she was doing, who was sleeping at the house with her and if she had eaten.

Gabriele, Maria and their children immigrated to Edmonton on May 18, 1966. I remember that relatives in Italy at the last moment gave us homemade sausages, supresatas to bring to Canada for us to share with our uncle Aldo that had sponsored us and was waiting for us. I also remember that we were wearing these thick wool coats that we were instructed to wear and not take off no matter what. People told our mom that it was cold in Canada so she dressed us appropriately. Since we could not put the sausages in our suitcases that were already full, my brother and I had to tuck them inside our sleeves and we did not dare go against our mother's wishes so we just hung on to our sleeves and did not let go. It was for sure over 20 degrees when the plane arrived at the airport and we, the smugglers must have looked kind of goofy making our way through and out the airport! We arrived in Canada with what we were able to take with us on the plane and dad at the time had only \$20 in his pocket. The next day after our arrival, our father talked things over with my uncle Aldo and Dad went to work the next day to provide for his family. Our father taught us many things but the most important thing that he taught us is what I will talk about in the next few lines.

As I mentioned before, our father was a kind, loving man and always went out of his way to help, listen, and connect with others. In the bible when Jesus was asked what it takes to live a good life and what is the greatest commandment. The answer was to love God, others and yourself with all your heart, mind and soul. Our father did that daily and all of you that knew him will confirm this statement, correct? I want everyone to take a moment and reflect on how he was able to connect with you. We all have memories of him, some more than others, that we can all reflect on and we are all blessed that we had the privilege and honor to know him and connect with him. This is a very important thing that our father taught us and I encourage all of you to continue to make those connections with your loved ones, be good, love as our father did. After all, that is what Jesus wants us to do and that was what our father did on a daily basis.

We will all miss Gabriele Miceli and may he rest in peace with the Lord. Before I end, I just want to say that our uncle Alfredo, my dad's younger brother who lives in Toronto, faceted our father a day after he entered the hospital. They had a lengthy conversation that evening. My uncle went to bed all worried about his brother and tragically died of a heart attack that night. He was a very loving man like our father. He prepared the way for our father, they are together now and may he also rest in peace with the Lord. I want to thank all of you for listening and may God bless you all!