EULOGY FOR MARGARET BOBO

SPEECH FOR

KIMBERLY BOBO

Hello everyone. If I am standing up here, in front of you, and I am, it means that I have recently become a member of a club that no one wants to join. It means that my glorious, wonderful, funny, accomplished, and spirited mother, Margaret Bobo, has left us. (**If you want to make a joke-in the spirit of your mother’s sense of humor you can say**) It also means that we can talk about her!!! (**Wait for the laugh**) Some may think it’s a little too soon for levity, but honestly, I think we should all have a smile on our faces, and a wink in our eye as a tribute to the life and love she shared with all of us. **(If you want to be a little more serious you can say**) Margaret Bobo was not only my mother, she was my muse, my mentor, and my inspiration for everything I did throughout my life and any accomplishments I’ve achieved, I share with her. Today I want to invite everyone here to listen to the thoughts I will share and as you think of my mother, feel her smiling down on you …and if you think you’re imagining something pulling your leg, you’re not. That’s my mother!!!! She had an impish teasing way about her, and I’m pretty sure she’s powerful enough to be able to tweak each one of us from Heaven.

Margaret Bobo lived a remarkable life. She was born in 1921 as the daughter of Hungarian immigrants. The bad news is, she grew up during the Great Depression. The good news is she grew up during the Great Depression. Although her family was very poor and had only pennies on which to survive and sustain a family with five children, somehow, at such an early age, she learned the value of life and of a dollar. Her early struggles taught her rich life lessons and her world-class bargain hunting skills are only part of the myth that is Margaret Bobo. (**If you want to make a joke you can say**) Fortunately for the retail industry, my mother chose to be a nurse!! If she were a professional price negotiator, she would have been capable of bringing entire industries to their knees!! (**Wait for the laugh**). I have to say I inherited her “passion for value,” and I can remember all the times we went shopping when I was a child. We went to all kinds of great sales. Moonlight madness sales were sheer delight!!! Buy one/get one free-the concept was like manna from heaven!! We were all in for closeouts!! I’m telling you, her zeal for a bargain was of Olympic proportions. I also remember that many times we would return empty handed from our missions and the family would kid us. How could we be gone so long and still come back empty handed? It’s simple. The bargains just weren’t good enough that day or night. And I think the one thing our family may not have understood that I know my mother and I totally shared, was that sometimes the chase is sweeter than the catch-and what could be sweeter than spending some intense bargain reconnaissance bonding time with my Mama?

My mother also grew up in an era and community where she learned to appreciate and celebrate diversity. With the great immigration wave coinciding with her childhood, she learned and innately taught us, her children, to be thoughtful and tolerant. She was a woman who truly was before her time. Although it may seem that in her early years she was handed some lemons, she turned her life into the tastiest lemonade imaginable as she found the beauty and positivity in all she encountered.

As she grew a little older, she went to nursing school and joined the army during World War II, serving as a nurse while stationed in France, Italy and North Africa. And by the way, I suggest you alert the media and revise all of the history references you’ve read, because if you knew Margaret Bobo, then you would know beyond the shadow of a doubt that it was the **nurses** that won World War II, and believe me, if the rest of her battalion (**company?**) were anything like her, then she probably was right! (**Wait for the laugh**).

After the war, she returned to the United States, got married and had her first three children within three years and ten months of each other. Do the math-that’s a lot of diapers!!! Even on sale!! (**Wait for the laugh**) But in the inimitable style of Margaret Bobo, my brothers and sister **(? name them**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ were nurtured and loved and turned out to be fine and loving people-just like their parents. By the time they got to high school, my mother was just about ready to go through the change of life…. however, she wasn’t quite ready for the change that would be her fourth child, namely me. At the age of 47, in spite of a high-risk pregnancy, she gave birth to her fourth child and I entered this world. And since I truly believe that there are no accidents in life, I suppose, almost as a tribute to my mother’s determination and fortitude, especially with regard to having me, I became and am, a practicing obstetrician and gynecologist. And even though when I was growing up and people would wonder if my parents were my grandparents, it amused me, where most young kids might be embarrassed. I just thought I had these great, smart, seasoned mature adults as parents!! Lucky me… really!! I love to share my story with my patients, especially those that seem to have histories of high-risk pregnancies or will be giving birth to babies later in life. My mother really lived the saying, “Life is either a daring adventure or it is nothing.” Like I said earlier, I really do owe **EVERYTHING** I have and all that I am to my mother. I don’t think I can ever fully express how thankful and grateful I am to have been so blessed to have a mother like mine.

And what a mother she was!!! We thought she was a good nurse… after all; she won the war, didn’t she?!?! (**Wait for the laugh**) But that was nothing compared to her mothering skills. Take the bargaining power of a Titan of industry, the tenacity of a world champion athlete, the patience of a saint… or a **really good** nurse…and combine those with the homemaking skills of someone like Martha Stewart… but **nice**…. and you get **close** to what my mother was like as a homemaker. She was completely devoted to her children and was the kind of mother that packed our lunches, made sure three wholesome meals were prepared and ready for each one of us every day, was thoughtful enough to make cupcakes for school parties, and still managed to see to it that my hair was properly primped and braided and bowed as needed. She volunteered at school whenever she could, helped with school plays, and made sure that her love of music, especially the violin-after all, she **was** Hungarian, rubbed off on me. She thought the violin was the most beautiful instrument and she started me on lessons at an early age, and as I practiced and went to my lessons, she was there, always by my side for every lesson, every performance, every competition. She was a brilliant and loving example of what it truly means to be a wonderful mother, and I can only hope to be the mother that she was to her children.

It sounds like it might have been exhausting to be Margaret Bobo, but she made it look easy, and when you think of all that she accomplished in her long life, you know that what made her even more special was her way with people. **ALL PEOPLE**. She loved to laugh and she loved to be a little mischievous…. well, maybe sometimes **a little more** than a little… everyone was fair came for her mischief. My mother was a fun, friendly, gregarious soul and the word “stranger” was not in her vocabulary or comprehension. If she had her way, a grocery line would have been turned into a conga line. An orderly queue at the bank could have easily become a social gathering as she would “shmooze” her way through the crowd.

One of the most amusing memories I have of my mother is that the older she got, the more she just **LOVED** to be silly!! I can just imagine what she must have been like as a child, because as an adult and dare I say, senior citizen, she was a pistol!! Nothing was safe from her impish gesture, and whether she was tweaking some little girl’s braids or poking someone’s ample belly, or asking a bald man how and where he parts his “hair,” the world was a sweeter, funnier, sillier place thanks to Margaret Bobo’s charm. And speaking of picturing her as a child, no matter how many of her birthdays we celebrated and no matter how many people could easily calculate how old she was, she never wanted to admit to her real age, in fact, when she saw the invitations to her 90th birthday party, she got a little annoyed and wanted to know why we had to publicize that it was her 90th year of life! I remember she called us “dumbbells” and scolded us for leaking that number. The truth is, she never looked her age and she certainly never acted it. She was truly eternally youthful!! It also reminds me of what a sweet tooth she had, and like a child, her love of cookies trumped all for enjoyment. Many was the time I would see vegetables left over on her plate and if I dared to leave her side for even a minute, somehow, mystically and magically, fists full of cookies would appear. The next time you see the cookie monster, picture my mother. I hear in the newer versions of the dictionary when you look up cookie, there will be a picture of my mother (**Wait for the laugh**)

And she was never more youthful or beautiful or “snazzy” than when she was singing her favorite song. In her best falsetto voice, she would belt her very special rendition of “My momma done told me…” and I promise you, she had to have been the reincarnation of Josephine Baker-she had the soul of jazz lounge singer. Hey!! One never knows!

It’s so fitting that would be her favorite song, because believe me, “My momma done told **ME**. She told me about life and love and joy and respect. She taught me about consideration and care and cookies and community. She taught me about everything that mattered and how to nurture and care for myself and others as well. She taught me about the value of money and the way to discriminate against what might not be worth it. And she showed all of us how to live a long and beautiful life filled with patience, tolerance and resilience. I can’t imagine how I was so blessed to have had such a wonderful mother, and I am so grateful that her heart and soul live on through each one of us. Margaret Bobo, I love you. May your legacy continue to spread joy throughout our lives.

Thank you!