**EULOGY**

**EDITED FOR**

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**REVISED**

Hello everyone. The Talmud teaches that in every generation there are 36 righteous men. Unrecognized by their fellow men and even unknown to each other, they are said to be humble as they pursue their lives in relative obscurity, but the world depends on them for its existence. My father, Robert Rapaport, did not exactly live his life in relative obscurity, but he was the embodiment of “the righteous man” and he was the center of our world. He was smart, generous, and fiercely loyal. Integrity was the bedrock of everything he did. Once he became your friend, you were his friend forever. When he became your partner, he was your partner for life, and if, by some great blessing, you were born into this world with him as your parent, he was **always** your dad. There was nothing he would not do for you.

As we have each inherited the legacy of our faith from those who precede us, and as my father found his strength and humanity within Judaism, he learned to find meaning in its symbolism. His voracious appetite for knowledge honed his ability to dig deeper, search for answers, and discover meaning in the mysteries of life. Just as God created the earth in seven days, just as a bride circles her groom seven times, just as the first verse in the Torah has seven words... and the other countless symbolic septets that guide us in Judaism, I realize now that Dad had seven great passions.

The first was Judaism - trying to summarize his involvement would be like reading the cliff notes to a 400 page novel. Even the cliff notes are 30 pages. So sometimes less is more. I will share only one anecdote to try and encapsulate his entire life’s devotion to his faith. It was the summer after my bar-mitzvah, we were at home in Jerusalem, on the balcony, the old city behind us and the sunset falling on the Knesset in front of us. Dad and I sat there in a moment of silence. After a while, he turned to me and quietly said "**my people**." If you knew Dad’s love of Judaism, you knew Dad.

His second great passion was a delicious distraction that I discovered at a very young age. It was years earlier. I must have been 6 or 7. We were once again at home in Jerusalem. We had finished chasing each other around the apartment .... battling over a decadent, over-sized chocolate éclair. In the final inning, I snatched the éclair from Dad and ran out to that balcony. I tossed it as far as I could. Of course, gravity took over, and the terrace on the garden apartment 10 floors below became the default beneficiary of our game of "pastry tag." That challenge ended in one big chocolate **SPLAT**... The score that day was recorded as "Jeff **zero**, Dad **zero**, the neighbor's terrace **ONE**... in retrospect I'm thankful he didn't dive over the railing father that eclair... (**wait for the laugh**). If you knew Dad’s love of chocolate, you knew Dad....

His next great passion was his love of his cats. I remember the "feline hall of fame..." the inimitable Knippy, then Chatulah, then another Chatulah, followed by Honeybell, and now Arielle, who, ...May they all be resting and playing in peace and not hear this....knock on wood.... was his **favorite** (**you can say this in a whisper and wait for a giggle**). To set the record straight, Dad has **five** children... if you knew Dad's love of cats, you knew Dad.

And then there were the cars. His devotion was apparent in so many ways. Maybe it was his initials on the Shabbat mobile or driving to Main Street News after temple every Saturday to read car magazines. Or maybe it was that after 40 years of owning Chryslers, that his first Toyota, one of the first Prius’ on the road, Dad was convinced he single handedly reduced oil consumption from the Arabs. If you knew Dad’s love of cars, you knew Dad.

His love of flying.... another passion... It was 1995, sitting on the end of runway 5L in Raleigh Durham, and for the very first time in his new plane he’d push forward the levers that spooled up 10,000HP. If you thought you’ve **ever** seen a big smile, this was **bigger**. Abraham Lincoln once said, "I cannot imagine anyone looking at the sky and denying God." I cannot imagine anyone feeling closer to God than my father in flight. If you knew Dad’s love of flying, you knew Dad.

And of course there was his work – I will never forget...I was in third grade. We were sitting at the breakfast table. I was eating my Honey Nut Cheerios. Dad was eating his All-Bran, just as we would the other 364 days a year, and for what seemed like the millionth time, he tried to explain depreciation to me. (**Do you want to make a little joke and say**) Looking back on those lessons, all he probably had to say to me to teach that lesson was that my Honey Nut Cheerios were worth more in the store than after we took them home and ate some... I would have understood something tangible...I mean, after all... I was ... what? **EIGHT** years old?? ... (**and wait for the laugh**) ...Or maybe it was decades earlier, when he was in his 20’s, when, instead of getting landscapers to mow the lawns of the homes he was developing, he took a sheep and tied its leash to the mailbox, encouraging a mutually beneficial "snack." When it came to his work, he had vision, integrity, determination, and a boldness strong enough to move the rock up the hill to make it happen. David Ben Gurion reminds us , "In order to be a realist, you must believe in miracles." Dad ceaselessly exhibited his talent for balance, innovation, and commitment to realizing his goals... and he believed in miracles. If you knew Dad, you knew of this passion and motivation to create and achieve.... and to teach others along the way.

But Dad’s greatest passion, his greatest focus, his complete, unlimited commitment, was to all of us, his family. In each one of our lives, whether you were his first child or his third cousin, Dad was an unwavering force... his devotion to those he loved created a truly positive and meaningful impact on all of those fortunate enough to be connected to this wonderful man. It might have been as a role-model, or a business partner, or a friend.... all were "family" to him. His commitment to all of us knew no bounds. As I told him at my wedding, to have the privilege of being the recipient of his unconditional love is the greatest gift of my life. His love of family... past... present... and future was so evident at all times, but after Tali was born it was profoundly clear..... He had endowed the publication of a prayer book and gave a copy to my great grandparents. In it he inscribed, "To Gigi and Papa, May this prayer book carry our devotion to family and tradition- to **our** children and **their** children, and **their children's children**."

...And his relationship with and devotion to our mother was and is an inspiration to all of us. Mom, it is so apparent that the two of you really were **one**... and when he was no longer able to communicate, you were there to lead. When he was no longer able to stand, you found the strength to stand for him and for us...it is only through such complete commitment, patience, understanding, and love that a bond like yours could exist and I know he will continue to inspire and guide you... and all of us (**Do you want to name your brothers and sisters and their families as well as yours? If so you can say**). I know I speak for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and our children... and their children.. when I say that you and Dad taught us the meaning of love and we all stand with **you**.

According to Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Character is higher than intellect. A great soul will be strong to live, as well as strong to think." My father lived his life as an example to us and to the world... an example of strength and tenderness, vision and action, power and understanding, and with each gesture he understood and honored the profound importance of connection and legacy. It is also Alfred, Lord Tennyson who reminds us, "I am part of all that I have met." I am so blessed to have been born a part of this wonderful man, and I am honored to share his spirit and wisdom for the rest of my life.... and beyond.

Dad was fond of saying: "Life is not for window shopping." I know no one who got more and gave more. He left nothing on the table. He did what he wanted and helped everyone he could. His was a deeply meaningful and fulfilling life. Dad, I love you.

Thank you.