**EULOGY SPEECH**

**FOR**

**LEROY BENNETT**

Hello everyone. For those of you that may not know, I am LeRoy Bennett and I have had the great privilege, throughout my entire life, to call Albert Bradley Bennett, Jr, my brother.... in **EVERY** sense of the word. He was also my friend, my guide, my mentor, my teacher, and my sounding board. He taught me everything that was essential in life...right from wrong, consideration, and basketball... and baseball! It is with an abundance of precious memories that I invite all of us to celebrate the life of this interesting, inspirational man. He was always there for me, ready to provide the most meaningful wisdom and advice.... but the question is.... do I have the tools to express just how wonderful he was? Let’s hope he taught me well!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

My brother Al possessed so many great qualities... he had a brilliant mind, a wonderful sense of self, and a natural curiosity about life that kept him on a perpetual quest for experience, knowledge, self-fulfillment, and service to others. While he may have gained recognition in high school as the founder of the “Melody Kings,” it was his later work in education and mathematics that sealed his professional legacy. It’s been said that “Mathematics is the music of reason.” Looking back on his life, I think we can safely say that Al knew the innate connection between math, music, and all of the moments that bring meaning to existence and add to the rhythm of life.

President John Adams taught us, “I must study politics and war so that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy.” I would like to take a moment to thank our forebears for allowing Albert to pursue his academic dreams! (**Wait for the laugh**). We knew it had to have started **SOMEWHERE**!!

Al lead an interesting and fulfilled life. Born on December 11,1932, Albert Bradley Bennett, Jr exhibited great and diverse potential from an early age. When he was just a sophomore in high school, the cadence and beat of the times inspired him to found the “mellifluous” Melody Kings... and local YMCA dances were not quite the same. He also exhibited an interest in sports, playing basketball and baseball... when he wasn’t serenading the girls... By the time Al was a senior, he added to that rhythm with the bouncing percussion of the basketball and in his senior year, the team won the Knox-Lincoln Championship.... I was only a young boy at the time, but I can imagine that between the music and his athletic prowess, there was a string of broken hearts that lead to our front door.... (**Wait for the laugh**).

After high school, Al seriously thought about becoming a minister and planned to enter General Seminary School in Boston **(If you want, you can add**).... I suppose that line of broken hearts began to wrap around the block at that point... (**and wait for the laugh**). Well, it seems the female population of Camden, Maine didn’t have to worry too much.... or **DID THEY**??? While his interest in attending seminary didn’t quite take hold, he got a call from his good friend, Parker Laite, suggesting he apply to attend the Maine Maritime Academy, and so he did. Al was accepted and in 1954 he graduated as class Valedictorian. He sailed with the Merchant Marines for two years and after a call from the MMA requesting that he return to teach a class in Electrical Engineering, the path to his future really began to unfold. Al attended the University of Maine... a very prophetic choice in more ways than one. It was there that he met his wonderful wife Jane, and as Al graduated with a Masters Degree in Mathematics in 1959, by 1960, they both earned advanced recognition... Al for an **MR** and Jane proudly and concurrently attained her **MRS**. (**Wait for the laugh**). This dynamic duo became the proud parents of three sons, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

Math, especially to Al, was apparently the **great** “**equalizer**” and he found the formula for a happy and fulfilling life. In his “**spare time**,” Al taught math at Gotham State Teachers College. Since someone of his talents and intelligence does not go unacknowledged, he was offered a scholarship to the University of Michigan and graduated in 1966 with his Doctorate in Mathematics. While some people might have felt challenged to balance their checkbooks, in 1967, my brother began his tenure as a professor of Mathematics at the University of New Hampshire, and as a testament to his intelligence, talents, patience, and enthusiasm for the subject matter and passion for education, he sustained a remarkable career at the University for an astounding **forty-two years**.

Over the course of his professorial career, Al developed systems, courses, and curricula.... His work in the field of mathematics has had a great and positive impact over the years and his concepts and theories still inspire and instruct students throughout the United States. His “Fraction Bars” course for teachers is still in use today, influencing the next generations of younger students to understand and find the value in math. In 2009, when my brother retired from “active duty...” I mean teaching, I have a feeling he forgot to check the definition of “retire” because he kept on going, and in true tribute to exactly who he was throughout his entire life, he found yet another mountain to climb... in addition to continuing to author books on mathematics, Al also began to write volumes on our family history. His book on Cyrus Curtis and the Lyndonia can be found in the Camden Library...

Albert Bradley Bennett Jr leaves a formidable legacy.... in the books he wrote to guide and inspire generations of students and teachers, in the expressions he used, like “Look to the positive side of things,” and “Get a lot of birds with one stone...” ... I would imagine a well trained aim and a sharp eye might help in **THAT** situation... (**Wait for the laugh**), in the consideration and patience he generously demonstrated, in the simple wisdom he shared from a life well lived and observed.... he would readily remind all of us two important points: don’t hurry your decisions and don’t make assumptions. With all of his wit, wisdom, and patience, I think he would be the first one to freely declare that the experience that meant the most in his life... the **ONE** persuasive act he managed to pull off... the triumphant coup he executed as a young man.... no.... not his smooth moves as the leader of the Melody Kings.... not his winning strategy in that defining high school basketball championship.... not even his facility with a fraction.... no... the greatest move of his life was when he convinced Jane to break up with her beau at the time and to go out with him.... that decision continued to yield the joy in geometric proportions in his life and he was endlessly proud of his family and thrilled at what fine men his sons have turned out to be.

Al lived a fruitful, productive, love filled, and simply extraordinary life. As brilliant as his math mind was, it was balanced by his love of board games... like Parchesi, Cribbage, and chess... he was as supportive as he was competitive.... he was as patient as he was curious, and as intense as he was compassionate. He also didn’t expect any more of people than he was prepared to demand of himself. He held himself to high standards and the memory of his daily physical workouts are an integral part of who he was. I believe he would want to be remembered as a good person who was there for people.... with moral support, intelligence, and encouragement.

With all that he had, and with all that he accomplished, family was first and he cherished his close relationships with Jane, his sons, his grandchildren, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, his sisters, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and me... that’s a **LOT** of love, and yes, Al discovered that when shared authentically with those closest, that love **MULTIPLIES**.

While I am deeply saddened by his passing, I **KNOW** that Albert Bradley Bennett, Jr lived a rich, worthwhile, and fulfilled life.... and that is all anyone might wish for. I know he will live in all of us as we recall his wisdom and caring... as we remember the anecdotes.... as we do our best to emulate his patience... (**Do you want to add**) ... and of course, as we attempt to balance our check books (**and wait for the laugh**). While Alfred, Lord Tennyson reminds us that, “I am part of all that I have met,” I do find comfort in knowing that my brother is an everlasting part of me.... and of all of you. Thank you all.