**EULOGY**

**SPEECH FOR**

**DANIEL HILBERT**

**FINAL**

Hello everyone and thank you for being here as we remember and honor my brother, Gene. He was many things to many people throughout his life, but the one undeniable truth about the man born as Francis Hilbert was his incredible, inspiring, unrelenting **loyalty**. The word itself is noble and he was the embodiment of the practice.... dependable, conscientious, earnest, honorable, dutiful.... all of those words describe loyalty and my brother lived and breathed it in every area of his life... he was **dedicated** to his family, **devoted** to his military service in the Marines, **steadfast** in his beliefs, **passionately committed** to **HIS** team, Notre Dame, and **faithful** and **true** to his friends, his work ethic, and anything or anyone that had the great fortune to cross his path.

What can one say about someone who is so present, so reliable, so clear in his intention and commitments? Honestly, my brother Gene was such an integral, involved, engaged part of my life that it’s almost difficult for me to separate my experience from my thoughts.... Gene and I must have had **THOUSANDS** of conversations over the course of his lifetime and the one thing that always came through loud and clear, no matter what we were discussing... or **DEBATING**... was that commitment to others... that expression of constancy.... of fealty... of earnestness.

There are so many instances I can sight and I am sure most of you have your own similar experience and memories as well, but a few come immediately to my mind. He made sure that his three daughters, Lynne, Laurie, and Andrea had the best Catholic education they could possibly receive... no matter the sacrifice to him. In addition to his dedication to his daughters, he was a great... I mean a **wonderful** grandfather to (**Name the grandchildren**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and a **SUPER** **GREAT** grandfather to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Imagine... three generations learning the value of relationship and loyalty from the **BEST**. He was loyal to the core to the **CORPS**.... The **MARINE CORPS**, that is. **SIXTY YEARS** after he completed his service, he was still a proud, engaged, devoted Marine. .... and his loyalty to friends goes back even further than his service. Gene never ceased to express his appreciation and faith in his friends.... his **CHILDHOOD** friends (**If any are going to be there in attendance, or if people know his friends, name some of them**)... I don’t want to give away any **top drawer secrets** or betray anyone’s **REAL** age, (**Wait for the laugh**) but Gene was devoted to his friends.... in some cases for **SIXTY-FIVE YEARS**, with people like \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. If you want to know the **TRUE** measure of a man, see how long his friends stick around.... Gene **ACED** that test without even having to study!!! He just followed his gut and his heart.

Don’t get me wrong.... Gene wasn’t a **COMPLETE** paragon.... he had his moments.... and somehow they tended to involve his passion for Notre Dame. If you look up “diehard fan” in the dictionary, there’s a very good chance Gene’s picture would be there.... because that is exactly what he was. Nothing made him happier than being in that stadium..... surrounded by tens of thousands of people, and Gene.... completely wrapped up.... in criticizing the coaching. He felt it was his responsibility, as a conscientious devotee, to figure out how to improve the team’s performance. Ara Parseghian once said, “The harder you work, the less mistakes you make. The fewer mistakes you make, the better your chance of winning.” .... there’s only **ONE** thing that Coach Parseghian overlooked, and that was getting Gene Hilbert’s **TWO CENTS**!!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

My brother and I went to many games together, and there was **NOTHING** greater than being with Gene in a crowd of 80,000 to 90,000 people.... and playing just a little “devil’s advocate” with him... for those of you that really knew Gene, you might have noted on occasion that he was capable of being.... oh.... just a little bit of a “**catastrophist**” for lack of a better word.... okay, maybe he was a little bit of a **hypochondriac**??? **Doomsayer**??? **Fatalist**???? Of course, knowing that would set my wheels turning... so one time I said, “Would you look at **ALL OF THESE PEOPLE**!!! **WOW**!!! How many do you think **WON’T MAKE IT HOME TONIGHT**???? **YIKES**!!! Would he get mad!!! ... because it set **HIS** wheels turning!!!! (**Wait for the laugh**). Fortunately for me, Gene also knew the value of forgiveness. He had plenty of heated discussions.... okay.... **ARGUMENTS**... but he never held a grudge. He said his piece, listened to yours, and moved on. He **KNEW** life was too short.

My brother didn’t have a lot, but what he had, he shared. He gave to his high school, to the Marine Corps, and so many other beneficiaries and charities that he cared about so much. And as he gave of his loyalty and resources, people were compelled to be there for him... look around...today is a testament to that simple fact.

Gene, my brother, the time has come for you to get the best seat in the house. I know you’ll be looking down on the stadium as you remain loyal and true to the team and the game of life. Perfection may not exist, but your selfless loyalty was pretty close.....you’ll remain with all of us as well in our thoughts and hearts, and memories...

And as the Notre Dame fight song reminds us,

Shake down the thunder from the sky!

What though the odds be great or small,

Old Notre Dame will win over all,

While her loyal sons are marching

Onward to victory!

Thank you all!!

(**Here are the lyrics to the Notre Dame fight song that I found.i pulled out a couple of lines.... i didn’t see exactly what you said, so switch the lines if you feel others are better**).

Notre Dame

"Notre Dame Victory March"

Rally sons of Notre Dame

Sing her glory and sound her fame

Raise her Gold and Blue

And cheer with voices true:

Rah, rah, for Notre Dame

We will fight in every game,

Strong of heart and true to her name

We will ne'er forget her

And will cheer her ever

Loyal to Notre Dame.

Cheer, cheer for Old Notre Dame,

Wake up the echoes cheering her name,

Send a volley cheer on high,

Shake down the thunder from the sky!

What though the odds be great or small,

Old Notre Dame will win over all,

While her loyal sons are marching

Onward to victory!