**EULOGY SPEECH**

**FOR**

**JOE TAVAREZ**

Hello everyone... for those of you that may not know, I am Joe Tavares, José’s oldest son. My father was an extraordinary man... he had a way about him... he was smart and caring, he was absolutely devoted to his family.... he had a magnetic personality, and he was always in control... even when he wasn’t maneuvering heavy airborne equipment. As an immigrant from the Dominican Republic, he was proud of his heritage. As a career Air Force Chief Master Sargent, my brother Gabe (**? Please correct as needed** ) and I learned early on to **listen** to him. He was charming.... at least my mother figured that out.... maybe **not at first sight**, but she eventually **got it**.... and he was also a natural, easily inspired, well versed and spontaneous speaker.... Ladies and gentlemen... your **luck** has **run out**.... that might be the **one thing** I didn’t pick up from my father, so bear with me!! (**Wait for the laugh**). José Tavarez was a stellar husband, father, grandfather, and friend. It’s only natural to honor his life and accomplishments... and while we all knew how much he meant to us before, today is a celebration... an extension of Father’s Day... in his memory.

Mark Twain said something that really hit me about fathers. He said, “When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the guy around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much **HE** had learned in **just** **seven years**.” Now, I can’t say that my father would ever be considered ignorant, but it **IS** true that as I got older, my appreciation of, respect for, and understanding of my father grew without limit, and knowing my Dad as I did, I think he’d really want to be remembered for his considerable accomplishments.... not in a flashy way, but in a way that conveys how proud and blessed he was to be able to really live the “American Dream” while being equally proud of his Dominican roots. When I think of my father, I think of his sense of humor.... he was his own best audience and thought he was **hysterical**... He would probably be so proud if I said to you... “I know a lot of jokes about retired people... but **none of them work**!!” (**Wait for the laugh**)... I know, I know... we would groan too... but boy were those rolling eyeballs filled with love.... as we silently begged him to ease up on the “Dad jokes.” I also just realized... that now, as the oldest male member of our family, it will be **MY** responsibility to keep these awful jokes in play... **STAND BACK**... I’m doing it for the team!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

One other thing I observed about my father was that he lived the expression, “the measure of a man.” As a kid growing up in a military family, we really **got around** ... “Join the Air Force and **see the world**!!” ... that we did, and the good part was that my brother and I didn’t even have to enlist... I mean, we **were** like **EIGHT** years old (**Wait for the laugh**)... we moved a lot... from Texas to Queens to Germany...Gabe and I had quite an experience... but when it came time for our parents to retire and settle down, something struck me.... we started in a small house, and every one after that got larger and larger... José Tavarez was staking his claim and he was going to make sure there was room for everyone... I guess you might say... to borrow a phrase... José “**rolled deep.**” He and my mother, Celia (**Is this correct?**) were incredibly hard working career military people... they showed us what loyalty and hard work meant by **DOING**. That dedication really paid off and taught my brother and me priceless lessons on the importance of family, being responsible, and keeping one’s word. I have to say, we learned from the **best**.

My father was “The Chief.” He was the Chief in his military career. He was the Chief of our family, and he was the Chief when it came to his devotion to baseball... and since we know that **NOTHING** ever fades on the Internet... proof of that can be seen in that picture on Facebook... my father with his mother (**? Is this correct**) by his side.. he’s tenderly holding me, and I’m sporting a “major league baseball striped ‘onesie.’” It **HAD** to be the smallest size available... He was in his broader baseball stripes too... **GET ‘EM** while they’re **YOUNG**!!! ... and he certainly did...

Life` has its blessings and although we will miss Chief Master Sergeant José Tavarez greatly, he will live on in us... those that knew and loved him... my mother, Gabe, our wives, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, in his four grandchildren, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, in the stories we **all** will tell, and of course... in those **Really. Bad. Jokes**... (**Wait for the laugh**). Thank You.