**EULOGY SPEECH**

**FOR**

**LISA MANKINS**

Hello everyone.... today we’ve come together to honor the life of a man that meant so much to so many people. Al Murtha was a role model to everyone who was lucky enough to know him.... he was a son and a brother, a friend to all, a comrade, a soldier, a devoted husband and father, grandfather, great grandfather, neighbor... I could go on... you get the picture because you know how much he meant to you... and to us... I also have to say, from my point of view..... he was one of the most enthusiastic cheerleaders I have ever witnessed.... oh.... and he was **MY** grandfather... my wonderful, funny, earthy, passionately committed-to-every-cause grandfather. **BOY**!!! Was I blessed!!!

Throughout his long and productive life, my grandfather was dedicated to making a difference in this world and to doing whatever he could to show people what **goodness** really meant. There is a saying that teaches us, “I am part of all that I have met.” To everyone here today, I bet you have a deeper appreciation for that quote knowing that each one of us keeps a part of Al Murtha with us.

He risked his life for others.... and not just in his illustrious military service.... I’m talking about crises much closer to home... My grandfather was a great, committed, guiding light. He was devoted to my basketball career and whenever he could, managed to travel to all of my away games throughout the country. That was heroic enough.... but then there was that **ONE TIME**.... he got **HEATED**...those in the know **KNOW**... don’t poke the beast when he is rooting for his granddaughter’s team... I’ll never forget... it was Senior Night and we were playing at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We played against the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and there was that **ONE CALL**.... that **SOMEONE** didn’t agree with.... and in his mind, his conscience preceded him.... Grandpa saw something.... and said something..to one of the referees..... Grandpa felt it was a bad call and he spoke up for **TRUTH** and **JUSTICE**.... unfortunately, they were probably out on a break at just that point, and, yes, Grandpa got **THROWN OUT** of the arena.... (**Wait for the laugh**).... but that was Al Murtha.... unstoppable... intolerant of wrong.... perpetual advocate for the underdog... and by the way, if anyone thinks or thought that something like getting kicked out would stop him from continuing to show his encouragement, they’d be wrong. He was as much of a presence and support system to my kids as he was dedicated to my interests and achievements.

My grandfather was a soldier and a warrior, but most of all, he was a survivor and a teacher. Al Murtha served as an Air Force Bombardier in World War II. He gained his experience and showed his determination in the European Theater of Operations and was called on to do his part in the bombing of Berlin. Most of us may worry about the challenges of every day life, but to a bombardier... or anyone in service in the military.... the potential for disaster was and is, enormous. My grandfather did not escape the unthinkable. His mission was right in the thick of the conflict... and then, upon crisis and capture, the situation got even “thicker....” Somehow, though we all may silently live by the credo, “That which doesn’t kill you makes you stronger,” for those in combat, there are no choices but to toughen up, be vigilant, and survive, and that’s what Al Murtha demonstrated during his service, capture, and release. Impossibly hard lessons informed his life after he came home, and all of us are better, stronger, more aware, alert, and appreciative because of his sacrifice.

None of us... the later generations... my (**Name which parent was his child**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (**Name your other aunts and uncles that were siblings**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, or their children and grandchildren would be here without the loving, enduring, devotion and marriage of my grandparents, Ruth and Al Murtha. Theirs was a marriage that taught as well as it showed what true, lasting love means. Married for an incredible **SEVENTY THREE** years, my grandparents gave all of us witness to what it means to have love and family be a priority in life. If you want to know just who Al Murtha is.... all you have to do is be reminded of his main priority... his **FAMILY**. I said it before and I’ll say it again.... **BOY**, was I **BLESSED**!!

The poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, said something that may seem a little “grand” for someone as down to earth as Al Murtha, but it’s the characteristics that my grandfather possessed in abundance that continue to inspire these words... “Lives of great men all remind us, we can make our lives sublime, and, departing, leave behind us, footprints in the sands of time.” I am so grateful that I had Al Murtha for a grandfather. I am thankful that I had the chance to walk in the shadow of his footsteps for as long as I did. I will always know the blessings that come from my children having known him too. Let us all keep Al Murtha close to our hearts and continue to be guided by, and smile, as we live our lives enriched by the lessons and love he so graciously and generously shared. Thank you!