**MOTHER’s EULOGY**

**FOR**

**GREGORY MAROUN**

Hello everyone... today, we mourn the passing of my mother, Pasen Maroun, yet we cannot help but celebrate the incredible life she lived and the indelible legacy she’s given to all of us. We are all related through our connection to my mother.... Friends... neighbors...and most importantly, family, meant the world to her. Throughout her life, my mother was dedicated to her sisters and brothers... there were eight in all... two boys and six girls.... legend has it that in more than a few parts in South Africa... and probably in some areas in the rest of the world, those sisters were considered “**the Viljoenskroon Mafia.**” The bond they had was **AMAZING**... and trust me... you **DID NOT** want to get on the wrong side of the **Viljoenskroon SIX... (Wait for the laugh).** Aswith so many of the gestures we’ve observed from this wonderful woman, my mother’s loyalty and love for her sisters set a great example for my siblings and me as we were growing up. The emphasis on and devotion to family got her... and **ALL** of us through those “adventures” we faced in life... and those bonds.... through all the changes... the moves... the trips back to South Africa... gave her such strength, and in turn, kept us strong and reinforced the power of love and family connection.

Life throws curve balls and our ability to adapt directly relates to our quality of life. My mother **LOVED** South Africa so the thought of moving to London was extraordinary... and then... she moved to Belgium **TWICE**... Rome... the US... also twice... managing **FIVE** children... navigating new surroundings... running new homes, new schools, new shops, doctors...foreign languages... and she did it all with grace and an indomitable strength. She set a very high bar for all of us to emulate. Her standards pushed us to be better people... I’m quite sure of that... she also had a way of instilling assurance in those around her. No matter what she was going through, she made it look, well, if not easy, then natural. Because of her attitude, it brought us confidence. At no time through those moves did we kids have any sense of fear or apprehension... I remember feeling a sense of adventure yet I felt safe... that’s truly a gift.

My mother was also devoted to our father, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. He had great success as a businessman, husband, father, grandfather and friend. There’s an expression that reminds us that behind every great man.... Pasen Maroun was that woman. Was she a “puppet master? Was she the forerunner of today’s “momager?” She was so much more than that. She had an innate sense to know what to do. At one point, my father was in business with his cousin as bookmakers. Something happened and they went their separate ways. As if by some divine, mystical intervention, my mother looked in the newspaper, circled a job, and Dad went for the interview. He would say that he just went to make my mother happy. He’d also say he did everything in his power to **not** get the job so, of course, he got the job... with an advertising agency that had Bristol Myers as a client... As we know... the rest is history... and testimony to the power and passion of Pasen Maroun.

All roads... all actions... all success... lead back to my mother. Every day, without fail, she was there... years ago, on a TV show, they had a catch phrase, “Clear eyes, full hearts, can’t lose.” To us, whether we were coming home from school, on a break from college, visiting her down in Florida... whatever... we knew... “full fridge, cleared washing machine... can’t lose “ (**Wait for the laugh**). She was always ready... we all know what a great cook she was... and clearly she wanted to cement that reputation... there was delicious food prepared...usually enough for an army... and everyone was welcomed at the Maroun table.... no matter how spontaneous the visit or how hearty the appetite.... as I recall, Chris had friends that proved that point, especially John. In the Lebanese culture, we know that the closest route to the heart is through the stomach. He demonstrated his appreciation with a legendary capacity to consume platesful of food and my mom who loved all of our friends unconditionally, loved John... and his appetite.

Our mother was our strength and our greatest source of support. She had limited tolerance for nonsense and we knew it. It was common knowledge, as we entered new schools, that the principal had permission to discipline us. One day she got called into the office. Damian had “allegedly” gotten into trouble and “allegedly” did not “act alone.” When asked, he refused to “fess up” and reveal his “cohorts.” Mom looked at the principal, then back to Damian, and said, “Good. We’re **NOT** squealers.”

Family... love of family... she loved her husband unconditionally, her sisters beyond imagination, her children... grandchildren.. sons and daughters in law as her own...but her grandchildren? Beyond... and not just because they were the best reason to power shop... my mother’s favorite sport. Costco was her happy place and getting in early, securing a motorized cart, and scoping the aisles... well.. all I can say... **ALL STAR MVP**... or **MVS**... Most Valuable Shopper (**Wait for the laugh**). And she shared... whether it was with Ann Berbudez (?) who cleaned the house twice a week... and never left empty handed... or on trips to South Africa, suitcases filled with things for Shorty, Sophie, or Abel, everyone “scored.”

Her faith meant everything to Pasen as well, and she taught us the same... in Rome, picture piling into the Fiat to go to the Pontemilvio market... we were told to pray for parking... it worked!!! One little thing.... we realized when we got back to the car that Mom parked in the middle of a traffic circle... her prayers clearly also saved her from a ticket.

She believed in the power of prayer... and she also prayed for others... rarely for herself... my nieces would ask for prayers for big exams... and so would their friends... and **THEIR** friends... let’s just remember... they **ALL** graduated... **BELIEVE**... (**Wait for the laugh**). When we lived in Mexico, Mom would drive Damian and me to school... and we’d say the rosary... no radio for us!!! Prayer stuck to me with temporary adhesive... Damian was a different story... just before Mom passed, her condition changed and it was advised that he return from Vermont... he told me the length of the trip... not in hours or miles, but said it took **FOURTEEN** rosaries!!!

From her humble beginning in the back of the store run by her father to her peaceful end here in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Connecticut?), Pasen Maroun was an extraordinary woman who lived an exemplary life filled with love, resilience, faith, and **FAMILY**. If we’ve learned anything from her, it’s this: Love your family, be strong and loyal, give to others, and your life will be fulfilled.

God Bless Pasen Maroun and America...the country she grew to love... even more than South Africa. Thank you!