**EULOGY SPEECH**

**FOR**

**YAEL FRIEDLAND**

Hello everyone. We’re here today to honor the life and “legend” of my grandfather, Leo...he was a beacon in all of our lives, and to those that preceded us, for **over one hundred years.**.. just speaking his name calls to mind the strength and resilience of the human spirit. He experienced unimaginable challenges and tragedies, yet he showed us all what it meant to really **live** and love life.

Born on April 4, 1919, Leo \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ had a fairly inauspicious beginning. He grew up in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. And then things changed. While he met Grandma Sophie during the Holocaust, and while he had been transferred to **SIX** different camps, somehow, he and Sophie managed to stay in touch. Can you imagine the steely strength of a young man capable of **THAT**??? Leo lost SIX brothers and sisters, his parents, and extended family member, and still, and yet, he held on. After the war, and with two surviving brothers, Leo began to build a life... dedicated to his family that remained and, of course, Sophie. They married and became parents to my dad, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ shortly after. From their makeshift home in Poland, they found themselves first in a refugee camp in Italy, then in Israel, and finally settling in... (**do you want to make a little joke and say**).... the **TRUE** motherland, Queens, NY (**and wait for the laugh**). Apparently, G-d still had some tragic tests in store for Leo and Sophie. My aunt, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ died of a brain tumor at just thirteen years old..... deep sorrow can either break... or make a person. Leo \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was the living embodiment of the saying, “That which doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.” My grandfather led by example and showed an appreciation of life that was infectious.

Poppy was so proud of my father when he became a dentist.... his pride was boundless when my father eventually developed a successful career in real estate. My grandfather lived for his family and the three of us (**your siblings? Name them**) ... me, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ were his pride and joy. He was also incredibly close to my father, who suddenly passed away several months ago... in April, just after Poppy turned 100. When we asked if there was anything special he wanted us to say in our eulogy, it was a simple, poignant expression of love and grief... “we were together from his beginning until his end.”

There are so many memories I have of my grandfather.... and, of course, being who we are, food was naturally involved .... I supposed the “naughtiest” and most subversive we ever got was when I skipped school and he would take me out for bagels and lox... I mean... **priorities**... **RIGHT**? (**Wait for the laugh**)... I will never forget how we would “bond” over citrus... just the simple act of splitting a grapefruit with honey drizzled over it... which made the grapefruit sweeter, meant so much, but now that I think of it, Poppy was the honey that sweetened all our lives.... we would go to Alley Pond Park and play tennis... and when I was at sleepaway camp, there may have been a “no outside food rule” but did **THAT** stop Poppy??? What do **YOU** think??? He never missed an opportunity to bring a pizza pie for my entire bunk... no need to wonder why I was popular!!! .. and oh those stories when I would sleep over at his and Grandma’s house... learning about how mischievous my dad was... eating Cream of Wheat that had been perfectly, patiently cooled on their kitchen window sill... that sill must have been magic because that Cream of Wheat... delicious!! We played for hours and hours in the basement with that penguin racing toy... I can still see him making the prayer over the challah at my Bat Mitzvah... and then at my wedding... and then at the brisses of both my kids...

Circumstances were unusually cruel for this tower of a man in his early years, but I want to believe that through the family he and Sophie built and we shared, the joy he got from all of us really did make him love life... over the past several years, seeing him as a **GREAT** grandfather has been indescribable and his playfulness can best be described in the way he was with my kids... referring to my five year old son, Jack, as “the Captain.” I’ve also witnessed how difficult it’s been for him....eleven years without my grandma.... these past eight months without Daddy...

Even still... and even so... I can’t imagine a person more inspiring... to all of us... than Poppy... from his move to the Nautilus for the summer to enjoy the beach, to dancing to “Runaround Sue... “ his time here on earth... with us, was one of the great **mitzvahs** (**do you prefer the word blessings?**) of life. He was relentless in being with all of us, sharing his strength and optimism, no matter what, and never giving up hope that he would walk again... that determination will remain with me my whole life.

I saw a quote recently... “Look around you. Appreciate what you have. **Nothing** will be the same in a year.” Poppy will stay with us... in our memories and stories told.... in the smiles and twinkle I see in the eyes of “Captain Jack” and his brother, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, in the gestures and inflections we’ve inherited.... and of course... in the bagels and lox we’ll joyfully consume repeatedly in his memory.

“I am part of all that I have met.” I cannot imagine a greater person to have loved, cared for, and inspired me. Rest In Peace, Poppy. We love you. Thank you all.