**EULOGY SPEECH**

**FOR**

**PETER HENRY**

Hello everyone. While I’m pretty sure most or all of you know who I am, I won’t assume that and I will let you know that I am Peter Henry and Rob was a good, dear friend of mine. I’m sure each one of you have memories and moments that you recall, and believe me, some of those “adventures” were ***classic***…. (**Emphasize “classic” and wait for the laugh**) …. I mean you know what **THEY** say… “What happens in Owatonna **STAYS** in Owatonna”…(**Wait for the laugh)**….But I’ve been doing a lot of thinking since Rob’s passing and I would like to share some thoughts on what my friendship with Rob meant to me.

I once heard an expression, “I am part of all that I have met.” What’s amazing… and true, is how long Rob had been a part of my life. We didn’t have to be together twenty-four/seven to really know each other…. In fact we weren’t. I think it’s a sign of true and genuine friendship that with certain people, neither time not distance can weaken a connection. That’s how it was with Rob and me.

We met in high school. Rob was one of the first friends I met when I went to that school, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. You might easily say that’s where the “trouble” began… at least according to our mothers!! Yes…. Our mothers thought we were regular hell raisers…looking back, I think that’s all relative… I mean… **OWATONNA**!!! Honestly, how much hell could we possibly raise???? (**Wait for the laugh**). Back then, life was so much simpler!!! Also…. Big confession… Rob and I also had special gifts… somehow, when we got caught, we were able to sweet talk our moms and they calmed down, which made it possible for us to start all over the next day… I guess all things considered, we were raised right, and for that I’m grateful.

At first glance, you might not have guessed that we would hit it off… after all… I was “a little bit country”… actually **A LOT** country and by comparison, Rob was a “city slicker,” but you know what??? We found common ground. We bonded through our love of sports and while we may not have been on the same teams, we had spirit and really rooted for each other to win…. **EH**… maybe not **ALWAYS**…. More about that in a little bit….!! Our friendship lasted in high school and all through our college years until I moved away for about fifteen years. When I came back, of course the details of our lives had changed but one thing we noticed for sure… the friendship…. the bond…. the connection we had was genuine. We picked up where we left off, and with that experience, there were lessons to be learned. True friendship is timeless. I am blessed to realize and appreciate those lessons.

Throughout the years, since our reunion, we continued to build and strengthen our bond, especially through our mutual love of sports…. And that included tennis and golf as well as football…. We would love to cheer on our teams. We went to a few Gopher football games and Twins games.  I was also thrilled that Rob attended my 50th birthday party after all these years.

To know Rob was to appreciate the “art of competition.” We were both “confident in our own unique skills.” We played lots of golf together, but here’s what I have to say about that…. I must confess that I always thought I was the better golfer… Told you I was competitive!!! … yet I always wondered how the heck Rob always came out the money winner. It wasn’t until I had some talks with Rob’s colleagues at Federated Insurance that I learned he was a “master negotiator.” He knew his gifts and talents and used them!! (**Wait for the laugh**). I must say that while our competitive natures kicked in on the golf course, I know we **still** rooted for each other. I play back those games in my head sometimes, and although Rob was really smooth, I try to recall the technique of his talent for negotiation.

I think what I’m trying to say, is that it’s on occasions like these that we are inspired to think… not only to recall the times we spent with the person who’s gone, but how can we use the loss to help us to appreciate what we have… both in our own lives and in our connections to others. I’ve learned that there is nothing more precious than a friend for life. I know Rob was that person for me and what I’ve discovered over the past several weeks is that although he is gone, he continues to inspire me… to live a life that **counts**… to appreciate the gifts I have in life, especially the people that make it so special.

Rob will live on in all of us…. In the stories we tell… in the memories we share… in the lessons we learn, and in the connections we continue to make and strengthen. Although I will miss him a great deal, we all should acknowledge that he brought us all together today, and that’s what real friends do. May his memory continue to be a blessing for all of us. Thank you all!