

KITCHEN COUNTER MUSINGS OF REV. MARK

June 15, 2025

Fathers' Day

June 15th is Father's Day. A day of salutations, new ties, and phone calls for those living far apart. I'm always a bit melancholy on Father's Day. It's now been 45 years since I tragically lost my father. I never had the privilege of knowing him as an adult. My mom used to say that we would have been very close as adults. I believe that more each passing year.

I don't remember many of his words. No quotes of his do I carry with me. His business achievements were admirable, but I don't think they would be called extraordinary today. We were not an affectionate family. I can't ever remember saying to him, or hearing him say, "I love you." The one hug I do remember was, well, awkward.

But he was a calming presence in the turbulence of my teen life: a warm fireplace in a cold house. I always thought he was kind of boring, but that's because he could be counted on in times of need, always. His predictability was underappreciated in my roller coaster high school years. Crushes on girls came and went, and dad was there. Football season turned into baseball season, and back to football season again, and dad watched the games with me. I had my first beer with him during Monday Night Football. He couldn't understand my love of that "silly" sport called "soccer" but he never missed one of my matches.

Because of his presence, life went smoothly for the Porizky family. The cars always ran, the bills got paid, and the yard was maintained. Because he was there, I never worried about the future. (I had no way of knowing that he secured our family future before he died with prudent investments. It was never discussed.) My sister and I never worried about things like income tax, savings accounts, monthly bills, and mortgages. They were those things on dad's desk. I have many pictures of our family without him. Oh, he was there, but behind the camera. He broke up fights between me and my "always wrong" baby sister. He read the paper every evening and played tennis with me every Sunday afternoon. Nothing unusual. We never talked about sex, though I knew he would have if I wanted to bring it up. I didn't!

He was Jewish by birth and tradition but was remarkably tolerant of my zeal for the Christian faith. He did not teach me how to pray, but he taught me how to shave and knot a tie. He valued honesty. He walked me back to a grocery store where I had stolen a pack of baseball cards. Most importantly, he modeled the importance of getting up early and staying out of debt. His life expressed a balance between ambition and self-acceptance. He would have loved pickleball as his bad knees diminished his love for tennis. I think of him when I see those old men playing on the courts in Groton Long Point. Wait! Those old men are me!

I have now lived thirteen years longer than he did. Yet I don't feel I have come close to reaching the maturity and wisdom I felt radiating from him. I thank God for his being part of making me the

man I am today. There are just so many times in the last four and a half decades I wish I could have asked his advice. Once I had a child of my own, I missed his counsel dearly. This Father's Day, once more, I thank God for all that he gave me, my mom, and my sister. I pray that the best of him lives on in me, and that I have passed that knowledge on to my own son, Joshua. What is good in my dad, Joshua will only know through me.

Happy Father's Day!

Rev. Mark