

Concluding Remarks

(Read by David Mills on behalf of Scott Dailard)

When asked how I am holding up during these last two painful weeks, I've often remarked that I do very well until someone says something kind about Cynthia or does something nice for me. And so, with knowledge of this weakness, I've wisely penned these few lines of thanks to be read by someone else at the conclusion of Cynthia's memorial service, and my first words of thanks go to my unlucky proxy, David Mills.

Cynthia's sudden death left a void in my life that will be difficult to fill and it is hard at times to feel anything other than outrage at her loss. Like Donald Hall after the death of his wife Jane Kenyon, it is the little things that trouble me. At home, we are still surrounded with things that Cynthia purchased, selected, and placed with her hands. It seems cruelly unfair that the houseplants she bought for the holidays are still flowering on the mantel or the balloons she bought for our daughter's third birthday party are still floating in the family room and she is gone.

I do fine most of the time. My spirits are buoyed by the happy energy of my little girls that fills the house, and by the notes and cards that keep arriving like unexpected blessings. And then I see or touch something small and personal of hers that triggers a fresh starburst of grief. Like her handwriting in our address book – those small precise loops and curls that that never changed in all the years I knew her. Or her delicate shoe beneath our nightstand or, most strangely, her car keys.

It is hard not to feel cheated by the loss of my wife at such a young age. We had so much unfinished business between us – as parents, as a married couple and as friends. Still, I also know that I have much to be thankful for -- thankful most of all for the twenty years I did get to spend with Cynthia, for her companionship and conversation and for the beautiful daughters she gave me and the beautiful way she has raised them. Before Cynthia died, I did not think it was possible to feel closer to my daughters, Miranda and Julia, or to love them more. I was wrong.

I am grateful for our marriage. Cynthia and I had what might be described politely as a "very long engagement." After so many years of living together, I was surprised by how much our relationship flowered after our wedding. Our marriage was like the third leg of a sturdy stool that supported two ambitious careers, a busy household and eventually a family. When she died, two legs of that stool were pulled away from me everything in my life swayed and seemed about to topple.

The day Cynthia collapsed, she knew that I loved her and I knew that she loved me but I doubt we told each other these things when we parted that morning. We both were preoccupied with problems at work, with the kids and all the little things that need to be done before leaving town for the holidays. It is perhaps inevitable that even the strongest marriages eventually become filled with more prose than poetry but if you are married,

draw a little closer to your husband or wife on Cynthia's account today. Take care in how you speak to each other and how you take leave of each other.

I also am grateful for the many friends who have surrounded me in this crisis, many of whom were first Cynthia's friends. All her life, my wife had this penchant for bonding with other formidable, talented women, many of whom you've met today -- women like Lori Wachs, Rebecca Lawton, Kate Duval and Laurie Rubiner. Each is as unique in her way as Cynthia was but I see in them many of my wife's finest qualities: her strength and pragmatism, her gift for organization, her essential kindness -- and I feel close to her in their presence.

Many other friends have helped me in these difficult days. Friends like David Mills and Chris Spanos, Dr. Jules Duval, Bob and Naira Darius, Lucy Owen, Andy Blocker, Barry Zigas and Jodie-Levin Epstein. Many of these people were at my side and Cynthia's almost every moment we spent at the hospital until the morning of her death. And all of them have worked tirelessly since that time on the complicated arrangements for this service. There was nothing any of us could do to save Cynthia's life but there was much work to be done to ensure that her life received the recognition it deserved. Dozens of our friends helped with this project, taking time from their own families, holidays and work to do so. I will always be grateful for their efforts.

I also am touched and humbled to see the faces of so many of my clients and of other good friends -- including friends from my childhood in San Diego and Cynthia's childhood in New York -- all of whom who have traveled great distances to be with us today. I know too well how easy it is to neglect old friendships when you are secure in a good marriage and your daily life is consumed with the busy work of raising small children and pursuing a demanding career. Don't neglect your friends. I can't tell you how much you may need them in times like this.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to my partners and colleagues at Dow Lohnes -- the law firm that saved Christmas for the Dailard family in 2006 -- and to Cynthia's colleagues at the Guttmacher Institute and to the entire CCBC pre-school community. I am grateful to these organizations and to the individuals within them for innumerable acts of kindness and generosity that went far beyond what I could reasonably expect from compassionate colleagues, good neighbors, concerned teachers and fellow parents.

Finally, I want to thank Cynthia's mother Ellen for her example of strength and my own mother Kay for the tremendous personal sacrifices she has made to join our household -- at least temporarily -- in Washington. No one's life has been disrupted more by this tragedy than my mother's and no one's support is more important to the immediate well-being of my daughters than hers. Please make her feel welcome here for as long as she stays.

Thank you for joining us today to celebrate the life and memory of my remarkable wife. Cynthia was not a recognition-seeker and she would be embarrassed by the size of the

audience gathered here today. Anyone who knew her well, however, could hardly be surprised by the number of lives she has touched.

Please take a moment to reflect on a few final images of Cynthia. A reception upstairs in the third-floor ballroom will follow immediately after the conclusion of this last song. All are welcome.