Editor's Note: Remembering Jere Brophy

Daniel Robinson

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The educational psychology community received sad news on October 15, 2009 that one of the giants in our field had left us at the young age of 69. Jere Brophy not only left an enormous impact on the field but also on countless individuals whose paths had crossed his. This editor's note includes comments from those who were close to him.

I first met Jere at a reception during the annual meeting of the Midwest Educational Research Association in Chicago in 1991. This past April, he and I shared a good chuckle about that encounter during the University of Texas reception at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) meeting in San Diego. Six years ago, Jere's thoughts about educational psychology were revealed in an interview (Gaedke and Shaughnessy 2003), which I encourage the reader to revisit.

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There are not sufficient words to express the loss of Jere Brophy, an esteemed colleague, a valued mentor, and a cherished friend. As a colleague, he always held to the highest standards his work and expected no less from others. As a mentor, he was supportive, generous with his time, and had a broad reach. There are students and faculty across this country who regard Jere as a mentor. As a friend, he took time to listen and had a genuine interest in other people, their families, lives, and work. And, he always took great pride in sharing stories and news of his family. Jere had warmth of character and, as we all know, he greatly enjoyed a good chuckle.

Jere came to Michigan State University (MSU) in 1976 after having received his doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of Chicago and serving on the faculty at the University of Texas at Austin. He came to MSU as a professor and senior researcher in the Institute for Research on Teaching (known as IRT); and from 1981 to 1994, he served as co-director of the IRT. In that capacity, he convened scholars to share their works-in-progress through the "Invisible College" prior to the annual meetings of the American Educational Research Association. At MSU, Jere held the title of University Distinguished Professor, the highest academic distinction in the university.

Jere's honors and awards are among the most prized in the fields of education and psychology. He received the 2007 E. L. Thorndike Award from Division 15 of the American Psychological Association. This award, signifying a career of distinguished contributions to knowledge, theory and practice in educational psychology was very special to Jere because, as he said, "The recognition comes from one's peers." He was elected to Fellow status in the American Psychological Association, the International Academy of Education, the American Psychological Society, and the American Educational Research Association. He was also elected to the National Academy of Education—truly the highest form of recognition in education in the US.

He served on editorial boards for many of the most prestigious journals in the field of education and was a prolific author having written over 300 articles, chapters and books. The work of Jere Brophy was as well known to practitioners as scholars. His research on effective teaching, classroom management, and student motivation influenced both theory and practice with lucid and incisive thought and writing. More recently, he applied these ideas to the construction of social studies curriculum and received the Award for Exemplary Research in Social Studies from the National Council on Social Studies.

Each of his awards conveys the highest level of regard he held in the field and the highest level of respect afforded him by his colleagues. It is hard to imagine an undergraduate or graduate student in education or psychology who has not encountered the work of Jere Brophy.

Jere was an intellectual giant to the field of education. His good will and good cheer will be cherished in our memories. To the world, Jere was an internationally renowned scholar whose writing will continue to inform researchers, policy makers, and practitioners alike. To us, he was all that, but we also had the privilege of having him as our beloved colleague and friend. We all had the privilege of knowing this wonderful human being and of being a part of his life.

Carole Ames, Dean
College of Education
Michigan State University

As I reflect on the life and work of Jere, I envision a giant puzzle with hundreds of pieces. Jere represented the big picture on the box, with the rest of us gaining access to

the many unique and special pieces of his life and work. He was truly an extraordinary human being!

I had the rare and rich opportunity to collaborate with Jere for more than 20 years, and over that time he became my best friend and my intellectual soulmate. Our professional journey together was a labor of love and filled with enormous positive energy as we explored theoretical and practical possibilities for teaching and learning elementary social studies. Early in our collaboration, we located a very gifted practitioner, Barbara Knighton, who became a lasting member of our team. Our secret for success stemmed from the fact that we all approached our research as learners, coming from different spaces and places, but with a shared sense of curiosity and infectious desire for excellence. Jere brought to the collaboration a naivete as a learner that caused you to open up to him in amazing ways and he would push you to come up with examples that made you think creatively and more deeply. His mind was always on task. When we all met to discuss our work, we would interact for several hours, up to the point that Barb and I had exhausted every last brain cell, but Jere seemed to reproduce them as we went.

I also want to mention June Benson and Amy Peebles who were our support staff throughout our work together. We embraced their ideas, and they played a crucial role in our collaboration. We valued their insights and incorporated them into our thinking. Jere's unwavering ability and genuine desire to learn from everyone truly set him apart from almost anyone that I know. He did not just profess about equity and quality. He lived it.

Jere and I have met almost daily over the years. Most of our meetings started with an update on family, the political theme of the day, and sports, and then we spent quality time on our writing and research. Additionally, I never taught a class without popping into Jere's office for my informal debriefing. He would ask the most amazing questions in challenging ways. When I would describe one of my out-of-the-box strategies, he would ask my favorite questions, "What did you take out?" and "What evidence is there that it matched the goal?" I would joke with him that he was the best coach in the world, and I did not have to pay a cent.

We never parted without a plan for our next session. I would come to his office with my Franklin Planner and he would pull out his version of a blackberry from his shirt pocket, a simple mini-sheet of white paper. His "calendar" was not a representative artifact of his accomplishments. He did not spend much time writing about what he was going to do, he just did it.

Among my fondest memories is the day that he was going to observe me teaching for the very first time in an elementary classroom. He was going to be taking notes and recording me. I was on my way to the school in Haslett; and about a mile from the site, I pulled over to the side of the road and brought my car to a screeching halt. I said to myself, "My gosh, what have I gotten myself into? The world-renowned guru of motivation, the process-product mastermind, the expert on classroom management was going to watch me teach." I took a few deep breaths and said to myself, "It is too late to turn back." While worried that I had blown my cover of knowing what I was doing, things continued to work out. He gave me specific praise for my instruction that morning. His continued support and faith in me and my work allowed me to flourish. Not long ago, wearing the jacket that I wore on that memorable morning, I shared the story with him. I said, "That jacket will always be in my closet. It represents such powerful messages and gifts you gave to me."

Jere was incredibly humble. After he got the Thorndike Award, I came to his office and asked him if his head size had increased because Arlene might need to buy him a new winter hat. He just looked at me, puzzled. I remember when he received his honorary doctorate. I teased him that I was going to start a rumor that he and Arlene were adding a room to their home to house his awards and publications, and we could make money for the

College by opening it as a museum. He would get that look—that twinkle—blush, and then change the subject back to our research. And, as you all know, time on the right task equals achievement. The more Jere received acknowledgements and awards, the more he gave. A stranger would think that he was vying for tenure.

Jere has left a giant footprint marked by honesty, integrity, genuineness, brilliance, gentle encouragement, and authenticity. He has given each of us pieces of his puzzle. It is now time for us to pick up those pieces. Take a moment and think of what piece he has given you. I challenge you to act on that piece or pieces so that we, as a community of family, friends, and colleagues, can carry on his legacy. That will make his eyes twinkle and he will blush just a tad.

Janet Alleman
Michigan State University

Like Carole and Jan, I have known Jere, very well, for a long time, at least 30 years. Jere was my friend. That is all he needed to know about someone, and that is all someone needed to know about him. I can tell a lot of wonderful stories about Jere but now is not the time. We are—I am—still coming to terms with his loss. We will gather together soon and do that.

I cannot resist telling one story, though. Jere and I always went to dinner together when we were at a national conference. One night, at an AERA meeting in New York, we were returning late from dinner and had gotten into a big discussion—an argument really—about something that was important to us at the time. We were so focused on the discussion that we stopped in the middle of the block to drive our points home. Just at that moment, a woman of the night approached us, hesitating a minute before asking her question. Jere, without losing a beat, said, "Excuse me...we're having a discussion here."

Like others, I will state the obvious: Jere was a really *good* man. He was a great scholar and colleague—we all know that—nationally and internationally acclaimed for his work and also known by everyone for his eagerness to share his knowledge and skill with others, teachers, students, and colleagues. He had a special gift for making that knowledge useful to each audience.

We also all know that Jere was a great friend—and a great husband, father, and grandfather.

In all the ways that mattered, Jere was unchanging: His playfulness, his interest in the world around him—in classrooms, sports, politics, and people, especially people. Jere could have been a great novelist. He collected stories about people and told them in such a compelling and good-humored way that you could not help but be drawn into his world.

There were other unchanging things about Jere that maybe should not have mattered but did, like his way of dressing and his way of wearing his hair. Those things were just like his values, rock solid. Jere was always going to be Jere. You could count on it.

You knew that Jere was always going to be there for you. The thing that is so hard to accept now is that he is not always going to be there for us except in our *memory*. The best thing we can do is to cherish that memory and carry on like he would have done: to try to maintain a commitment to truth, to good humor, and to being a good person.

Richard S. Prawat, Chairperson
Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Special Education
Michigan State University

Jere Brophy supervised my research as an intern in the Institute for Research on Teaching at Michigan State University; he also directed my dissertation. Jere was the kind of advisor

that I strive to be. He created a safe place within which I could study and stretch my thinking, take intellectual risks, make mistakes and try again. Jere and I held complementary views on most things related to our work and I enjoyed our disagreements as much as our common ground. Our most recent was a debate, again, on the primacy of the individual; Jere thought—he would likely say he knew—I was too contextual.

Jere extended the safe place for learning beyond school. He was very generous with his family, Arlene, Cheri, and Joe, including me in ways that were welcoming and fun. Some of these involved music. The kiva in the college of education was a venue for an amazing array of music in those years: think David Bromberg, Steve Goodman, and Jesse Winchester. Jere knew a lot about each of them and the current music scene more generally; in my opinion, he was of the wrong opinion only when he did not give Van Morrison his due.

I basically stayed at MSU as long as they would let me. I had no desire to leave, but I had completed my program and run out of excuses and it was time to go. Graduation was bittersweet. I have an especially fond memory of Jere and Arlene taking me out to dinner to celebrate. Arlene had arranged to have matches made with my name and degree on the cover. They were glossy black with gold lettering; I still have them.

I believe Jere lived his life fully and exactly as he wanted and there was nothing he would have changed if given the opportunity. He loved his wife, Arlene, and children, Cheri and Joe and now their children; he loved his work; he loved his life. I used to tease him that he confused Okemos, Michigan with the Garden of Eden. He would laugh, but he wouldn't disagree. I think I know why.

Mary McCaslin (pka McCaslin Rohrkemper)
University of Arizona

Jere Brophy was an exceedingly important person in my life. Since we met in 1968 as beginning assistant professors of Educational Psychology at the University of Texas, we have been active colleagues and collaborators. Jere and I had many common interests—such as sports—but the special bond was always the mutual enjoyment of intellectual discussions—even arguments. (Although our viewpoints were generally the same, we enjoyed discussing the differences—even the small ones.)

Our first common research activity evolved around a disagreement of the extent to which teachers would vary in how they interacted with students they believed to be more and less capable. This dispute led to a spate of articles that in the end proved both of us right and wrong. Some teachers exhibit markedly different behavior and opportunities based upon perceived level of student ability—others do not.

Our lives have fitted together in so many ways. For example, our PhD thesis work both involved the study of dyadic behavior. When Bruce Biddle approached Jere about a job at the University of Missouri, he handed the opportunity off to me. Similarly, a few years later when Lee Shulman asked about my possible interest in Michigan State University, I lateraled the opportunity to Jere. And so it went. Our last exchange involved our every 2-year discussion—did we want to revise *Looking in Classrooms* again? We had decided to rest on our laurels and to not do a new edition.

My last personal contact with Jere was when I was fortunate enough to introduce him as the winner of the APA Division 15 Thorndike Award for a distinguished research career. Jere remarked that he was pleased to be in the same fraternity with Piaget and Skinner. Jere has received many awards and honors, but as his wife Arlene has told me, he was especially pleased with the Thorndike Award because it came from peers and was based on a lifetime of work.

Although I will always hold many academic memories of Jere, I think my fondest memory of Jere will be of his love for Arlene his wife and his children, Cheryl and Joe, and their children. Jere and I had a vast number of phone calls over the years and in almost every case before we could discuss our work or my beloved Cardinals and his cherished White Sox, Jere always had to fill me in on the important events in his life—his family and their recent exploits.

Jere was firm in his commitments; perhaps, unalterable is a better way to express his affection for family, sports team affiliations, hair cut, and choice of clothing. However, I do assume some partial credit for one change in Jere's behavior over time. He was a beer man—nothing else would do. However, over the years, I and others were good models and he subsequently developed a taste for wine, Sauvignon Blanc (especially those from New Zealand) in particular.

So Jere had a great life. He loved his wife and family, he loved his colleagues and work at Michigan State, and he made huge contributions to the field of educational psychology. He died quickly and painlessly and without any preceding illness. So let us toast his good life (I recommend a Cloudy Bay) and express our affection and support for his family and friends who must endure without him.

Tom Good, Head
Department of Educational Psychology
University of Arizona

I met Jere in 1970 when I was a doctoral student looking for a research project that involved work in actual classrooms. He and Tom Good were conducting the first classroom studies on teacher expectations, and the project needed observer/data collectors so I signed up. This early association led to a collegueship and personal friendship that lasted throughout his life. One of the most important things I learned from Jere was how important it was to have a passion and commitment for what you do. I was struck by his commitment to finding real solutions to problems in classrooms and schools and how to make schools and teaching better rather than joining in the criticism of the day.

In the preface to *Learning from Teaching*, Jere wrote "...education needs less heat and more light." He said that educational problems will not be solved by heaping criticism, but by finding research-based principles and strategies that enable teachers and schools to be effective. Jere dedicated his career to this end. He strove to bring honesty, integrity, comprehensiveness, and intellect to the enterprise of research on teaching in all of its related issues, from his analysis of effective praise, to studies of teacher effectiveness, to motivating students to learn, and helping teachers deal with problem students. When asked about his theoretical position, he would say that he was an existential pragmatist. His research and writing was an intellectual and personal pursuit driven by a desire to show what worked.

No scholar has devoted himself more steadfastly to bringing light to the problems of education.

Carolyn Evertson
Vanderbilt University

Between 1969 and 1983, Jere Brophy and his colleagues conducted more process-outcome studies than any other researcher. Their first studies coded a variety of teacher classroom practices and then correlated these practices with measures of student achievement gain.

Jere and his colleagues also computed the correlations between students' classroom behaviors and their achievement gain. These correlational studies were conducted in both elementary and junior high grades and involved both reading and math achievement. The findings that emerged from this research (also called process-product and teacher effects research) were then tested in experimental studies. The findings from both sets of studies remain relevant today.

Jere had the gift of being was able to look at the hundreds of correlations that were obtained in these studies and see important patterns. He was able to weave these correlations, and the patterns they formed, into a series of findings about effective teaching. No one else, ever, could look at those correlations and make the sense out of them than Jere did.

Jere and his colleagues developed a dyadic observational system that enabled observers to code both teacher and student behavior. Student responses to a teacher's question were coded as correct, partly correct, do not know, and error. This observational instrument then allowed observers to code each teacher's responses to the student responses. Jere then wove these complex correlational results into statements on which types of responses to student answers were most effective for student achievement. These conclusions remain relevant today.

It was Jere who looked at the raw correlational results and then developed the phrase "teaching in small steps" to describe the instructional behaviors of those teachers whose students had a high proportion of correct responses. "Teaching in small steps" is a valuable and humane idea, which I have helped spread, but the original idea came from Jere.

The chapter by Jere and Tom Good in the Third Handbook of Research on Teaching contains a summary of each of the process-outcome studies that Jere and his colleagues conducted. This chapter is also a detailed, accessible account of the process-outcome research studies from 1973 to 1983. It constitutes the definitive archival summary of process-outcome research.

Jere was graduate adviser and mentor to Linda Anderson, John Crawford, and mentor to Carolyn Everson, all of whom conducted valuable process-outcome research. Carolyn went on to expand process-outcome research to include classroom management. Her work led to the first manual on classroom management that came from the observations of the most successful teachers. Jere supported and facilitated this early ground breaking research.

Barak Rosenshine
University of Illinois

My memories of Jere go back to the 1970s when we were young faculty members in Austin, Texas. Jere's doctoral training had been at the University of Chicago in the Human Development program where he was influenced by Robert Hess. In keeping with that beginning point, Jere's work always had a strong developmental base as well as a concern for environmental influences on behavior. At Texas he was a popular faculty member among graduate students who were attracted to his research program and benefited from his supervision. After he moved to East Lansing, I saw him mainly at AERA, where I was always struck by the constancy of his appearance and demeanor; Jere was instantly recognizable and always enjoyed a conversation. He was also very consistent throughout his distinguished career in his commitment to scholarship that made a difference to teachers. There are many impressive aspects to his work, and one that I appreciated most was his concern with improving educational practice. He was very theoretically minded, but it was always in the service of improving education.

My most vivid visual recollection of him is from the day a wall of books in his office collapsed on him (workmen had not properly anchored the shelves). Hearing the

commotion, several of us hurried to his office to find Jere standing unhurt but perplexed amidst the wreckage. It was the only time I knew him to be at a loss for words.

Ed Emmer, Chair
Department of Educational Psychology
University of Texas

A dedicated scholar, a genuine empiricist, one of the founders of research on teaching as a field of study, and a man of principles. Our field has lost a genuinely nice person and an immensely productive researcher.

David C. Berliner
Regents' Professor, Arizona State University

Carole Ames, Jan Alleman, and Dick Prawat have painted a wonderful portrait of my dad's professional career and the positive influence he has had on so many. My hope is to share some stories and insights of a more personal nature to demonstrate that we all have some "Jere Brophy" in us, just in very different ways.

We held the memorial service for my dad at the Michigan State University Alumni Chapel. My father loved this university. Not all that long ago, on crisp fall days, you could find my dad rollerblading around the absolutely beautiful campus—often with one or two grandchildren "in tow". He loved the exterior beauty of the campus—the trees, the river, and his office window overlooking the Red Cedar River. Even more, he loved the internal beauty that Michigan State offered to him—a platform to impact students in deep and meaningful ways. He was proud to be part of MSU's College of Education and of the work he and his colleagues have done to advance knowledge and impact lives.

My parents had long talked about creating a future scholarship to fund graduate students at MSU. While not named a scholarship, "shortly before my dad died", my parents decided to return his salary raise for 2009-2010 to support student scholarships. In his memory, the Brophy family will be making a significant gift to initiate the Jere Edward and Arlene Pintozi Brophy Scholarship to be awarded to promising graduate students. We are proud that he will continue to impact students at the university where he spent 33 years.

While I cannot recreate the ambiance of the memorial service, I will try to provide some "feel" for my dad's shaping of the service. One of my dad's passions was music.....world music, folk, blues, jazz, soft rock, etc. He read Rolling Stone cover to cover, hung out at Flat Black and Circular in East Lansing (an indie used record store) where he found little known (at least by his children and grandchildren) bands that "we then had to check out". While none of us have his breadth of eclectic tastes, all of us share some of his musical selections and he was always able to suggest a new artist that made our "purchase list". To honor his passion for music as well as the eclectic selections, the three songs that played during the service were: Beautiful Dreamer (sung by Raul Malo—favorite lullaby), Danny Boy (sung by Eva Cassidy—just an all around favorite song that reflected his Irish heritage and one of his favorite vocalists), and Just a Closer Walk With Thee (sung by Patsy Cline, a favorite hymn).

My brother, Joe and I, were blessed with wonderful parents. They are so different in so many ways, and he and I are a blend of both. My dad relished his "quiet time"—to listen to music and read. He lived up to the stereotypical image of a somewhat stoic and unemotional Irishman—yet all of us knew how much he loved us and how proud he was of each one of us—even though he did not say it often. My mom—my mom lights up a room. She is the epitome of warmth and generosity and her Italian heritage comes through in her

hugs, words, and always putting family first. My parents met at Marillac Social Center, a settlement house in Chicago where they worked while in high school. They dated for several years before 46 years of a wonderful marriage. My husband recognized the special relationship my parents had early in our dating and later told me that he knew we would be together forever if we could just follow their lead. My brother and I and our respective spouses have been given a gift—a blueprint of sorts for both marriage and parenting. We strive to emulate and build on the blueprint we have been given.

As I look at our family, I see my dad in each of us and celebrate that he has played such an influential role. My brother Joe has my dad's wit and easy going nature. Joe is patient with everyone under all circumstances and, at the same time, is such a lover of life. He plays on multiple soccer teams in addition to coaching his kids' teams. The escapades of the Joe Brophy family shared in annual Christmas letters are family favorites resulting in chuckles throughout the year. My brother is an MSU alumna and, as such, was able to spend a lot of time with my parents while completing his degree. He and my dad would watch MSU hockey games at Munn Arena on Friday nights during hockey season. Friday nights were always "pizza night" at the Brophy house and my dad would take four to five pieces of pizza with him to the rink (yes, contraband). As others have described my dad's driving, he was able to drive from the house to campus, park and walk to the rink, and the pizza stayed warm!! (hmm, I am not sure that "a lead foot" really describes his driving speed). I know that these games during Joe's college years established an important ritual for our family—whether it was my mom, "one of the kids" (including in-laws), or one of the grandkids, one of us was almost always sitting with my dad on Friday nights watching the Spartans skate up the ice.

While it is easy to say that I followed in my father's footsteps into academia (I am a full professor in the Broad College of Business at MSU), this would misrepresent reality. I never intended to be a professor. I was embarrassed in high school having to explain what my dad did for a living. Please note that I was not embarrassed of him, but in my inability to explain what he did—well, he is a teacher that does not teach....and he works from home until noon or 1 PM....and what the heck is this research thing anyway (clearly, my dad's intellect did not get passed down to me in the chunks needed....how did I not figure out what a great gig we have as professors?). There were some latent signs....as a 7- or 8-year-old, I asked for a tape recorder for Christmas. As you may know, my dad dictated everything he ever "wrote" (books, papers, emails, the whole shebang). As a kid, he would sit in a chair in my parent's bedroom, and hour after hour, would dictate his work. I distinctly remember taking my brand new Christmas present, sneaking into the bedroom as quietly as I could, and would lie on the floor, recording him, record himself....for hours. (so, I am light on intellect, heavy on being "a geek" ☺). When I came to the realization that I wanted to get my PhD, my dad was the first person I called. I do not remember the conversation, but I remember feeling desperate to share the news with him. When I interviewed for my current job at MSU, my dad asked if he could come to my "job talk"....not your everyday request, huh? He came and was amazed at my ability to "carry a room". Not surprising to any of you who have written or worked directly with my father, he did provide me a marked-up copy of my paper with edits, references I should incorporate, etc.

I will miss the little things the most—chatting about what books he/I should read, new musical artists to listen to, stories about the kids, and the joys and tribulations of the world around us.

While we never know when we will lose people we love, I am very thankful that my dad has lived within an hour of his four grandchildren for the last 12 years. My dad relished his

time with his grandchildren. All are very different, and yet each one reflects facets of my dad in many ways. All four grandkids have become published “artists” thanks to the Social Studies Excursions series authored by Jan Alleman and my dad. They each took tremendous pride in creating their artwork and sharing copies of the books to teachers at their elementary schools, etc.

At the memorial service, I shared a special memory or characteristic of the relationship between each grandchild and my dad (Papa) and will do so here as well:

Carmen, 7—having Papa sit in her “beauty parlor” having his hair done (he did not give her much to work with), putting on make-up—again and again, and again...for hours! Like any good Brophy, after a few hours working the beauty parlor, Carmen would engage Papa in her primary passion—soccer.

Jered, 10—Named for Papa and shares his grandfather’s passion for economics and social studies by creating “Brophytown”—a city built out of boxes and cardboard designed as a place to drive the hundreds of matchbox cars that Jered accrued over time. As Jered grew older and more sophisticated, cars moved from place to place for the community to function and grow—the purchase of goods, the delivery of services, and the exchange of money. Jered innately “lives” the economics and social studies lesson Jan and Papa write about in their books.

Mark, 16—As the “first” grandchild, Mark Edward was named for his grandfather (Jere Edward) and also christened him with the “Papa” moniker. We were shooting for Grandpa, but Mark could only say Papa and my dad loved the name. Over the last few years, Mark and Papa have spent more time together at MSU hockey games than anyone else. Papa loved watching Mark play hockey—a defensive defenseman that protects his goalie and does not worry about scoring—a personality trait learned from his grandfather—support those around you, do not put the spotlight on you, and get the work done. Like my brother, my son Mark has an amazing sense of humor, cultivated in great part by Papa.

Chris, 12—Chris will always be reminded of Papa whenever he looks in the mirror—folks who know both my dad and son remark on the resemblance! The similarities between Chris and Papa only begin with their physical resemblance. On the weekend before he died, my parents, Chris, and I were out to dinner and the subject turned to social studies. Chris mentioned that “history was boring”. Debate on. My dad, in no uncertain terms, told Chris that history is one of the most critical academic areas as it is one of the few disciplines that speak to the human condition and if we do not learn from history, we will repeat our mistakes. So, Chris begins to share obscure historical details that refute my dad’s position. My dad proceeds to take Chris’ examples and provide alternative explanations to make his point. My mom and I recognized the value of staying on the sidelines (in part, we didn’t know enough arcane historical examples to mix it up with the two of them). If you had asked either Chris or Papa, they would have told you that “I won the debate”. In reality, everyone “won”—a 12-year-old kid who has the chutzpah to take on a social studies expert and go head-to-head?

As you can see, we have four wonderful young people who have been shaped by their grandfather in wonderful ways.

On the day after my dad died, my brother and I were in his home office. There was a book on his desk (otherwise, it was empty), sitting open to a page, as if it had been creased over time and again. The book was the second edition of my dad’s *Motivating Students to Learn* and it was open to the dedication page:

For my grandchildren,
Mark Speier, Chris Speier, Jered Brophy, and Carmen Brophy

While there are many possible explanations, the notion that one of his last thoughts or perhaps his way of sending a message to us after his death—reminds us of all the joy and wonderment his grandchildren brought to his life and he to theirs.

Let me close with a return to one of my dad's passions—music. When we were selecting the songs that we thought he would want us to include during the service, my brother and I both instantly suggested “Drop Kick Me Jesus Through the Goalposts of Life”. My mom, always the rational one, thought dignity should trump some of his favorites and it was struck from the list! If you are not familiar with the song (written by Paul Craft and made famous by Bobby Bare), the refrain goes as follows:

Drop kick me Jesus through the goal posts of life
End-over-end neither left nor to right
Straight through the heart of them righteous uprights
Drop kick me Jesus through the goal posts of life.

It is easy to focus on the refrain and miss a key verse, particularly for all of us as we think about my dad. At the memorial service, I asked everyone to close their eyes (and ask the same of you before you read the verse). Picture my dad, wearing a Michigan State University uniform, and read on:

Take all the brothers who've gone on before
And all of the sisters who've knocked on your door
All the departed dear loved ones of mine
Stick'em up front in the offensive line.

My dad has touched all of us and for some, we are not sure how we will get through another day without him and for others, the impact he has made as a research colleague, “a teacher”, a friend will be sorely missed. My dad spent his life serving on a “virtual offensive line” creating holes in the defense for us to run through. I know in my heart that he is wearing his new uniform, (complaining about what the football helmet is doing to his “forever in style” crew cut) and will continue to knock over the defensive linemen to ensure that we have big enough holes that we can run through. As we run through these holes, we need to use the special gifts that each one of us has to share his vision—positively influencing those around in whatever ways we can.

Dr. Cheri Speier
Professor Accounting and Information Systems
Michigan State University

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