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EULOGY TO WILLIAM HUGHES MULLIGAN ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH MAY 17, 1996

William Hughes Mulligan, Jr.

Your Eminence Cardinal O'Connor, Father O'Hare, Monsignor Connolly, Reverend clergy and friends:

On behalf of my father and my entire family, thank you so much for attending this beautiful and fitting funeral mass for my father.

John Feerick, my father always said, "A Fordham man is a gentle man." You sir, epitomize the Fordham man. You and so many others, like Dennis McInerney, and Irene, who gave our family so much comfort over the past ten months, will never be forgotten.

How many men can truthfully say at the time of their father's death he was the greatest man they ever knew? Probably all too few, but count me among them.

Perhaps William Hughes Mulligan was your friend, your professor, your mentor, your dean, your colleague, your partner, your neighbor, or your counselor. He was one or all to untold thousands of men and women.

But only three can boast that he was their father. And only one can claim that he was her husband.

For you see, for all of my father's achievements in life, which are well documented (none of which you would hear about from him) and were hard earned, they pale in comparison to his achievements as a husband and a father.

Can you imagine the unparalleled experience of having such a thoroughly decent human being as your father?

I believe, and I'm sure you would agree, that you were fortunate to have known him whether you met him once or knew him for sixty years.

But Anne and Stephen and I had him full time. We were the lucky ones.

You may have been in attendance at one of his many, many triumphs as an after-dinner speaker.

But we were there for the dress rehearsals. He loved to use us as guinea pigs for his next speaking engagement, usually at the dinner table on Sunday. I can hear him as if it were yesterday. "Kids, I think I've got a good one in the hopper!" and he would proceed to deliver his perceived next gem.

Since to us he was only our father, nor did he *ever* pretend to be anything else, we would usually sit there non-plussed.

Just as we knew he was growing closer to the punch line with his expert build-up, peering over his glasses, awaiting the explosion of laughter, one of us would say "Ma, could I have some more milk?"

He would be crestfallen, "Maybe I have to re-work this, Rose!" The devastation would only be momentary of course, as we would tell him we were only kidding and the speech was great. His smile would return, he'd take a puff on his pipe and retreat to the den—confident of his next success.

Of course, my father never laid an egg. He delivered every time and I am further happy to report, especially after hearing such nice snippets this morning, that you can expect this fall, the publication of a collection of my father's greatest speeches. The book will be published, appropriately, by the Fordham University Press.

My father was noted for his wit and humor, of course, but you always knew that the humor, more often than not, was at his own expense and was never vulgar nor cruel.

But he had many other outstanding attributes. Foremost was his treatment of others, no matter their standing in life, with respect and dignity.

His greatest asset was his capacity to love. His family always came first—and not just his wife and children. He loved my wife as if she were his own daughter. He loved his role as Uncle Bill. He loved his grandchildren as all grandparents do—that love which you can only understand when you experience it. He had many titles—Judge, Professor, Dean, etc. but the one that warmed his soul was "Grandpa."

He had other loves. He loved his God. He loved the Holy Roman Catholic Church and the Jesuits. It was never just the Catholic Church to my father—it was the *Holy Roman Catholic Church*. He had a million friends, of all colors and persuasions. If he thought highly of a man, he was a "prince." If he thought highly of a woman she was "a real peach."

My father loved his schools. Particularly, he loved that *premier* Jesuit institution in the country, Fordham University in the Bronx. A *cum laude* graduate of the college and the law school, he was a sports-writer for the school newspaper, the Ram, and he sang in the glee club.

If you were a family friend, and you happened to be in our house on a weekend afternoon *and* you were lucky, my father would regale you with tales of the Seven Blocks of Granite, the three scoreless ties with Pitt in his Freshman through Junior years; the trips to the Cotton Bowl and the Sugar Bowl; Wojciechowicz—the 13 letter man.

My father's love for Fordham is legendary and Fordham's love for him has always been returned. Be assured, Father O'Hare, when those trumpets were blaring today upon my father's entry into heaven, there was only one song that was playing:

"With a Ram, Dad—With a Ram"

My father loved his country. He was an unabashed patriot. He served proudly in World War II. As my father tells it:

In 1942 I was shipped out of Fort Dix as an Army private and arrived by train at an Army pier on 58th Street in Brooklyn. I had a total of six days of Army service and the rest of my colleagues were equally untrained and unskilled. After lining up on the pier with our barracks bags, we were given the command "Prepare for embarkation." This was a rather unnerving experience. We were loaded on a sea-going tug which we thought would take us out to a troop transport but instead took us to Fort Hamilton. I took basic training at Ft. Hamilton and the Brooklyn Army Base and became a military policeman, patrolling the taverns on 58th Street armed with a night stick and a Colt 45—the perfect assignment for an Irishman with a law degree. After several months in the Peace Corps in Brooklyn, I was shipped overseas—to Staten Island.

You see what I mean about self-deprecating humor.

It was the war experience as well, that created the greatest opportunity of my father's lifetime for it was in 1944 that he met Rosie Connelly, the Colonel's secretary.

A classic love affair that would last fifty years. Complete love and affection, loyalty and fidelity—in sickness and in health. My father habitually called my mother from one to three times a day from work just to tell her he loved her.

This loving relationship produced three children and six grandchildren who adore their parents and grandparents. Their love was evident to all who knew them. Certainly it was clear in the good times and there were so many—and so many of you were a part of them. I can't begin to describe them because we don't have the rest of the month and there aren't enough tissues in Bronxville.

Many words have been used the last few days to describe my father. They have all been heartfelt and they have all been accurate.

A prince among men, a giant, a mighty oak. He *was* a giant. Physically, intellectually, spiritually, and emotionally.

As a child, I viewed him as a human jungle gym. You could hang from his arms and dangle from his knees and legs as he sat and read his books or watched TV, smoking his pipe.

His hands were strong. He had a vise-like grip. Of course, he never much talked about nor was impressed by his physical strength because he was taught, believed and passed on the simple truths that you were born to know, love, and serve God in this world to be happy with him in the next.

Some people may snicker, of course, but my father was steadfast. He was not impressed with material things. He always had the proper perspective. He was just a little better focused than most. How many times did we hear him say, after having listened to the usually exaggerated tales of someone else's financial killing or latest conspicuous consumption: "But what has he done to save his immortal soul?"

The yuppie maxim, "He who dies with the most toys wins" is simply antithetical to everything in which my father believed.

My father did not have toys. He had values. He didn't know a Mercedes from a Volkswagen and he could not have cared less. He never even had a driver's license.

The values which he held he imparted to everyone with whom he ever came into contact. Witness the outpouring of respect for my father over the last few days. Tell me again, who wins?

My father had the comedic writing ability of Neil Simon. He had the timing of Bob Hope and the delivery of Jack Benny.

Neither Broadway nor Hollywood were his destiny of course. Perhaps they could have been. He did serve on the Board of Directors of 20th Century Fox under Darryl Zanuck. They became friends. This provided great fodder for the after-dinner circuit. Did you know that my father directed "Tora Tora Tora?"

My father would have been the ideal Commissioner of Baseball. He had the knowledge of the game, the stature, and the experience. Had he held the position in 1994, I can't believe that what happened to our national pastime would have occurred.

My father loved New York. He loved the Bronx of his youth. He loved the Dominican nuns who taught him in grammar school and he loved his experience at Cathedral Prep. Fortunately, certainly for me, my father, as well as his life-long friend, the brother he never had, Joe Crowley, realized before it was too late that they didn't really have a calling for the priesthood and they left to continue their education at Fordham.

He worshipped his father, Steve, and his mother, Jane, our daughter Jenny's namesake. Many of you knew Mom Mulligan who was legendary around here. She doted on her son. I wish you knew his father. A large, devout, quite simple man who my mother says was the sweetest man she ever knew. He loved his sister Jane, twelve years his junior. Beautiful, effervescent and a great aunt. I pray they are reunited today in paradise.

My father loved his years as Dean of the law school. He loved his faculty. He also loved the martini lunches at Des Artistes, 100 to 1 straight up with a twist and Lord help the waiter who botched that order!—Keefe, O'Keefe, Calamari and Perillo, Fogelman, Kessler, Phillips, Manning, McLaughlin, McGonagle, McAniff, Sweeney, Byrne, Crowley and his beloved Gus Katsoris and so many more. They each left their mark on generations of Fordham lawyers.

My father loved his home at Sturgis Road into which we moved in February 1956 when we moved from North Pelham. The Bronxville experience began. The happiest days of our life. St. Joseph's School, the Men's Club—the Mother's Club. The good times. As Bobby Linder said the other night, "the happy house." All friends were wel-

come. The parties were legendary. It broke my heart to miss my parent's twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. I was serving diligently in the National Guard at the time. I did not miss my father's fiftieth birthday party in March 1968. It is a fact that this party is still talked about. It was impromptu—less than twenty-four hours notice. *No one* declined. *Everyone* was overserved. It was the Irish Mafia at its best. Singing and laughter and well into the night—what a group.

You had to know this group. This World War II generation. They worked hard and they played hard. They were faithful mates and loyal friends. They took trips together, they stood by each other in good times and bad. The legacy continues through today. You could take an invitation list to a cocktail party at my parents' house in 1962 and match it thirty-four years later against the names on the floral arrangements at McGrath's this week. That says it all about continuity and loyalty.

My father loved to teach and he loved being Dean. But I believed he most cherished his career on the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit from 1971-1981. This was a Court, as my father once pronounced to the New York County Lawyers Association, which was known, up *until* the time of his abrupt elevation to it, for the "the wisdom, scholarship, probity and dignity of its membership." Any self-doubt or doubts of others about my father's qualifications to serve on the bench quickly dissipated.

His scholarship, temperament, collegiality, knowledge, and pursuit of excellence, always tinged with the right amount of humor, served him well and gained him the respect and devotion of his colleagues as witnessed by the presence of so many Federal Jurists both at his wake on Wednesday and Thursday and in attendance today. This experience was shared by my father with a special group. As Jesus Christ had his apostles, my father had his clerks. He loved each one of you as if you were his own.

My father resigned from the bench in 1981. Why retire from such a prestigious bench with a lifetime salary guarantee? Why leave a job you so thoroughly enjoyed? My father's response was simple but his decision was not easily made: "I love the federal bench but I love my family more. I can live on the salary but I can't die on it."

My father then enjoyed an all too short career at Skadden Arps, the most successful law firm in the history of this country. He loved the firm, was able to put all of his talents to use, and contributed to the continuing success of the firm. I want to thank that firm for the consideration and concern they extended to my father and family, especially in those critical months following my father's first illness in 1989, and which continues today. It will never be forgotten.

So, as you can see, my father had a long and rewarding life. His children never lacked for love, attention, guidance, or advice.

I have talked about my parents' love and affection for each other. In health, it glowed. But, in sickness, it took on dimensions that most people can only dream about. I thought my father and mother had reason to be bitter, to complain. How could such a mighty man be robbed of his vitality? How could such a loving couple be denied the peace and tranquility of their golden years? But there was never a complaint, not a whimper. For they still had each other—which is all that ever counted.

God bless you, Dad. Heaven is a bit brighter today and the laughter a little louder. May you rest in peace.