

Mammy's Eulogy, by Geoff Dobson
April 19, 2017

Hello, for those of you who don't know me, my name is Geoff Dobson, Peggy's first grandchild. Margaret Peggy Mammy Flaherty was born on April 24, 1928 to Helen and John Moffit. She grew up on Rochelle Street, attended St Canice grade school and then South Hills High School where she met many lifelong friends, and graduated in 1946. If I got any of those dates wrong, keep it to yourself please. During a eulogy you're supposed to tell at least a couple stories, so I will. And it was actually a wonderful pleasure to walk up to countless family and friends of mammy over the past two days and ask them to please tell a Mammy story. The oldest story I heard was from Stella who described a wonderful Saturday afternoon in 1942 when Peggy, Ida, and Stella went to Ida's aunt's house for perms. Ida's aunt was running a sort of jitney hair saloon and didn't have hair dryers, so she put each of the young ladies heads into the oven to dry their hair. Speaking of hair, Mammy loved getting her hair done. It was very important. Here in this church, I believe, Mammy's oldest hair dresser and most recent hair dresser are both in attendance. Many years ago, Mammy would go with a few of her best friends to Joe Zarvis, every Saturday morning, and get her hair done for \$2. And for the past 25 years, until very recently, she would go to Sue Ellsworth to get her hair done. Sue wouldn't tell me how much she charged Mammy, but I think it was more than \$2.

On August 6, 1949 Peggy married Leo Flaherty, which we're all very happy about, since many here in attendance can call Peggy and Leo, mom, dad, Aunt Peg, Uncle Leo, Mammy and Dedo... or our great friends. Mammy and Dedo had a wonderful romance, wonderful marriage, and a wonderful life. Mammy adored Dedo, for good reason. If you look around the house on Grouse Drive, you'll see many pictures of Dedo, and also three other gentlemen: Frank Sinatra, Pope Francis, and Tom Selleck. In Mammy's later years, they were the men that gave her some comfort, in the absence of Dedo. The pope through his liturgy, Frank through his music, and Tom Selleck through his expert command of a fictional New York Police Department, dashing looks, and overly comfortable dinner time sweaters. I'd like to share a quote from each of these great men, that I think directly relate to Mammy's wonderful life.

Last year on a visit to South America Pope Francis was talking about family to young couples, and said: "Faith grows when it is lived and shaped by love. That is why our families, our homes, are true domestic churches. Love is shown by little things, by attention to small daily signs which make us feel at home." That quote really struck me, because I can think of many, many little things... like the condensation on the glass of her front door as we walked up the steps to Thanksgiving dinner. And walking inside and the smell of the food cooking.. I know that everyone here today is recalling those sights and smells at this moment. Mammy and Dedo's house was the most welcoming, hospitable, and loving place in the world. It was a place where you could go, and immediately upon walking in, you were welcomed with a huge smile, and big hugs. They wanted to know about the great report card, the game winning run, the dance recital rehearsal, and all of the other things that were important to us, and Mammy and Dedo knew all about. Those conversations were so important to me, that I still called Mammy and Dedo after every college baseball game to tell them about it. If homes are domestic churches, as Pope Francis said, then 1251 Grouse Drive was the cleanest church in the history of the world. Mammy was epically clean. Over the past two days I heard many Mammy cleaning stories. For

instance, on the days when Mammy was hosting Card Club, none of her children were allowed to use the rest room. They had to go next door to Rectenwald's. Dedo used to joke about how easy the job was for any housekeeping staff the day after Mammy stayed in a hotel. And everyone knows that you weren't allowed to throw anything away at the condo at Ocean City until the garbage can was disinfected.

The next quote is from Tom Selleck. He once said: "Hopefully you marry someone who you not only love, but who you like as well." There is no doubt that Mammy and Dedo were both in love and great, great friends. Mammy and Dedo were the example of a loving, respectful, playful, nearly perfect marriage. Some of the stories I heard over the past two days were in this exact vein. Stories like the expert jitterbug dancing, interrupting Mammy scratching Dedo's back while they watched Hawaii Five O, and the "Lucky Lady Crops".

The third quote is from Frank. He once said "Alcohol may be man's worst enemy. But the bible says love your enemy." Does anyone here know the Wine Time genesis story? I'm actually embarrassed to say that I just heard it, for the first time, two days ago. It was January 1960. Nancy and Bill McGurvy had just moved in, across the street from Mammy and Dedo, on Grouse Drive. Mammy, being the ever social, hospitable, and neighborly woman she was, walked across the street, and said, hello to the new neighbor... and asked if she'd like to have a cup of coffee. Gurv said, "Coffee? It's five o'clock, how about a glass of wine!" Wine time was born.

I grew up in the 80s.. the age of booming capitalism, and movies like Wall Street. Every kid I knew had the same goal for their life: get rich! Over the years, you get older, and hopefully wiser. And nine years ago, I had the pleasure to attend Mammy's 80th birthday party, attended by over 100 people. And these people were real, real friends. I remember looking around and noticing that every person in attendance had deep knowledge of Mammy, and had spent a lot of time with her. She had gone to school with these friends, and went on vacation with these friends, and shared dinner with and held the babies of these friends. She laughed and cried with these friends. It was that moment that I realized, richness isn't measured in dollars, it's something else. And it dawned on me, Mammy is quite rich. Nine years later, I'm still trying to measure it, and I think to myself:

- She had a viewing where at least twenty people told me it was the loudest viewing they had ever been to, I think Mary Ann is hoarse today
- She had twelve club card friends who she spent time with nearly every month of her entire life, that's approximately 93,000 hands of gin rummy
- She had six children, fifteen grandchildren and fifteen great grandchildren, nearly all living within several miles of her, that's approximately 850 birthday parties attended
- She spent a week every year on 41st street with the love of her life, and over 100 of her best friends, that's approximately 11 pounds of salt water taffy consumed, 308 beach sunsets, 616 tide changes, 15,140 waves jumped, 33,352 miles driven to and from, and 39,000 ounces of liquor purchased from the wishing well
- She watched nearly every Steeler game for over five decades, with close friends and family at her side, she witnessed approximately 257,000 yards gained by her beloved Steelers.

- She lived next door to her sister, who also had six children, making Grouse Drive the home base for family meals for nearly a century, that's approximately 374,000 plates served
- She hosted wine time, at her house, every day of the year, at five o'clock, for the past 13 years, that's approximately 113,000 glasses of wine shared

Yes, Mammy is the richest woman I've ever known.

At Dan Rooney's funeral just the other day, Kevin Colbert was asked: "How do you replace the irreplaceable?" He said: "I guess you take what he gave us and you try to give it to someone else". I agree. I call on all of us to reinvest the riches that Mammy has passed on to us, and carry on her legacy with warmth, laughter, and love.