

Jody's Eulogy

On behalf of my aunts, my dad's two sisters Lahni and Linda, Sam and Andrew, Curt and I thank you for coming today. My father of course would say that there are far better things for you to be doing on a crisp fall day. My father spent 37 years in the navy, his last position as vice chief of the defence staff. He had an unusual path to becoming an Admiral, and Commander of the Navy. Born in Kelowna he joined the navy to be educated and help support his sisters after their father then their mother died when they were all very young. He began as an engineer, in the first class of the Venture Plan the post ww2 program to rebuild the RCN, becoming an engineer simply because he was good at math, and he rapidly became the Engineering officer of HMCS Jonquiere Antigonish Saskatchewan. Always observant of how and why people succeeded he determined his path to leadership was by becoming a surface officer. He essentially trained himself. Wrote exams. Passed them and talked his CO, Commander Robbie Hughes into letting him stand bridge watches. In his last conversation with Robbie Hughes, before Robbie died dad was able to thank him for giving him the opportunity that changed everything. In the navy careers are measured by commands. His ship time as a junior officer was almost entirely as engineer he then had several staff jobs, before being sent to Saint John NB to manage the trouble ridden build of HMCS Preserver- Jim Irving still speaks of when my dad showed up, he then was commissioning XO of Preserver CO of Fraser and Commanding Officer here in Victoria of the 4th Canadian Training squadron. He believed deeply in the need to recruit and train young Canadians to be the future of the Navy and threw himself into revamping the training system - this time in his career was everyone's favourite. Living in Victoria was glorious for us all. In 1979 we moved to Ottawa from Kingston and his life's work and greatest challenge began. He was tasked to recapitalize the Canadian Navy. The Canadian Frigate Program became his all encompassing obsession, his sole focus, it was his mission and it could not fail. He was determined that the navy would see new ships while he was serving and he worked endlessly, with what he described as the greatest post war group of officers this country had seen, to achieve this goal. His legacy was 2 harbours of ships that had seen his imprint. He of course didn't care about legacy. He felt he did his job, and gave credit to those who travelled the 10 probably 15 year journey with him. My dad believed deeply in this country. In its sovereignty, in the need to be able to defend ourselves. He equally believed that only in Canada could a kid from the wrong side of the tracks lead an institution like the RCN. It's why he never left. He had zero tolerance patience or time for officers who abused their position or who allowed their egos rather than the job to drive them. As all of you can imagine, he had much to say to me about the current crisis in the military- I found strength in his voice and often used his words as I talked about the crisis in my last job. I

struggle to find the words to describe my dad. There are so many ways to describe him but nonetheless I struggle. His intelligence was near genius, he could process ideas so quickly, explain things so rationally so logically, he grasped concepts, he spoke with eloquence and passion, every word used with conviction, he was fearless in giving advice and once said to me that to not speak to truth to power was not only intellectually dishonest it was an utter waste of time ...He welcomed challenge and he enjoyed a difference of opinion. He was tough there is no doubt and his expectations were high, he understood mistakes, but could not tolerate, at work or at home indolence or superficial effort. His sense of humour was huge and He loved to tell a story. He was himself to the last day of his career. Resigning because he felt he could not mislead the men and women of the armed forces by agreeing to doing more or the same, with less. His love of debate and ideas is why he and my mom were so perfectly suited. It is impossible for me to speak of my dad without talking about my mom. He told us that he knew he would marry her the first time he saw her, her red hair catching his eye. They were a fierce team, they loved each other profoundly, they respected each other enormously and they truly were happiest in each other's company, chatting away, each with a book and Airedale at their feet. We were blessed to see what a marriage should be. Of course no marriage is without its bumps. They never bickered. But when they argued - Those giant brains could use words in combinations that were terrifying,- even the dogs hid, as an adult they just made me laugh They challenged each other to be better, they built a home of love and warmth, a place where we all wanted to be Anyone who knows me, knows my father was my hero. I adored him. He taught me everything I know about leadership, ethics and courage . He taught me how to fail and come back, what resilience really means. His love was unconditional, he was till the end my greatest and most trusted advisor. I had the privilege of working in his world twice, as a junior officer and then as a public servant, I saw his leadership and his impact through two lenses, I am forever grateful He was odd as a dad, he talked to us from the time we were small about politics, books, sports. He was away a lot, at sea and business travel. But that's not what I remember. I remember hours on our catamaran on lake Charles. Skiing in Quebec. Sing alongs to show tunes - he loved a show tune. Discussions about every book - he gave me a copy of Robert Kennedy and his Times when I was 14. I still have it. And of course Golf which was sometimes a good thing and often not. When he was home he attended every event, game every match Megan or I had - he did this while completing his MBA, part time. I am not sure when he slept. He was energy. He was interesting and he was the core of our family. He was not tall but he was a towering figure. He was, for me, perfect. Perfect as he was as a father, he was an even better grandfather. He was in awe of his grandchildren. I remember when Sam was about two months old him saying that She must be much smarter than me

(her mother his daughter) because he didn't remember me being interesting as a baby. I will note that promoted a quick rebuke from my mother of - how would you know you were not here. Convo ended, sentiment appreciated none the less. My mom was a magnet for kids and dogs and as such dad was determined to have a relationship with the kids that was all his own. Sam as a baby was scared of his deep voice so he began a charm offensive taking her for breakfast every Wednesday. Typical him. Problem defined. Solution found. They became quite well known around Victoria on their breakfast dates. He continued the tradition with Andrew, though it was a slightly different experience with his rambunctious bear than with polite sam. In Sam he saw mom, in Bear himself. Nothing made him happier than both of them, with Bryant and Shannon being in the house, the noise, the energy and the ridiculous discussions filled him with joy. In august he said to me, how wonderful it was to see both kids settled. Success in their careers and with partners that made them happy, made them better, dad quickly loved Shannon and Bryant, though perhaps he loved Shannon a little bit more. The last two years were hard. He struggled with the rapid loss of mom and Megan. He was good at so many things, but he by his own admission was not good at getting old. An athlete all his life, He resented his diminished body, he hated his failing memory Curt the kids and I would like to thank so many of you who helped him. Checked in on him. Made sure he was at men's night dinner, included him in every gathering. We would also like to thank our friend Cheryl Simonds King who helped us plan today He golfed on the Saturday before he died. That's not bad for 87 but it was no longer fun. And that I think says it all. He is with mom and Megan. He is happy again. we are blessed to have experienced life with this remarkable man. From orphan to admiral it was an extraordinary 86.5 years on this planet. I hope that as you look to the ocean and when you see a gray hull in the distance that you think of him and smile. That ship was his life's work. It was a good life.