

CELEBRATION OF LIFE MEMORIES AND TRIBUTES

When we planned the Celebration of Life for Dennis, we wanted it to truly be about Dennis, the person he was and the lives he touched. To honor Dennis, we asked that people send us memories or tributes to be read at the service to really make it about him and the lives he touched.

Several people including Curt Heath, Ann Heath and Colin Smith spoke of their relationship and memories of Dennis rather than have them read. People First Member Terry Schwartz also talked during the service about his relationship with Dennis.

The rest of the memories and tributes were read by Phil McBrien and Judith Steele who had been co-spiritual counselors with Dennis at Willamette Valley Hospice and officiated at his Celebration of Life.

Curt Heath

It is hard to be here. The last time I saw Dennis was when he officiated at our older brother Rollie's funeral on September 28. Rollie died on September 19. Now Dennis too is gone.

I was 7 years younger than Dennis but as we grew up, I always felt important to him as he involved me in playing sports. Baseball and basketball were important parts of our lives as we grew up. We were competitive because our father was a Hall of Fame athlete in North Dakota. He taught us to do our best, be competitive and work hard. Dennis had these traits throughout his life. He could have played major league baseball but instead chose to go to Wartburg Seminary to enter the Lutheran Ministry. His service to others who needed help was evident his entire life. He treated people at Fairview Hospital in Salem with developmental disabilities, then went on in his later life to continue with chaplain responsibilities and working with Hospice for those who needed support in the dying process in Salem. If that isn't being a servant on earth as God wanted then I do not know what else he could have done better.

On a lighter note, Dennis had his light side of what he thought was fun when in our younger days Roland, Dennis and I were talking loudly upstairs and Dad opened the door and yelled for us to quiet down and go to sleep. Dennis in his own way said "come up old man and talk in person to us." Dad came up stairs with a purpose to respond to the statement. We all got a quick shot to our back side. I personally didn't understand my hit but took it. Dennis when dad left smiled and then we all went to sleep.

If anyone could leave a legacy of love, compassion and caring for his family, other people and his brothers, Dennis did it with quality. I will miss you brother but know you are in a better place. You will be missed by many.

Love you Brother

Ann Heath

About a month before Dennis died, he came up to me at Fred Meyers and made a point of telling me “We had a lot of very good times” and I said “Yes, you were the Best!”. It occurred to me later that he was wanting to make sure I knew this and was a kind of closure. I was glad I could say that to him. All of us at this age understand when we say goodbye it could be forever and important to tell people we loved them.

Stephany asked me to write about my time with Dennis, especially about how he organized a whole “resocialization” program in Kansas City for persons coming out of state hospitals as well as the beginnings of his work and advocacy with People First in Salem.

I met Dennis in early 1971. I was working in a community mental health program in Kansas City, he had finished his social work degree and was also working there in a different dept. Dennis showed up at a staff meeting of psychiatric social workers and challenged them to go out into the community. He described how one of his clients told him, “You’d be depressed if you lived where I do”, so Dennis went to a gloomy poorly lit room, in a slum hotel where this man lived. Dennis said there was someone in the other bed and he wasn’t sure if the guy was alive. He wanted the social workers to get out of their offices and meet people where they lived. After his impassioned plea I went up to him afterwards and said, “I want to do that”, and that’s how our friendship began.

Out of that small start in the community mental health center, Dennis started a resocialization movement aimed at helping folks from the institutions begin to acclimate and join society outside those walls. The centerpiece were groups he started with residents of the slum hotels and boarding houses. This was very unique, and the psychiatric social workers didn’t ever really leave their silos. But Dennis advocated nonstop, he was a man on a mission. The groups were a joy and we worked together, sharing the friendship of very institutionalized residents starting to wake up to the world and join society. Dennis had just finished his social work degree at U of Kansas, though he was already a Lutheran minister. He was not dogmatic about his faith. He espoused the idea of a “church without walls” and the belief the God is Love and “dynamic loving energy”. This I could accept.

He was action oriented, and we were kindred spirits in believing we could make change. He had the leadership skills and the confidence of a minister and was never intimidated by authority figures. I was amazed that he could walk into any group and inspire them to action. I was more of a fellow traveler, loved working for a larger cause. Dennis, in a short time, recruited over 100 volunteers, who learned the group “resocialization” model he had written, and then went into the residences. The slum landlords started fixing up the residences out of shame and he outed a social worker from the state hospital who was getting paid on the side when he placed someone in these places. A wealthy businessman donated a residential building to be a model for “doing it right”.

One of my favorite memories of our early time together was coming home to my apartment and there was Dennis out on the lawn surround by neighborhood children. I drove up and took one look at him flipping burgers and hotdogs surrounded by those beautiful children laughing and playing, and thought, “I have found the perfect man for me.”

Because of his community organizing success in Kansas City and because Dennis wanted to be back close to his sons Jeremy and Joel, he took a job doing community development for Fairview training Center in Salem. Dennis was a one-man community organizer, persuading and supporting, befriending group home providers who agreed take only Fairview residents moving out, creating openings in the community. Again, we shared in this work, I was hired also by Fairview and worked in social services, assigned to the unit where residents were identified to move out. We were on a mission to get everyone out as believed it was their right and we felt they were being held prisoner based on their disability.

In November 1973 we drove to British Columbia with 3 residents of Fairview for a conference about self-advocacy. This conference was organized by professionals and the participants from Oregon wanted an organization planned by people with disabilities themselves with assistance from advisors, when needed.

In January 1974 the People First Movement started, and the people planned their own convention to get the word out. The Inn at Otter Crest was booked, and the date set in October. None of the establishment case managers, Mental Health Division higher ups, professionals, had enough courage to promote this conference, all afraid it would be a flop, or worse, cause injuries, or maybe no one would show. Feared a total disaster and didn't want their names attached.

We drove to the coast nervously that Sat morning with Josh and Joanna and it was incredible. The roadways were full of buses and vans and cars from the DD community

group homes, and community program. The place was packed, over 500 people showed up. The People First participants came with suitcases, fancy clothes for the big dance, lots of ideas and determination, and it was a terrific success. At the banquet, mic open to anyone who wanted to speak, the participants lined up for an hour at least. All were adamant, that this "name calling" (Retarded) must stop. There was such pride. The staff who attended just gave up trying to supervise and lo and behold the place didn't burn down, no one fell off the cliff and it was a very happy beginning to what became an international organization. The Inn at Otter Crest staff enjoyed everyone and provided great courteous service and turned away other people to make room.

The convention and movement were front page, top banner of the Statesman Journal the next day. After that the mental health professional jumped on board and immediately took credit for the whole thing. It angers me that Dennis' name is not mentioned when People First gets touted as a great movement because without Dennis there would be no People First. But that was the way Dennis wanted it.

Sadly, and painfully, our marriage didn't last, and we divorced in 1981. We came, after Dennis happily married Stephany, to a place of friendship again, and although co-parenting was a new idea at the time it was our model. I remember someone seemed surprised how our family had multiplied and seemed to get along, as though they thought that was weird. We did show up in large groups at the games and events. I asked that person if they would prefer, we all hatred each other, which was a common divorce model at the time. He was the dad, and I was the mom and no one else could really be that, so we made amends to each other. Dennis' family and Stephany have always made me feel I am an extended family member.

Tim Jacobs

I first met Dennis when I moved to Salem in 1973 and began working with people living at Fairview Training Center. At the time I had little experience in mental health services. I was told that this dynamic social worker, Dennis Heath, was working out of Fairview with people who had recently been placed in the Salem community. He was running a support group for his clients, and I attended his group to see what this was all about. I was so impressed with his skills at facilitating this group, and later many groups throughout Salem, I told myself that I had to learn how to do this. The several support groups that Dennis and others initiated laid the foundation for People First. He was a master for accepting people for who they are. He also listened carefully to what they are saying and giving them a platform to say it. In my almost 40 years as a social worker, the most valuable skills I have developed in working with people, I learned from Dennis.

Dennis was also a good friend. He taught me how to barbeque a chicken from a recipe he used when he was going to Divinity school. We attended Trailblazer games together

and commiserated over other sports teams we both liked. When my wife and I were ready to married, Dennis performed the ceremony in his capacity as a minister. In the last 10 years we got together annually for lunch to share our experiences of growing older.

As many of you know, People First became so prolific, it spread across the U.S. and into several foreign countries. I was reminded of this on a trip to Germany in 2019. While in Berlin my wife and I visited a memorial to the tens of thousands of disabled people who were murdered in the holocaust. On that memorial is a tribute to those victims written by a German woman who signed her name and identified herself as a member of People First of Germany.

We all feel a sense of satisfaction when we have a positive impact on people in our family and our community. Through People First, Dennis had an impact on people all over the world.

Terry Schwartz

Terry was a resident of Fairview when Dennis started working there in 1972. Dennis was his social worker. Terry was involved right from the start with the People First movement and he spoke of the conference at the Inn at Otter Crest in 1974 that started it all. Terry also spoke of his years of friendship with Dennis including how he helped move people out of Fairview into the community and the time they had traveled to Japan at the invitation of People First of Japan in 2005.

FAMILY

Dennis loved his blended family unconditionally. Whether his children were adopted, biological, step children or his wife's nephew he treated them all the same. He was their dad and they were his children. Their memories and tributes to him reflect how much his unconditional love meant to them. Dennis also cared greatly for his extended family and tried to be there for them in good times and bad.

Son Jeremy Heath

I remember my father as a man whose life was always spent in service to others. From starting a church for the poorest of the poor, to encouraging and mentoring those who were the most abandoned by society. And finally helping those who at the end of their lives who. were the most helpless. It was a common thread, something that drove him. Reminds me of his dad, my grandfather Mel. A man who took me in; an adopted grandson, but to Mel I was one of the family. With Mel I felt like I mattered, like I could fit in. That's what my dad tried to do for those around him. He defined himself by what he could do to help those who needed help. Faults, sure. Perfect, thankfully no. The world is definitely better for his presence. Thanks Dad

Son Joshua Heath

My father was a hard-working soul who provided for his family and found innovative ways to level the playing field for those who were treated unfairly. I am proud to be his son and try to take up the life lessons he taught me. That is, to be kind, compassionate, and considerate of others, even when getting thru tough times, as life can throw us a curve ball when least expected. I remember the times I spent with him as a kid and teenager, wondering how he became so committed to the work he loved, and how I might grow up to be like him. My father addressed both young and old in his work and life with the wisdom to deal with both tragedy and great loss as well as success and achievements. He instilled in me love of family, hard work, and community in a way that was extraordinary. I could talk to my father about anything and he would help me solve problems. He advised me to take care of myself so I would treat other people the same way as I liked to be treated. He helped me feel good about myself and get clarity about how to move forward. He taught me to understand the importance of having someone there to listen and provide comfort and I will miss him.

Daughter Joanna Heath

Dad, you made this world a better place. You held up a torch of hope in the neglected corners of humanity. Through your tireless social work as a Lutheran Minister, in the slums of Kansas City, to your self-advocacy work at Fairview, Spiritual counseling, and Hospice, here in Salem, you have helped so many. You never wanted any glory for yourself. Instead, you encouraged everyone to feel the warmth of love and self-empowerment that you knew resides in of all of us.

As my father you taught me how to build a fire to keep me and the family warm. As a man in the world, you showed me how to ignite fires in the hearts of people through caring, kindness, and selfless action.

The year I was born you lit a candle of hope that help start the grassroots human rights movement of People 1st. People 1st has now spread around the world. When you came back from Japan, after helping establish their model of people 1st you inspired me when you said you had seen how humans around the world are all connected, like trees who share the same roots.

You taught me to give before I take, and showed me that even though life may seem like a competition that what really matters is helping others in need, when we can, without expecting anything in return. To let go of the cold, greedy energy, and with a generous spirit, be one with the warm grace of true humanity.

"Den" Heath I have been proud to call you my Father. I love you

Son Colin Smith

Colin chose to stand up and speak of his memories of Dennis. These are his notes:

1st memory

Around 2nd grade while starting a new soccer team I was met by this whirlwind of a large man with thick wavy hair and the most enthusiastic attitude I had encountered. He was so supportive and encouraging always yelling things like “Good job!” and “Way to go”, he was an incredible positive male role model which had a tremendous influence on me then and still does till this day.

Cool Dad

My relationship with Dennis continued outside of soccer because I was close friends with his son Josh. Often Dennis would pick Josh up from Leslie Middle School in his blue VW bug, sporting turtlenecks, sports coats and always smoking a pipe. He was a quintessential cool dad for the time. He would let Josh shift the gears of the VW as he drove us home which really was such a cool dad move. Dennis never once turned me down for a ride expect for the time he said, “...not today, Colin, today I am taking Josh to a nursing home to visit with the residents, you’re welcome to come along if you want.” Being all of 14, hanging out with nursing home residents did not seem like the thing I wanted to do after school, so I declined but his teaching compassion to Josh by taking him to interact with nursing home residents always stuck with me. Dennis was always devoted to community service.

Patient and Supportive Stepdad

My relationship with Dennis turned to family when he became our stepdad. Soon after that there would be 6 teenagers under our one roof more often than not. Dennis handled this chaos with his usual patience and support. He never asked for a thank you for the things he did for the family. Though often after returning from the grocery store with a receipt as long as an ancient scroll, he would hang it from the refrigerator hoping to get an acknowledgement of just how much money was being spent on the family. Unfortunately for Dennis this was a big ask for teenagers and usually all he got as a response was a question such as “why did you forget my Rice Chex cereal?”

Dennis was always supportive of his kids’ activities, whether it was soccer games, baseball games, track meets, whatever, if his kids were enthusiastic about something he would try to show up and support them. Such as the time, in 1994, when he as well as the rest of the family came down to Eugene to join me for a Grateful Dead concert that just happened to fall on Father’ Day. Even though Dennis did not listen to the Grateful Dead he was excited to be a part of an experience I had been boasting about for years. The funny thing was, as Dennis strolled around the parking lot scene before the actual

concert, he looked like he belonged there more than most of the faithful fans with his smoking pipe and fanny pack. That is the sort of ease and joy that he projected.

Missing Dennis

I will miss Dennis. I will miss the secret language that he and I shared which revolved around sports. The ease with which one of us could comment on a game like "Lucky, we got a win today" and in that moment whether by phone or text we would be saying so much more to each other. It is how we said "I love you" to each other and I will miss that special connection immensely. I will miss how Dennis would decide to stop watching games when his team fell too far behind or were playing "pathetic" or "puny" as he would like to say and many times his teams would rally in amazing ways and end up winning which would always shock him the next day when he heard the news of what he had missed in those games.

I will miss Dennis and his ability to predict the arrival of fall every year like a living Farmer's Almanac. Typically, sometime in late August, usually on a still hot a summerlike day, Dennis would randomly turn to the wind sniff it a bit and say "smells like autumn is starting" which usually led to stunned disbelief because like I said it was usually a warm sunny day when these predictions were uttered. Amazingly these predictions of autumn's return were far more often correct than incorrect.

I will miss these types of moments.

Mariners Hat

I brought a Mariner's hat with me as it symbolizes the relationship Dennis and I shared. The hat was bought for me by Dennis on the last trip we took together. In June 2007 Dennis and I went up to Seattle to see a couple of Mariner games like we often did. We got a hotel room to share as we usually did, only this time the power and volume of Dennis' snoring finally caught up with me and kept me up all night. I decided then and there that if and when Dennis and I took another trip we would need to have separate rooms, but we never did take another trip together and I will forever miss those moments. Like now, with Dennis gone from us, I would give anything to be stuck sleepless at 3:24am in a hotel room listening to him loudly snore the night away.

Which brings me to my last point. Make sure to love one another, not just the easy stuff but the difficult things as well. Nobody is perfect we all suffer from faults and weaknesses, loving people's symbolic cracks in the sidewalk is where true love happens and Dennis embodied this selfless sort of love every day of his life.

I WILL MISS HIM.

Daughter Devon Smith Toomey

My dad Pa is one of the most kindest, caring, loving people I have ever met. He truly did love everyone regardless of race, disability, etc. He gave his entire life to serving others. First as a Lutheran minister in a church he started in an underprivileged part of town. Then as a social worker who worked almost his entire career with people with developmental disabilities. Then as a counselor who provided counseling to those in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. And finally, when most people would have retired by now, as a spiritual counselor with hospice up until just a few years ago. His entire life was spent serving others and loving others. He was generous, kind and caring regardless of who you were. I know, without a doubt, that when he got to Heaven that God told him ***Well Done Good and Faithful Servant, Well Done***. I know that he is now happy, healed and whole in Heaven. Smiling and laughing. Filled with the joy and love he lived life with.

My dad and I shared a special spiritual connection. He and I both believed in the Lord and have lived our lives walking with the Lord. I love that we had that special connection and still do. I love that I always knew he was praying for me. I love that I could call him and ask him for spiritual guidance. I love that when he would visit, we would go to church together. In fact, he was here with us the weekend before he passed and we did online church together and took communion together. During Covid, when all we could do was online church, my dad would call and lead the boys and I in communion. It will always be one of my most special memories. He loved doing that with us. It made him so happy and took that responsibility very seriously. My dad was even the one who baptized my boys and I. So incredibly special and I will hold tight to those memories.

The Lord has always spoken to me through music. Since Pa's passing, he has spoken to me multiple times through music assuring me that Pa is in Heaven... happy, healed and whole with Him. I'll share one of these stories because I feel like my dad really wants you all to know this. I was lying in bed two mornings in a row with lyrics from a song I did not know. I kept hearing this beautiful melody of "I'm coming Home, I'm coming Home, Tell the world I'm coming home." As far as I can recall, I have never heard this song before. And even after finding the song and listening to it, I can tell you, this is not a song I listened to. It's not even in a genre I typically listen to. Yet these same lyrics kept playing in my mind. After two days of this, I looked up the lyrics and when I saw what the chorus said it brought me to tears. I knew instantly that my dad and The Lord were telling me that my dad was safe and sound and thriving in Heaven. The lyrics of this beautiful chorus are... "I'm coming home, I'm coming home, Tell the world I'm coming home, Let the rain wash away all the pain of yesterday, I know my kingdom awaits and they've forgiven my mistakes, I'm coming home, I'm coming home, Tell the world I'm coming home." My dad

Pa is home. And it's good. And he wants us to know that he is good and that he is right where he is supposed to be.

My dad showed me what a true, unconditionally loving dad is. And for that I am beyond grateful. He came into my life when I was 12 and never treated me as anything other than his daughter. I was never his step daughter. I was his daughter and he was my ad. And he was the best dad anyone could ever ask for. He was always my biggest supporter and always had my back. He was such a solid rock of support for me. I will miss him more than I could ever convey with words. I will miss his smile. I will miss his infectious laugh. I will miss his hugs. I will miss the flowers he always got me when he came to visit. I will miss surprising him with new warm, cozy gifts like heating pads and cozy lounge wear. He always loved those surprises! And I loved surprising him. There is so much I will miss about him. I could go on and on.

There are those special people in this world who leave a huge void when they leave this earth. People who change the world for the better while they are here. My dad is one of those people. He truly, truly did make the world a better place in so many ways while he was here. I am beyond grateful that he is and will always be my dad. I love you Pa.

Son-In-Law Jeremy Toomey

Dennis accepted me into the family despite my being a Lakers fan. He held his nose and made peace with it. He was a consummate creature of habit. Whenever he and Stephany would visit, he would always quickly setup a nest and make sure he was on Wi-Fi for Pogo. Wednesday was Pogo Badge Day and he obsessively had to get the new weekly badges so it always meant he would be a little distracted till he got them. If they were visiting during football season, he would eventually come over to have me turn on the Chiefs, Seahawks, or Ducks game. I also knew not to change the channel even if he was snoring on the couch. He had his selected stores in each place we lived to get his coffee, paper and baked goods. Bakers in Omaha. Fred Meyers in Eagle. He almost always came back with something for Devon. Flowers. People magazine. A treat for the boys

Dennis certainly kept life interesting as one never knew what he might say and when he might say it. I can recall talking to him about my frustrations with a neighbor who for months, had a rusted our car hulk up on blocks in his front yard directly across from us. I had told Dennis I was thinking of calling the city about it. The next time Pa visited we were standing in our driveway looking at the mess of a car when he suddenly pointed and asked me very loudly "Jer, isn't that the car you want to call the city about getting hauled out of here? You're right. It is ugly." He shrugged his shoulders and then walked inside. I was left trying to figure out if a neighborhood war had just been started.

I also realized I now had my very own embarrassing Pa comment story to tell over the years. Pa had a well-deserved reputation for being a bit of a loose cannon during conversations. But my favorite memory of him, ironically, is his response to something I said that hurt him. On our wedding day, I ended up introducing Dennis as Devon's step-dad a few times. I introduced him that way because it was simply the easiest and most expedient explanation to members of my family who were meeting him for the first time. Devon informed me at the reception that Pa was upset that I kept referring to him as her step-dad. I certainly did not want to keep upsetting him so I quickly started to introduce him as Devon's dad. But I did take notice of the fact that this hurt him despite the fact that he was technically, her step-dad. It turns out then explanation for his being upset was pretty simple. Dennis was Devon's dad in every way one could be a dad. For decades, he made every effort through thoughtful gestures and kind words to earn the title of being her dad.

I'm not sure what happens to us when we pass. I know Dennis believed in Heaven and I like to imagine him there in a cozy spot with all of his stuff around him. Listening to the radio and playing Pogo on his laptop all while smoking his pipe. Striking up conversations with anyone who wanted to chat. I think he would be watching this ceremony celebrating a life well lived and hopefully feel content. I do wonder though, if his attention may just be slightly split between us and his laptop since today is Wednesday, which means it's Pogo badge day!

Grandson Heath Toomey

My grandfather Pa was one of those people who touched the lives of everyone around him. Someone who cared for others above himself his whole life. He gave up his dream of playing major league baseball to live a life of servitude to others around him. I am very proud to carry on his name and am inspired every day by the selfless life he lived.

Grandson Brooks Toomey

Countless happy memories of mine are tied to experiences with Pa. A lot of these are tied to little traditions of ours. Going to McDonalds at Wild Horse Truck Stop while making the journey between Oregon and Idaho, also going to McDonalds in Idaho near Fred Meyer, and going for rides in his truck all were experiences that always made me happy no matter how many times we had previously done them. I also loved hearing about the newest "Dennie-ism", such as Pa asking me if I had a girlfriend. I replied no, and he then went on to say that since my dad was a doctor, I would have no problem finding a partner in India due to their supposed pre-arranged marriages!

One specific happy memory tied to Pa was when we went through the car wash a while back in Eagle. As we entered, he pretended that we were in the ocean and all the cleaning

devices were ocean life bombarding us all while he pretended to scream in terror. I can still remember how funny it was and both Pa and I were smiling after the experience. Pa was one of the most important people in my life and to me. He never once got upset at me and always remained happy. Pa was just a happy person who made everyone around him feel that. He made this world a better place simply by being on it and extending care and love to all those he met.

Grandson Bowen Toomey

The last weekend I saw Pa he was snoring and I thought it was funny. I laughed about it. He was snoring in a funny way. So I tapped him trying to wake him up. That memory makes me smile. Pa was funny. And he liked me very much. And we shared great memories together. He liked collecting walking sticks and beanie babies. Thank you, Pa, for buying the pastries for me. I'm grateful for the voicemails he sent to me. He's in Heaven with God and he is feeling good and protected.

Son Aden Smith

Dennis loved sports and he loved playing games and he could be very competitive. He and I used to play cribbage and backgammon a lot. At one point he wanted to make it 10 cents a game for backgammon. I would win more times than not and eventually when I had quite a few \$ owed me he put a stop to the wager, lol. Dennis was a wonderful grandfather to Ellery and Sydney. He always gave them his full attention when they were with him

Daughter-In-Law Kim Hill Smith

I met Dennis long before he became 'Pa', but he will always be Pa to me. I told him and Gram not that long ago that I had spent more Christmases with them than with my family of origin. Dennis always made me feel like family, even when technically, I stopped being family. He showed me what family could be and it wasn't something that needed to be avoided. It could be messy, complicated, loud and obnoxious and still safe and full of love. He and Stephany helped give Ellery and Sydney something I didn't have growing up. He loved those girls like crazy. For all of that and so much more I will be forever grateful that I got the privilege of having Pa in my life.

Granddaughter Sydney Smith

It takes death to remember the treasure of life. To cherish every moment you have however small, because one day it will be a distant memory. All memories with Pa like the TV marathons, bottle drop returns, dog walks and conversations, will one day not be normal occurrences anymore. I remember one conversation that stuck with me. Pa and I were sitting out on the deck eating lunch. He was reminiscing about his days at work, when he started talking about "People First". At the end of the conversation, he told me it

is important to try and make a difference when you are young so when you are old you not hearing about the same issues. He taught me the importance of my voice, the depth of my action, and the power of my mind. He was always supportive of my dreams. And was always there when I needed him, because no matter what he would be in my corner, in his family's corner above all else. I always respected him for his love of family. I could not have asked for a better grandpa, He showed up for nearly every orchestra concert, graduation, and was on the sidelines of my soccer games every season. Pa has done so much for me, that I will never forget. He helped make me who I am today and will continue to influence who I become tomorrow.

Granddaughter Ellery Smith

I was Pa's first grandchild which I won't sit here and deny didn't come with its perks especially when I was younger. As a young child I adored my grandfather, I still do, but the admiration changed as I grew older. It started out because he played games with me, playing hotel and dropping everything to do it with me and my sister. Even when a friend stopped by, he told his friend he had to go put mints on his granddaughters' pillows. He would sit in his closet with us playing camping, sitting on the ground in a circle with one of those large flashlights in the middle telling "spooky" stories. Or when we would go to the coast with us every summer, he would race me down the sand dunes, over and over again letting me win every time and making me feel like the fastest girl in the world. Looking back I think I may have actually beaten him every time!

But Pa and my favorite thing to play with just the two of us or with me and my sister Sydney was school up in the loft. He was the teacher and I was the student and there was this funny little imaginary student named Timmy who was always pulling his pants down. After my high school graduation one of the first things he asked me was "do you remember when you and I would play school" and I did. Those times in the loft with him are something I will always cherish forever.

As I grew older my admiration changed. I still adored him for playing with us the way he did. There are not many grandpas who would have done those things. But I also started to learn who he was as a person and I truly started listening to his stories. I admired the way he treated everyone equally no matter who they were. I admired the way family was one of his top priorities, he was always a call away if any of us needed him no matter what and was always willing to just sit in talk. But more than anything I admired the work my grandfather did with the People First Movement. As a class project I interviewed him on his work with the movement and I learned so much about the work he did truly advocating for people who didn't have a voice. But doing it all while staying behind the curtain or as a "helper" as he liked to call himself. The change he sparked all over Oregon and the world was a large contributor to why I'm studying Psychology specifically dealing

with children in the foster care system. He kept telling me how incredibly proud of me he was and how i was going to change the world and the children within it. Without my Pa I wouldn't be half the person I am today. I wouldn't have the drive to help the future generations.

I will be forever grateful for the loving and wonderful grandfather I called Pa.

Nephew and Son Justin Robertson

Dennis was always there for me. He loved and supported me and helped me through some trials and tribulations. I probably wouldn't have graduated from high school without him. I remember his love of sports and his coaching our games. If he wasn't coaching, he was making it to everyone's games from soccer to baseball to track to football even when they were spread out. Dennis was a great guy and I am going to miss him.

Brother-In-law Alan Libin

As I sit here attempting to write this, I am finding it difficult to convey just how much Dennis meant to me. He meant so much to me as he meant so much to all of us. Perhaps my mind wants to hold onto these precious memories. To not reveal all that Dennis was to me as a way to hold on to him. To not let him go.

Dennis was always there with that big mustache smile and a kind word. Never judgmental. Always supportive. He helped guide me through some of the most difficult times in my life. When my father, mother, and brother died within 5 years of each other (my brother and mother a mere six weeks apart) many people offered condolences. Dennis was the only one to offer sound advice to help me get through my darkest days.

During better times Dennis and Stephany would come visit us in Los Angeles. We would have great adventures together. I would take them to the coast, the desert, Indian casinos, wherever we wanted to go on a whim. One time we found a little Mexican restaurant in Palm Springs. We all tried their cactus soup that was absolutely delicious and had a memorable meal. These are the memories I will cherish.

Dennis was a gentleman as well as a gentle man. I will always love him. I will always miss him.

Nephew Brian Heath

Uncle Dennis- Never thought I would have to say good bye only a few weeks after Rollie passed. I will always remember you being so good at dealing with family members who have passed and being there for everyone. You just knew how to deal with grief and made everyone know it's going to be ok. You were there for me when Grandpa died and I thank

you for that. I will really miss the times we would text back and forth about Duck & Blazer games, we always seemed to agree on the good and the bad. Another thing I will miss is you asking for Carsen's baseball schedule to see what ones you could attend. I will never forget when you brought oranges for the whole team, this really made their day. What you probably don't know is how much it meant to me for you to have the chance to watch my son play ball! Heck, you were an all-American and I let Carsen's team know that as well. That was a very special day that I will never forget. We were just recently trying to connect in Idaho, too bad we couldn't have made that happen. I will miss you very much! Say hi to all the family in the heavens. Until we meet again RIP Uncle and thanks for everything you have done while here on earth. Love you and I will see you at the gates, make sure to pull Rollie off the cribbage table to meet me. Had to end with a laugh, because we all seem to do that very well.

Niece Shari Heath Morrelli

When I think of Uncle Dennis, my mind goes back to the Heath family reunions. This was the time of year I looked forward to. We all live busy lives, especially in my younger years with sports and we did not get a chance to see each other very often over the years. I guess back in the day Salem/Portland was way too far! Uncle Dennis was always asking us about how things were with our sports team. We all shared a passion for sports and that was always fun to talk about. Joanna was the stud track star, and he would light up talking about her success! I also remember listening to his stories and watching him interact with his brothers. My Dad was the baby of the family, I enjoyed listening to Rollie and Dennis tell stories of how they picked on their baby brother over the years. I am so very grateful I got to talk to Uncle Dennis just a little over a month ago at Uncle Rollie's service. He kept calling me "Cabo girl" and telling me every time he saw me on Facebook I was in Cabo. Not sure when I will go back, but when I do, I will toast to him for the amazing person he was!

Niece Staci Heath

I remember Uncle Dennis fondly. We may not have got together for every holiday but I knew he loved and supported our family. I enjoyed catching up with him at family reunions or ball games and laughing at all the stories they told about their childhood. In high school, I remember Uncle Dennis sending me an article from the Salem paper about our high school playoff game. He was always proud of the athletic accomplishments in the Heath family. He came to some of my high school and college games and supported me in my coaching career. He came to watch me coach a few times and brought my team bubble gum. He loved to watch softball/baseball and I loved sharing the same passion. It runs in our blood. I will miss you Uncle Dennis and I hope you are up there enjoying some good baseball games with Uncle Rollie, Grandma and Grandpa!!

Niece Laurie Edwards

I loved that every time he called to check in with me, he would call me Niecee. He got the biggest kick out of me being a dog walker later in life. When he would call me to check in, he would ask me if I was walking a dog at the moment and we would just laugh. We even talked about how I could come and visit and walk the new puppy he was getting. Another heartwarming story was the time Eli and I met up with Uncle Curt and Uncle Dennis to help dad with his knee surgery and both Uncles took Eli to lunch and when he was just a little guy. Eli still remembers that time with his great Uncles. A memory that all my kids have is that Uncle Dennis baptized them all. I love him and miss him.

NEIGHBORS

Dennis loved being part of the neighborhood. When a new neighbor moved in he would go to Great Harvest and buy a specialty loaf of bread for them as a welcome to the neighborhood present. When he used to smoke his pipe, he set up his man cave in the garage and he would sit with his computer and TV and his cat Isaac who he inherited from his son Jeremy and watch the neighborhood goings on and talk with any neighbors who came by.

Jim and Jean Southworth

Those of us lucky enough to have lived near Dennis Heath have long considered him as our neighborhood watchman. On sunny days, he'd often sink into a chair on his driveway with a view towards our cul-de-sac. Other times the picture window of his den offered him the same perspective. If something questionable were happening at our house while we were on vacation, I trusted that Dennis would give me a call. Dennis was never nosy or a busy-body in his sentry duty. He simply wanted to look out to make sure everyone was fine. He was less Gladys Kravitz and more Good Shepherd. Dennis's shepherding of us extended not just to the collective neighborhood, but to the individual. When my dad died five years ago, Dennis rang our doorbell a week later just to make sure I was doing okay. From his career as hospice chaplain, he understood how sadness can sometimes manifest after a period of time has passed. "Grief is funny like that," he explained. Dennis also loved to laugh and have fun. Several years ago we chatted on his driveway about our plans for Halloween trick-or-treaters. Dennis told me that he had a surprise for me. On Halloween night, Dennis rang our doorbell with a giant Hershey's chocolate bar in hand. I took a photo of him standing at our door with his Halloween offering and posted it on Facebook. This became our own Halloween tradition. Every year, Dennis would show up at our door on Halloween with a candy bar to *give* instead of *take*. Once I forgot to snap his photo and he prompted me that I needed to record our chocolate ceremony for Facebook again. I grabbed my camera. Halloween just won't

be the same for me this year. Our neighborhood just won't be the same. We already miss you, Dennis. Thank you for showing us what it means to be the best of neighbors.

Bev and John Mayhew

We always told everyone who visited about Dennis, our neighborhood guard dog. We love his protective eye and instinct. He will be missed.

Lana McCoy

Dennis was one of the first neighbors I met here. I waved to him every sunny day as he kept an eye on the neighborhood. He was a wonderful human and he will be missed.

Jerry Munson

Dennis and I became friends for the love of sports, dogs & family. We moved into the neighborhood in July 2004. Dennis would be sitting in his garage/man cave watching TV and would always wave when you drove by. Later I discovered he was watching some form of sports. When fall arrived you could find Dennis and I raking leaves and stopping to talk Duck Football. He loved giving a good harassing on the play call, Good or Bad. Later as technology advanced for both of us (smart phones) there was always multiple texting back and forth during games. As time went by, I found out while out to breakfast at his favorite place, that he played D1 baseball for Portland State. I would have liked to have seen that. As far as dogs go, I would see him every day, rain or shine, taking the dogs to the park. That is dedication! I knew he must have been a great family man because when our grandchildren were playing in the yard he would always find a little time and watch the fun. God Bless Dennis - Glad to have had some time with you

Steve and Sandy Hawes

Steve remembers how, when Dennis heard that their daughter, Patty, was considering a Masters Degree helping folks with dementia and Alzheimer's, he took time to talk with her, encouraging her to go back to school after her retirement. She did. Thanks, in part to Dennis's efforts. Sandy smiles as she remembers Dennis's Halloween tradition of setting up his table in the garage and greeting the little tricker treaters. He was there in all weathers. She says Dennis was a kind thoughtful listener and knew words to comfort in the situation. He was her safe place when her dad passed.

Annette Thorson

Dennis was such a special man. We are blessed to have had him touch our lives. I especially like the day that he walked up to the house to let me know that Andre had driven too quickly around the corner in the rain and hit the curb. Dennis always kept a close eye on the neighborhood, especially our kids, and I love him for that. He was cherished and will be missed by so many.

CO-WORKERS

Dennis kept in touch with coworkers through the years like Tim Jacobs from the early days of People First and the people he had worked with at Willamette Valley Hospice including Scott Dangermond and his co spiritual counselors, Phil McBrien and Judith Steele, who are conducting this service for him.

Scott Dangermond

Being co-workers at Willamette Valley Hospice, I liked and admired Dennis. We enjoyed working in the same organization, but didn't know each other well until we decided to drive to Seattle for a weekend trip to see a couple of Seattle Mariners baseball games, a ritual we eventually repeated several times. My favorite memory from those trips is:

On a Saturday afternoon, the Mariners were playing Kansas City, and Seattle was losing by a couple of runs as we entered the bottom of the ninth inning. We were sitting by a boy, possibly seven or eight years old, and he was increasingly sad and upset as he understood that his favorite team was likely to lose. Dennis thoughtfully showed him how to turn his baseball cap into a "rally cap", a fan tradition and superstition in which you turn your cap inside out or sideways to hopefully turn your team's fate in a positive direction. We also created rally caps, and watched as others in our seating section did the same. Lo and behold, the Mariners rallied and won the game in thrilling fashion. I've never seen a happier boy than I saw that day, and I recognized a look of awe in his eyes as he and Dennis shook hands during the celebration. Absolutely my favorite memory from attending many major league baseball games. Dennis, thanks for the friendship and thanks for the memories.