

Dad Eulogy – 3/23/22 (This is an approximation of what was said as only an outline was kept)

I have good news and bad news. The good news is Lou is in a better place now with Sharon his brothers & sisters & many friends. The bad news for you is I was asked if I wanted to talk.

When Lou was a young boy his mother was preparing dinner one day. Lou and his bother Lory saw that it was going to be pork chops, and they loved her pork chops, especially served with sauerkraut and dumplings. They also saw she was baking an apple pie. Later that day their mom called the boys in and said, “Lou, Lory, your Uncle Lou and Aunt Jo are coming for dinner tonight and I am short two pork chops. So I want you two not to take one. The boys were disappointed but they understood and did what their mother told them. When it came time for dinner and the food was passed around, as the plate with pork chops came to Lou and Lory they reluctantly said “no thanks” and passed it on. And the end of dinner it was time for dessert and the boys were all excited about the apple pie. As the plate came around to them they were ready to take a slice when all of a sudden their mom looked at them and said, “Lou, Lory, no pie for you, you didn’t eat your pork chops!”

My name is Chip Riedmann. I am Lou’s oldest and favorite son. And only son. My wife, Pat, was his favorite daughter-in-law of course. As for my four sisters you will have to talk to them about who his favorite daughter was. With the sons-in-law and grandchildren it generally was who was with him at the time. We thank you all for coming.

I have a high bar set for me to do this talk. Over the past year Lou lost his brother Al and his sister Irene and I had the opportunity to listen to my cousin Mike Riedmann give the eulogy for uncle Al, and my cousin Denny Van Moorlegem for aunt Renie. Hearing how good they were I knew that I would have to do as well for my father.

Lou Riedman was a SOB thru and thru. For those of you not familiar with the term it is short for South Omaha Boy. And that he was. Lou was born at home like all his siblings at the house at 504 Martha in South Omaha. He went to St. Patrick’s Elementary, which coincidentally was recently torn down, signaling the end of their era, and he went to South High School. After high school he moved to Olympia Washington to go St. Martin’s College, where he stayed with his sister Madge and her husband Tony Panowicz. But after a year he was homesick and moved back, married Janet Watkins and had 5 children, Chip, Beth, Gayly, Joyce and Lisa.

Lou taught us a few lessons about life while we were growing up. Work hard and do everything first class. Which is interesting because now that we’ve had time to look thru the house we see he also knew how to use duct tape, glue and baling wire. He didn’t dwell on bad people. He had marvelous friends around him, not a loser in the bunch, which is something I have tried to teach my own children. If you want to have a happy life and get ahead surround yourself with good, successful people. Don’t waste your time with people that are going to drag you down and make your life miserable. And as I look around this room I can see it is filled with good successful people, just like he was.

Lou raised 5 kids and loved to tell everyone how proud he was of his family. His latest story is when we were having Christmas dinner at my house he said he looked down the table and realized how beautiful a family he had. There were 19 of us there and not a bad one in the bunch. Not one of us

had spent time in prison. (Lou had a low bar on that one). Of course those of you who have heard the story may have heard him say 25 or 30. The count grew over time.

Lou was successful in business. When he moved back to Omaha and got married he had a choice to make; work for his father at the pop plant, which seemed to always struggle over the years, or go to work for his father-in-law Charley Watkins at Watkins Concrete and have some independence to live his life. As you all know he decided to go to work for Charlie and never looked back.

Lou helped Watkins grow, and he knew he didn't do it alone. Beside Charley he had his brother's-in-law, Chuck and Bob Watkins who handled the outside sales of the company. Inside he had a great team to help with Dorothy, Marv, Ron and Duane handling many of the details that needed done. He helped Watkins grow from the 4th of four block companies in Omaha to the largest in a two-state area. And everything was done first class, from the block machinery to the fleet of trucks and the new office they built. That was their style, everything was the best.

Lou loved to tell stories, and he loved to repeat them. Over and over. When Mike talked about Lou's brother Al he said they had numbers for the stories, like two sentences in they would start laughing because they knew #5 was coming. In our case it was different; they just had names, like the porkchop story I told at the beginning, the spit in air story, unhook the trolley stories, pop plant, block plant, Vegas, lake, on and on. Except Canada, everyone knew what happened in Canada stayed in Canada. And of course he had his Dad jokes. They were unfiltered, no PC rules, because everyone understood, it was a joke. And anyone was game to be part of the joke. That's what made them great. Lou loved everyone. It was hard to be on his bad side.

Lou was young at heart. He stayed young by hanging out with younger people, many about my age, e.g. Tom Hansen & the Canada gang (Pat, Mike, Jim and Tim), Tim Quinn, the Greco boys and his grandkids. I can't mention them all as there are so many.

Most of Lou's past friends already gone, Del Powell, Tony Iwan, Jim Quinn, Don Koepe, Jim Stachura, Marion Roman and his Shriner buddies. And of course, Sharon, the love of his life. And I assure you they are all having a good time heaven.

In his last months he received care from his family and friends. My sisters get all the credit, I just steadied the boat in the background. I want to thank my sisters for all the work they did for him in the past few months. I could have never have done it. Life comes around full circle, him for us, us for him.

Lou loved his brothers & sisters and while going thru papers I found a note he had written about each of them I'd like to share.

From Lou at aunt Renie's visitation: -10/20/21:

This loss will be the Hardest one for me.

My oldest Sister was Madge. She was like a Mother to me. Got me to college. Guided Sharon and I from the start. An amazing couple.

Renie was my Big sister. Still is.. Always will be. I'm still her " LITTLE BROTHER".

Franny was my fun "tickle my toes" Sister.

Ruth was my friend, confident and closest personally. Died too young (sigh)

Brother George taught me to work hard. Fix things with rubber bands and wire. Something I

*did not do. Fix it right! He was in the Navy, a cheerleader in high school.
Al was a Marine, a flirt and an Ambassador plus++. Showed me how to drive a Pop Truck at 15 so he
could catch a nap. Taught me how to be a gentleman.
Brother Lory was cool and I wanted to be like him. I wish we could have grown up with each other. We
would have kicked butt.
That's 7 super Riedmann's that made their Mark on earth. And Me!
God Bless Them!!*

I'd like to close with an appeal to the younger members of the family. There are 31 in our generation and we have already lost a few of them. Take the time to ask and listen to your elders about their life and stories. When they are gone you will never get them back. We have their memories that will live on, but their stories cannot be replaced. That is why I took the time to write about Lou's brother Lory. Lory had no family outside of his brothers and sisters. If I didn't do that his life would be lost forever. So take the time to write down the stories when you can, even if it is small bits. Before they are gone too.

To finish I have bad news and good news. The bad news is Lou is no longer with us but we have our memories and the stories he left behind. The good news is I'm done and Lisa gets to talk.

Thank you all for coming.