

### **Adv. Gregory Robert Wynne (Espin 1981 - 1984)**

Greg Wynne was a leading advocate in Johannesburg and highly respected. He passed away on 23 August 2010 on his farm near Parys.

Eulogy:

Today we celebrate the life of my special friend, Greg – a father, a son, a husband, a brother, a colleague and a friend.

Grego, I am honored to say a few words in your memory and to pay tribute to your life which ended far too soon. You and those who know me however know that I can get a little emotional at times so this may not all be smooth sailing.

None of us was expecting this day and I could not have imagined that I would ever be standing here. When I spoke to you for the last time on Friday you were happy and on top of the world – full of life and love and enjoyment. Now you have gone from us to a new place and we are naturally sad.

Our last conversation and your many last conversations and inter-actions with many people close to you are sometimes called the “winks of God” - the little things that happen just before you die to make sure the important people got to say good-bye even though they did not realise that was what they were doing. There is much truth in this thinking.

As you all know Greg died in tragic circumstances during Sunday night and it will take some time before we discover exactly what happened. There are however absolutely no indications that he took his own life as has been rumored.

The crazy thing is that if I had been asked to do someone else’s eulogy the first person I would have turned to for advice was Greg. This is the relationship many of us had with him as he was decisive, confident and brave in the face of any challenge. I’m not however suggesting that it was always a good idea to follow his advice as he was renowned for some rather left field and sometimes crazy ideas – but normally it was good advice.

So what do I think he would have said if I had been able to seek his advice with the added knowledge that it was his own eulogy? I think being the scholar and historian that he loved to be and given time to do a little research which he did not particularly enjoy, he could have first said something like:

- "Opus Dei" which is Latin for “The work of God”; or
- "Selume proferre" meaning “Towards the light”

He would somehow have looked at this situation differently and in a fresh light and in his own context. Following that would have been something like:

“Listen Grumpy Grumps” he would have said - which he always called me because he thought I could be too serious and maybe a bit grumpy. “I know my passing will be hard on certain people. I know my family, my loved ones, my children – you, I hope - will miss me. However I am a happy man at peace in a new place and I have been lucky to have experienced many things in this life. In fact if you consider the pace I generally lived at, it was really more like a long life of 80 years rather than 43.”

Then I think he would have told me to do 2 things:

Firstly, tell things straight with honesty.

Secondly, celebrate my life with joy. I loved life and I loved to live. I know you will be sad and will need to grieve but do not dwell on the sadness and my passing – Remember me as I lived and do justice to my memory.

So that is what I will try to do. However, the concept of “A story of a life” is not really accurate as we get so many lives to live between birth and death:

A life to be a child

A life to come of age

A life to wander, to settle, to fall in love, to parent, to test our promise and to realize our mortality.

Greg certainly lived and experienced many of these lives, some not without hardship and challenges, but all with tremendous passion. I was not intimately privy to all of Greg’s lives and all of you will have your own memories of different stages of his life which should be cherished. The times and experiences I was able to share with Greg were many, were always memorable and were underpinned by a tremendous bond of love. It is true to say that this was a mystery to many including both of us at times as we are so different in many ways but somehow so alike at the same time.

I met Greg properly on our first day at Stellenbosch University in 1985 and he has been a great friend ever since. We have not always been in permanent contact but like all great friendships, when we saw each other it was like we had never been apart.

I have enjoyed 25 years of almost everything you can imagine with Greg, including many highs and more than a few lows, from our thunderous university days at Stellenbosch, through graduation, through the army and police force, through our articles and other exams, through our first loves, through our various careers, through our successes and failures, through our weddings, through the births of our children, through ventures and through many travels, fishing trips and so much more. Grego, they didn’t call you action man for nothing. Always epic and larger than life – never average.

I will never forget our legendary through the night cramming sessions to pass university, the ability we learnt to think on our feet - you more so than me, our sometimes wild journey to manhood, jumping out of airplanes together, diving in oceans, the time it took us 26 hours non-stop to hitchhike from Stellenbosch to PE, your mid life crisis toys like Harleys and jet skis, our many crazy holidays, our weddings, birthdays, your eccentricity, your big hairstyles of late, your wacky dress code (in my opinion), laughing and crying with you, trying sometimes in vain to hear the tune you were dancing to and so much more.

More importantly, we will never forget how good you were at attracting friends and keeping up friendships, your absolute loyalty, your often jovial spirit, your passion, your rogue element, your fierce independence, your cheeky grin and infectious laughter, your wicked sense of humor and your tireless endeavors to tackle whatever came your way.

Greg loved many things including collectibles and anything fine with class. He loved his music. In particular he also loved to fish and we were very lucky to do a 10 day trip to Bassas da India last year where he met and made great new friends. Bassas is a volcano atoll in the middle of the ocean about 450 kms from Vilancoulos and one of the ultimates of a fishing career. How Greg was on a trip like that was almost a microcosm of his life. From gay abandon to ferocious but not very important arguments, from great food which he always loved to eat and cook (he always cooked with the enthusiasm and self proclaimed expertise of a world famous chef) to great partying and some totally irresponsible behaviour. Just a magnificent time with him and other friends away from the normal stresses of life. Most telling however when fishing with Greg was his absolute frustration if the fish were not hitting his rod and the unbridled joy and satisfaction when they did. A bit synonymous with his life at times when he did not perhaps get things his way. He liked to win.

I want to say something very briefly that may be a bit unusual but I feel somehow I can represent Greg in some matters of the heart. Certainly presumptuous of me but nevertheless. Like all of us Greg was not perfect and to all of you that he may have aggrieved in some way I ask you to forgive him as I believe God has and will. He did not always find it easy to admit when he was wrong or to say sorry when he should have. But the one thing I do know and I have witnessed often is that he usually or always eventually caught up with his sorries at a later stage knowing that he should have done so much earlier.

As this is not possible anymore, I say sorry on his behalf to anyone who he owes an apology and I do so only because I think he would have got there himself in time.

Here are some of the basics - as any good eulogy should also contain the basics. I think the basics and the people in a man's life are most important.

- Greg was born in Queenstown in 1967 and so is a proper "boet". That seems to be important to us Eastern Capers.
- His Dad is Bob and his Mom is Sue and I can tell you both from many discussions that he loved you very much. It must be the hardest thing imaginable for you to have Greg pass on but you should remember him always with happiness and pride. That's what he would have wanted. Thank you both for everything you have ever done for him and continue to do for his family and know that we are always here for you if your need arises.
- Greg's family moved from Queenstown to Grahamstown where he attended and finished at St Andrews College where the school flag is flying at half mast today in his honour.
- His sister Robin has been beside him all his life and has shared many of life's experiences with him – a true support. Robin, although I do not know that much about your relationship with Greg and have not spent much time with you, I do know that he mentioned you regularly; he loved you and often said how well you were doing. He had the type of respect for you to trust you implicitly with his affairs.
- After school Greg qualified first as an attorney and subsequently as an advocate. Many of you here today probably know him best from his profession and he had a fine legal mind. I have never been that privy to his work but by all accounts and from the little I did see I believe he was a fine advocate and could have gone as far as he chose to go. Since I first met him he has always loved the workings of the law although in fairness not always the grind of his profession. Thank you all who have supported him and guided him in his chosen profession. You are one of the true bands of brothers out there and Greg was always a very proud member of the Bar and his profession.
- Greg met and fell in love with his wife Chimene and they married after a whirlwind romance – so certain were they of their feelings for each other. Chimene, I know that things did not work out as in the stuff of fairytales and that the last few years have not been easy but I will never forget the joy, excitement and love shining from both of you when you came back from Nosy Bee. Thank you for being part of Greg's life, for being there for him many times and giving him 2 wonderful children. I choose to remember the good times over any bad and all of us will be there to support you and your children in your life ahead.
- There is no doubt that Greg considered his children Sean and Vinnie as his greatest and most significant achievement ever. He absolutely adored and loved his 2 boys and he was so proud of you. I don't think there is anything he would not have done for you.
  - Sean, your Dad was so proud of the young man you have become. He told me often how well you were doing at St John's and he loved the enthusiasm you show for many things in life. I know you will miss him but you can always know that he loves you, he will be with you and watching over you always.

- Vinnie, your Dad knew you were special. He loved to talk about your free spirit and your happy happy attitude. He loved your creativity and was convinced that these creative talents will blossom in your lifetime – you can also be sure that he loves you and will be watching over you.
- To Greg's wider family and friends whom I have not had the opportunity to really get to know well over the years, all I can really say is thanks for being a part of Greg's life at different times and thanks for all the tremendous support at this difficult time.

So now Grego you are with God – that I believe. Your ongoing search as to where to permanently plant your 2 feet has ended for now.

I did not really want to eulogize you. I was afraid that it would not be adequate and I'm sorry if I have missed anything or anyone. But after reading some Mitch Albom I realised that all who know you will eulogize you today and in their own time. A eulogy is no more than a summation of memories and we will never forget you because we cannot forget you because we will miss you. We will remember the memories and we will remember the child and the man that you were. You should know again that we loved you and will always love you. We take great comfort knowing where you are and knowing that you have found peace. Goodbye my man. We will all meet again one day. May God bless you and welcome you.

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