

Jack Died Today

I've known Jack for about 20 years or so. I didn't pay much attention to our friendship, just took it for granted. It was one of those friendships that are supposed to last forever. No one gets old, no one dies. The kind of friendship where people drift apart and then years later come back together as if parting were only yesterday.

Twenty somewhat years ago Jack called the Department Chairman of the Accounting Department at the local college. He wanted someone to teach or tutor his wife in keeping books on computer. Of all the people in our Department I drew the lucky number. For the next two or three years his wife would come to my office and we would work on data entry into a computer accounting package.

This is how I met Jack. For two or three years I heard all about Jack from his wife. Jack was a military man. He proudly served his country during WWII and continued to serve after the war. Upon leaving active duty he went back for more as a consultant writing technical documents, mostly for the Air Force.

Jack was on the road a lot. His assignments were hardly ever where he had is home. So I guess his wife was alone a lot also. Be that as it may, they were hopelessly in love with each other. Over the years I noticed certain things, certain, shall we say intimate signals the two of them sent each other. Like when ever my wife and I would visit his wife there would always be fresh flowers in the home. She would say, "Oh, Jack sent those to me, no reason, just because". On Veteran's Day she would always bake him a cake and go to where ever it was he happen to be stationed at that year.

After two or three years of helping his wife with bookkeeping I finally got to meet Jack. He was an unassuming man. Not too tall, skinny, starting to go bald and kinda shy at first. He didn't talk much. He told me he had a passion for sail boats. During his off time he enjoyed working at restoring them.

After many years I learned that Jack was a diabetic. He didn't wear it on his shirt sleeve. He just accepted it and dealt with it in a personal private way. Throughout the years Jack managed his illness with out fan fare. That is until the years began to take a toll. With age the complications began to set in. And yes there were many complications. There was the diabetes, then the heart attack, then Parkinson's, and skin cancer among a host of other things.

Through it all Jack kept on plugging away. He never quite retired. I guess he didn't know how to retire. I remember helping him learn new software programs on the computer.

A few days ago Jack had a massive stroke. It happened at night while he was asleep. After looking at the cat scan the Dr. said "Its massive, I don't think he will survive this one". He was right.

I was there today when he died in the intensive care unit of the hospital. His wife was with him. My heart cried as I watched her caress his forehead. She whispered to him more than once, "I love you Jack". Tears streaming down her check she turned and said to me, "He's not breathing". She held his hand and waited for his heart to stop. It was 5 p.m. Sunday. Jack died today.

About the Author

Pancho Villa - a bleeding heart liberal Revolutionary. Work with nature - plant a tree for more oxygen and less pollution.

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