

William Rebelsky Memorial Service

May 18, 1979

First Parish Unitarian Church, Watertown, Massachusetts

Piano music played by Elizabeth McCrae.

Cello music from 2 cello teachers of Freda.

Alan Orlove:

On behalf of Freda, Sam and the rest of Bill's family, I would like to welcome you. Thank you for coming. Bill touched our lives as we now touch each other in honor of him today. He remains part of our existence and rightly so. He passed through this life with strength and cheered us all.

Joseph Speisman:

We're here to celebrate, to celebrate Bill Rebelsky's life. Each of us will speak to all assembled, but I would like to speak especially to Freda and to Sam who I love. I wanted to make just some brief comments, some reflections, memories of Bill, some of the things that I hold dear, and in this way, Bill remains my friend. I knew Bill to be critical, honest, direct, even blunt. Everyone eventually sought his advice, and I can remember hearing him tell people, especially younger Polaroid people, "you're not ready for that" and making it stick and having these people come back to him again. He was direct and honest and blunt. In doing so, he was giving, he was not taking. There are many other ways in which he gave. In some ways I don't know why these memories, these particular memories stick, but I can remember when he first discovered the crab pond on Martha's Vineyard. He discovered the crab pond and then a little while later he discovered how he could net crabs from the shore and how he could assemble a variety of things that would enable him to do it better and to find more crabs, but the important thing is that he invited them, his friends to join him. He was giving. He was even giving an invitation to us to see what he saw, to enjoy what he enjoyed, and he gave in that way. With me and probably with others he gave through silence. I can remember one incident when he said to me, "Joe, let's go crabbing" and this time we didn't do it from the shores of the channel where we usually did it, we walked around the entire perimeter of the pond. It took us about two and a half hours, and we caught some crabs. He caught more than I did, as usual. We may have spoken ten words to one another, but he was all that time giving to a friend. On long beach walks, which he loved, he would find a piece of rope. It becomes important, and he was in the same way giving. I still have pieces of rope in my garage. (Laughter) I don't know what I will do with them, but they were something that Bill saw and made me see; or a sneaker that someday someone might find the mate to, (laughter) that someone might be able to use. In all of these things he was giving. There were times when he irritated me, because he was a man, a full man. I think sometimes the irritations were because k3 was usually right about things that we might argue about or discuss, but the many other times when he enabled me to love him were much more important. When he was ill and hardly or barely able to speak, I visited him (that was very recent), and it was after a prolonged period of stress that I had gone through, Bill's comment was, and it was an effort to make the comment, "Joe, you look like you're missing something, what are you missing?" And I didn't know what he meant. He said, "I think you're nostalgic for all the excitement". And he was right. There was a truth in what he was saying to me, and He was giving again. Those times when he enabled me to love him, he gave to me, but he was also allowing me to give to him, and he helped me always to grow and to live. In Yiddish, Bill was a mensh, and in Yiddish, I would like to give to you, Bill's toast, which you know, "L-Chaim - To Life."

Alan Orlove:

We would like to encourage anyone who would want to share their remembrances. They can speak from their seats or come up here if you wish or whatever, you're most comfortable, anything.

Ann Leibowitz:

Bill and I were friends for eight years. For several of those we shared different aspects of the same work. I can't think of anyone I ever knew who was more creatively supportive when his help was sought or more tolerant of human weaknesses, all of our weaknesses except perhaps for pomposity, or close-mindedness, in which case he was absolutely openly contemptuous. The only prejudice I ever saw in him was an inherent suspicion of professional credentials. He said they were used to mask a lack of common sense, and I think he only forgave me my own when he found out that most of the time I agreed with him. (Laughter) Bill escorted me into the world of Polaroid policy-making. It was a world in which he had grown up and felt very much at home, but was rather perplexing and sometimes intimidating to the uninitiated, but, oh, how I enjoyed sharing it with him and plotting and scheming with him and arguing with him and commiserating with him and ultimately, but always, laughing with him. In this last year, his strength really didn't surprise me at all, but it made me feel overwhelmingly humble. Bill and I once jokingly assured each other after a particularly heated debate that we nevertheless loved one another. I still do.

Richard Lawson:

Although in measures of time, I had all too brief a one with Bill, I shared a lifetime of friendship with him. He was my close associate, my boss, and, above all, my very dear friend. When he was Chairman of the Board at Inner City we used to have many debates about how to run it. We also shared a poem that I'd like to share with you. It was written by Martin Luther King.

Fleecy locks and black complexion
cannot forfeit nature's claim;
skin may differ, but affection dwells
in black and white the same.

Were I so tall as to reach the pole
or grasp the ocean at a span,
I must be measured by my soul,
for the mind is the standard of a man.

Bill believed in that!

William McCune:

As with so many of us here today, Bill Reblsky played an important role in my life. We worked together for many years, primarily on problems and issues arising from human interactions at work. He was an invaluable associate. I've often thought it was no accident that he was nicknamed Rebel. He was a rebel, but his rebellion was not against society. It was for it. He was warm, sensitive and compassionate; at the same time he had a keen awareness of the need for discipline and productivity. He had a fine sense of balance between the needs of the individual and the needs of the group. Thinking about Rebel recently, it occurred to me that his integrity

was so obvious that I had never even thought of it before. His personal strengths permitted an unusual degree of openness in its relationship with others. This often showed up in his sense of humor, which frequently brought about jokes on himself as well as on others. One of the aspects of Rebel that I remember is the way he would burst into a room, not so much physically as spiritually. He would suddenly arrive, and the environment was different and usually for the better. Of course, one disturbing aspect of this was all the affection and attention he got from the women. (Laughter) Gail Pick, who was so fond of Rebel, reminded me recently that if he and I went off together to hear a grievance, I'd straighten my bow tie and Rebel would grab his purse and off we'd go. (Laughter) We were a good pair and I will miss him. Those of us who worked with Rebel, experienced his critical appraisals, enjoyed his companionship, are stronger, wiser and happier for what he gave us.

Sandra Pilotto:

I had this whole thing written out about how hard this was going to be to do, and I'm finding it easier than I thought. For a period of time I thought about not doing this, but then I realized that a large part of my relationship with Bill was built around his encouraging me to do things that weren't always comfortable for me. Also, shortly after I began working for him, one of the first things I remember him telling me is that "you always have to speak up, because if you don't, no one will ever know how you really feel", and I guess that's why we're all here. When I think back on the ways that Bill touched my life, I think of the things like his support, both personally and professionally, his warmth in the friendship I knew from him, and also his generally very painfully honest observations which I always hated to admit that he was generally right about. When I think back over the past seven years, I thought about telling some sort of specific stories or experiences that we shared. In thinking back over those, what I really realized is that although the experiences and the stories are very different, they all really came down to share sort of a common factor. That was something that is very valuable to me. Bill was one of the first people in my life with whom I really learn to realize and share the full extent and the full range of my emotions. As much as I cared for him, he probably succeeded more than anybody else in making me angrier than I've ever been at anyone. I think it's fine that we recognize the side of him that was supportive, that was perceptive, it was warm, all those things, but I think it's really in some ways, it would be a disservice for us not to admit the other parts of him that really made him the sort of rounded individual that he was. There were a lot of sides to him. Knowing Bill Rebelsky was knowing, basically, quite frankly, sometimes he could be a real pain in the neck. But, you know, he was always someone you could look at directly in the eye and say, "You know I do think you're a pain in the neck, a lot of times you can be, but in spite of that, I respect you and I love you and I really value your friendship." He was someone who always cared enough about people to always tell you the truth. You knew you could really count on that. And for me, I guess, to have had the experiences with him I've had, that was a really special gift to have received from him.

Harold Page:

When I first met Bill in the fall of 1960 on a very rainy fall afternoon when I was coming to Polaroid for an interview. And like all people you are a little bit nervous about how you will come across in an interview and having parked my car and had a sort of a long walk to the building, I was soaking wet and the crease was gone out of my suit and I was feeling very uncomfortable. The first interviewer, wouldn't you know, was Bill Rebelsky. And Bill said to me, to open the interview, "We don't usually hire people who don't know enough to come in out of the rain." (Laughter) Needless to say, that was one of the most comforting things a person could have done because for the next hour Bill and I had a very fine interview, and I felt very

relaxed when I went on to some other people. I was hired and I come to work and I worked for Bill. And in the early months I was working on the second shift and once the shift got started I would stop in Bill's office, and Bill would then tell me Polaroid stories that he knew as a way of orienting me to the company and Bill was sharing everything that he knew and had learned because he had been there all that many years before I arrived', but he shared what he knew with me. And he shared his interpretation of what he thought it meant and what he thought what might be wise for me to do and so forth, and in this day and age where we have all I sorts of words for those things like sponsorship and support, it just seemed like a friend helping me along the way in those days. About six months later I had planned to get married and I was being married over the 4th of July weekend. I didn't have any vacation at that time in the company and I had to go back to New Jersey for the wedding and you needed to get a marriage license a month in advance. I went to Bill and I said, "Bill, I would like to have a day off so I can drive to New Jersey and get a license," which would mean taking a working day off. We were in the midst then or' a cut-back at Polaroid and Bill didn't think that was a very good idea, that I take a day off, having only been here six or seven months, layoff, new supervisor. I thought, "Gosh, what a heart of stone this man has, that he wouldn't even give me a day off," and Bill said, "No, I think it's wiser that you go to New Jersey and you get the town clerk out to open his office on Saturday and you get that license then rather than you take the day off." And when we think of Bill as being such a generous, thoughtful, giving person, (Laughter) that didn't exactly have that connotation, but in reality it really was, because Bill was doing something for me at that time, which was "Look, these times are a little shaky and a little tough right now, and it probably wouldn't be good for you to take a day off and maybe you ought to work a little bit harder at trying to find another way to solve that problem." And I did that and I didn't get married in sin or violate the law or anything like that (Laughter), but I thought, Bill said that, with really thoughtfulness in his mind about helping, not being a hard-hearted person, and so often in working through the years with Bill, he was always on the other side of the issue it seemed. As Bill said, we often called him Rebel, and he could make you mad and he could make you frustrated/ and you'd say, "Oh Rebelsky, get off of it, will you?" but he always made us think again, maybe a little clearer, maybe from a different direction. And I think in the nineteen years that I've known Bill, a fair amount of that from time to time has rubbed off on me, and I think the legacy that Bill leaves for me is that I wish more of it had rubbed off on me and I really hope that a fair amount of that will pass on to me and on to my children because to have that insight and that challenge and that intellectual thought a second and a third time before we so often jump, was a legacy that Bill left, and I hope that I can leave it to my children.

Alan Orlove:

For those late arrivals, there is a room downstairs with a public address system, or if you wish come in now. Jim, if you'll just ask them to come right across. There's a few seats.

Murray Stoloff:

Nobody has told any poker stories about Bill (Laughter) and poker was such a 'big part of his life. Perhaps I'll tell you how I met him, which was about ten or eleven years ago, and somehow we got to talking about what we liked to do for hobbies and I told Bill I liked to play poker. And he said, "Are you any good?" and I said, "Oh, I'm a very good poker player." (Laughter) He put his arm around me, (Laughter) smiled as only he could, and said, "Good, we always need good poker players in our game," and so he invited me to play with him. Knowing Bill was always a very educational kind of experience. One of the first things I learned was that I was not as good a poker player as I thought I was. (Laughter) After it had cost me enough money, he thought it was

enough, he figured I ought to learn how to play better, so he undertook to teach me and it was a real learning there, and I got to be a little cocky and told him one time that I thought I had learned as much as he could teach me, and then he taught me one other thing, that he was a better poker player than I was. (Laughter) I too didn't always agree with Bill, nor he with me, but he was so darned smart and so logical always, that it used to frustrate me and when I got angry with him, the only way I could deal with it was very soon after the argument began, I would say, "Bill, you're right, I don't want to talk about it anymore" and as much as Bill liked to be right, he liked to argue even more, (Laughter) and so capitulating was really not helpful to Bill. And I knew if I waited long enough, pretty soon he would take my side of the argument and argue that point. (Laughter) When I think of Bill I think of when my children were small and one or another would come home and say, "So and so doesn't want to play with me or I don't have any friends." As a parent you'd like to say, "You know the way to have friends is to be a friend" and many times I've told my children that, and Bill really exemplified that for me. Freda told me the other night that Bill was not much of a joiner, he didn't belong to a lot of clubs, and yet you look around at the number of people here, and the number of people that loved him, and the number of friends he had, then you know that one of the things that made Bill special was that he knew how to be a friend. He always made me feel special as a friend of his, and he'll always be very special to me.

Susan Ells:

I began to think about what I wanted to say today, and I had a million different thoughts. One of the thoughts that come into my head when I thought about Bill was that into each person's life some sunshine sometimes falls, and I think for each of us here today, a lot of sunshine has fallen on all of us. Someone in the last few days said, "You know, Susie, there was something like a Bill Rebelsky cult at Polaroid, I mean, if you really think about it." And it just clicked for me and I started to think, hoping that those who were not at Polaroid who would be here today, would be able to get a better sense of what this Bill Rebelsky cult at Polaroid was. Various little things would start coming to my mind, one is the Gucci bag which Sam has at his feet right here, another is the hugs in the hallways, the hugs in the middle of Technology Square; no man (I think every man at Polaroid must be very, very jealous) I have ever seen one male get away with hugging so many females in my life. (Laughter) In fact., when Bill was first in the hospital last spring, the nurses were just getting more boggled by it ever/ day because of 'he entourage of females, all ages, shapes and sizes that were marching in. When Shava, Bill's mother, came to visit, the nurses said, "Now we know, that's your mother." But they couldn't figure out who all these other women were that were flowing down the hall to see Bill . Another part of the Bill Rebelsky cult, and again he said this just a few months ago to another friend, was that it's very important to remember that PCV-6 operators are people too. The cult goes on and on. Those of us who knew him well, those of us who knew him slightly can think of additional little things to add to that cult. It won't die, he hasn't really died in us. Bill was someone that I found that you could cry with, he was someone that you could scream at, as Sandy said, he was someone who everyone is certainly saying today could certainly scream at you. He was someone who always tended to make me and everyone else sober because he would tell you his truth and when you began to think about his truth, you began to realize that was the truth, that was reality. I think there are two very, very important things that Bill taught me, he taught me a whole lot, but two very important things that I really need to share with you today; one of them was to have a lot of guts and to follow your feelings (and I feel more gutsy right this second than I think I've ever felt in my life). The second very important thing that he taught me is to have a sense of humor throughout it all and apparently he taught that to most of us here because I feel that there has been humor in every person that has spoken here today. Now I was thinking how can I best

convey those two important things that he taught to me. And I've been thinking about this for the last seven days. My instincts look me to my old files and I pulled out a performance rating that Bill gave to me in 1974. I think it is probably the best performance rating that I will ever have, not in terms of saying I was wonderful but just in terms of me learning what was happening. And I really want to share this with you, one, because it's a very personal thing to me and I think it's important to share my feelings, but the other is for those of you who ever received a performance rating from Bill, verbally or if you were lucky like me, in writing; it will bring back a whole lot of memories. He wrote as only Bill could write, and this is an original, honest-to-God Bill Rebelsky performance rating. Now he had a style. His style, either verbally or in writing, was to give you a couple of nice strokes to get you feeling all calm and warm, then he could quickly zap you twice, and then in the end you would feel a pat on your head. He did it again. This is to S. Ellis from W. Rebelsky, December 3, 1974. I, at this point, had just told Bill I was leaving Polaroid, I couldn't stand it any longer and it was time for me to get out and save the world outside. He thought that was the wrong idea, but he thought he ought to give me a performance rating before I left. I didn't leave by the way. He says, "Because of the nature of your work and our work relationship, a standardized performance rating seems somehow inappropriate. I do think some formal documentation of our continuing performance appraisal process has some merit and this memorandum will hopefully serve that purpose." Okay now, this is the good part. "Your creativity, energy and independence make you a pleasure to work with. I seem to spend more time holding you back than pushing you forward and that is good. In the past year, you have learned to better understand and use the existing system to accomplish those things you find important. As we have discussed, you are learning to operate organizationally, rather than as an advocate and find you can accomplish more that way." Here we go. "I am somewhat concerned Susan about your lack of tolerance for people who are less able than yourself. As you continue to improve in your handling of the institutional role, it becomes more important to accomplish your tasks through such people, and the way they are dealt with becomes a real measure of your abilities." And the second zap. "While I recognize the conflicting pressures of the past several months, your ability to complete tasks that are not personally exciting to you leaves something to be desired." (Laughter) And then he leaves you with the nice strokes. "Susan, in my judgment you have reached a point in your career when you should be looking towards the management of people working for you as a next step. Even if your long range career goal is not in management, (for every woman at that point you were never going to be a manager) "that specific experience will be valuable in providing you with some insight about yourself." He then ends by saying, "I had not intended this to be quite so long. In summary you are clearly outstanding at the things you do." Now that's not just my performance review. I think that's a performance review that a lot of us had from Bill Rebelsky. Many of us were not lucky enough to have him as a formal supervisor and to get his protection and his guidance and his learning. Those of us who were can appreciate it. Those of us who knew him understood how outstanding he was so that we also can be outstanding.

Charles Samson:

I've been preparing my talk while I was listening, and I'd like to give all of you a chance to participate, and obviously the hundreds that are here, that's impossible. So maybe a bit of response to some of the words that I've heard would be helpful and give you a chance to participate a little bit more fully. So I'd like to ask you either in a show of hands or by voice or somehow to indicate to me those people who have experienced Bill's charity. Can I have a show of hands, Ah! And how about his anger, 4" (Laughter) More of those, good! Does anybody question his integrity? I don't see anybody. Was he romantic? Ah, Ah! (Laughter) And did he

have wisdom? Ah! I think it's strange that a man could have all these things, but he did, and I've witnessed it. I think the skill that he had was that he possessed all of these things and he knew which of them to use and when to use each of us. There's one word that has not been used today and I've written down. I thought Bill was outrageous, and he was outrageous in many of his statements and actions, but he used these tactics to remind us of the broader meaning of our corporate life. He saw the real world more than most people and I think his profound perceptions were conveyed to us in ways that fit the relationship that each of us had with Bill. At times he asked more of me than I was willing to give, and this provoked great anger in me. I was mad at Bill a lot and frustrated, but after time for reflection his wisdom became very, very evident to me. His challenge, I think, is still with us. I loved him and I shall miss him terribly.

Howard Lee Leonard:

Reb and I go back a couple of years. I think most of you people know him in the context of Polaroid. Some 30 years ago at the University of Chicago I had two roommates and one boarder. (Laughter) Reb was the boarder, that is to say, he ate with us. During that time we were all on kind of short rations and usually the food situation was pretty good at the beginning of the month when three of us got our checks from the government. Reb, of course, made his contribution. He paid us a dollar a day for the privilege of eating with us, and, usually the last three or four days of each month, the rest of us ate on Reb's money. During that time, of course, I guess I taught Reb something about good food and good cooking. I told him how to eat laboratory rabbit. (Laughter) These were used rabbits. They had been used for pregnancy tests and there isn't much you could do with a used rabbit except eat it. (Laughter) The other thing we ate once I recalled was a duck, also come out of a lab, I think it was used for weight-lifting experiments. But when you speak of Reb's generosity I guess in a sense, the dollar a day that he paid for his board with us, I don't know whether it was generous or not but it certainly did pay for the food for the other three of us. As I said, you people mostly know Reb in the Polaroid context. Twenty years ago, Rebel and I were both unemployed because we were having trouble finding work. Luckily our wives were working, and Reb applied for a job at Polaroid, and he asked me if I would write a letter of recommendation for him. I said, "Sure, (Laughter) I've known you for a long while. I can certainly write a letter of recommendation for you", so Reb and I sat down for awhile and tried to figure out what I would say in this letter of recommendation. (Laughter) I didn't want to lie, and on the other hand I didn't want to tell the truth either, and so the only line that I can recall from that letter was the one that said, "His probity and rectitude are beyond question." (Laughter) Well shortly thereafter Reb got a job at Polaroid, and about two weeks after that I got a job working for an advertising agency where I've been ever since. (Laughter) I guess there are two things that I've learned over that time period, thinking of Reb, one is when it's time to say goodbye, you say goodbye, and the other is that the only baggage that is worth taking with you is the memories that you keep in your head.

Joline Godfrey:

Like so many others this week, I struggled with whether or not I was going to say anything and first I decided that I wouldn't because my thoughts of Rebel are very private and very personal, and he was a private man and he would understand that. And then I remembered that even though he was very private, he was never selfish, so above all I couldn't be selfish. So I decided to share with you one of the gifts that he gave me. He gave me a lot but this one is very special. I had only known Rebelsky a little under a year when the cancer was diagnosed, and I was really pissed off that he had cancer, because in that short time, he had demanded the very best of me. He would push me and he'd question me and he'd support me and he'd always make me give my

very best, so underneath the anger was a whole lot of fear that I hadn't had enough time to learn what my best was all about. And over the course of the year we talked about that. I'd talk about my fear of not growing to be as much as I wanted to be and he'd talk about his fears around the cancer. He didn't ever want to become dependent, he wasn't afraid or' dying. He knew how much the time meant to me, so around the time of my birthday, this last April, he said to Freda that he wanted me to start a collection (he felt I was young enough), and he sent Freda out in the midst of all his pain and the haze that he had from all the drugs and she come back with apparently several items from which he was to choose. He chose an Ashanty brass weight. It comes from Ghana and it was used to weigh gold, and I was told this morning when I went to Bernheimers that it's between 100 and 200 years old. He gave it to me on the very lost day that I saw film. I didn't think a whole lot about the time element or how old it was when he gave it to me, I just thought it was pretty incredible that he remembered me through all the pain, and then the day after he died Susie Ells came by my house and she said, "That's remarkable, he understood how much the time meant to you and he tried to make up for it," and indeed he did. He reminded me that things that are good last forever, and that's all that really matters. And that's what I'll remember about Rebel.

Alan Orlove:

I've been sitting here and have some spontaneous feelings, so if they're disorganized, they're from the heart. I'd like to pay tribute, not only to Bill, but to Freda and Sam ' and his wonderful friends. I don't know if it was Bill's attitude and I know it was because he would say in the early days, "Yes, I've got cancer, the doctors are going to do the best they can, I'm going to do the best I can, so let's have a drink." And that's true and the house was a scene of laughter and activity and people would come in and they were shocked because people ordinarily don't talk about cancer in this fashion. And Bill lived every minute of it and he savored the people who come by and he made it easy to be with. I think that's what we're all saying. Through all this despair, it was easy to be with Bill because he made it. He was open, he was honest, didn't beat around the bush and it was comfortable, and because of that the love and affection came back to him ten-fold over. In the last few months as things got bad, I have seen examples of love and affection that had moved me just very deeply. Freda, his wife, who was just with him constantly, (and without going to that you would expect), but other friends would come over and go shopping, come over to do the dishes, were there at four in the morning, and I'm just proud to know such a nice bunch of people. Someone said this to me the other day, the only good thing that has come out of this is that there are a lot of people, I can't begin to mention, who've we've gotten to know better over the lost few months because of her relationship to Bill and, by God, they are all super people. Bill had this unique way of surrounding himself with people and I'm proud and pleased to know you all .

John Carrington:

The place is filled. I don't have a prepared speech, and I don't recall when I first met Bill Rebelsky, but it was a long time ago. A lot of things-, have happened since then, a lot of things to a lot of people that I know, a lot of cases that I worked with and a lot of things personally. Years back when it wasn't popular to help black people, whether they were in Polaroid or outside, get better jobs, better opportunities, better pay, what have you, Rebelsky was out front. I've gone to him on many occasions for other people, for cases or what have you, and he's done a number of things with me. He's taught me to look at the other side. I can sometimes get locked into a position and swear that I'm right and get a lot of people to support that side, and really go pretty fast to get to a point

that I think is the right point. Bill on occasion, on many occasions, would say, "Carrington, have you looked at the other side?" And very quickly without thinking -0, I'd say, "yes." Back to my office or wherever I was working at the time, I would think about it. We had a case go all the way to the president, where I was so sure, I had this so documented it was unbelievable/ and Bill who I thought was really on my side all the way because I had worked with him, finally turned to me after he walked out of the hearing and I thought I had really won the case. He said, "You know if you spent half the time trying to save that person, instead of trying to get them out of the company, I think you'd look at the case a little differently." I did that, the person is still in the company. I don't believe that I put the time into it that I could have, but he forced me to think, and today I " diligently to look at the other side. Freda, Sam and other members of the family, I just like to say to you that it was not a fad when Bill helped me and many other people of my race and when the times came, '68, '69, he was there and when the pressure eased up, when the riots stopped, when people talked about how much is earned for pay and how many of the jobs are at upper levels, Bill was still there, and I tell you I believe in my heart that if he was here today, no matter what the challenge was for us he would still be there. So I'd like to say to you that I'm going to miss him, I believe just as much as you.

James Lakis:

I'd like to talk about one of Bill's failures and I'd also like to emphasize his patience. About nineteen years ago, the first time I ever sat down to play poker with Bill, and he decided at that time that I really needed help. We'd play about once a month for two or three years and he tried to help me, and kept trying to help me and gave me advice and made suggestions and gave me a book to read, which I read, which did no good. (Laughter) And then there was a break, and we resumed. I was invited to play poker with him one more time, with Joe, Murray and some others, (this was after a break of about seven or eight years and at that time I was working for Bill, I was back at Polaroid and working for Bill). We played one night and I lost about \$100. The next morning I went in to see him for our weekly session and he started by saying, "Look, its been fifteen years, I've really done all could, I want the book back, (Laughter) and I never want to see you at another poker game." (Laughter) I keep playing, but only for pennies, nickels and dimes. He was right, too. A week ago Wednesday, I was with Bill, he was very uncomfortable and Alan and I went with him, and I was saying some things that I usually did with him. I couldn't be too serious with Bill, I always had to give him a little. So as he was sitting on the edge of the bed, I said to him, "You know, I'm going to start playing poker again," and he turned and looked at me with a smile and said, "Don't do it." (Laughter) Last night Sam shared with me a letter that he had received from one of his classmates and I read it, and thought it would be appropriate to read here and Sam asked that I read it, so I'd like to read it to you.

Dear Sam:

I'm terribly sorry to hear about the death of your father. I had been wondering where you were the last few days of school, and now I guess I know. I realize how bad you must feel . My grandmother died this summer. I'm sure that isn't nearly as painful as having your own father die, but I think I can have some empathy for you. When you get back to school, the kids are probably going to act kind of strangely around you cause they won't know what to say. But they all feel sorry for you. When Ms. Lovely told us about what happened today a lot of kids started to rub their eyes, Vicki Larkin even started to cry. Although there is probably nothing I can do, I'd like to help you in any way I can. If there is a way, please let me know.

Your Friend, David

That kind of offer to help came for Bill frequently and I thought it was appropriate. Sam thought it was appropriate. I would like to echo Joe's comment, "L'Chaim" .

Alan Orlove:

Mr. Lakis will say it in Greek. This is indeed ecumenical type of affair, Joe Batal was the one who saw this church. When we looked at it, it seemed as if it's the type of place that Bill would have agreed with their thinking. An intriguing thing, the church was founded July 30th (which happens to be Bill's birthday), July 30, 1630, 300 years before the date of his birth and we said this is the place to have it.

Claire Boskin:

I have been sitting here thinking of all the years that Bill has been and is my friend and what it is I could say about him and what I have gained from him and I've learned from him. And I listened to all the things that all of you shared and I guess the very simplest and perhaps the deepest thing that I can offer to Bill is an appreciation for how it is he challenged me and I think everyone else who's here who has known him, to be the very fullest and richest that we could be in our very own ways and they were very different for all of us, but somehow he knew, and in his quiet and his-deep honoring of truth and pride and creativity, he just seemed to speak to that in each of us and for that I dearly thank him.

Richard McCann:

I used to live at 41 Billings Park where Sam and Freda and Bill live. (I think of it as all of them still there), and we now live at 49 which is right next door and something 'just occurred to me now, that it seems to me right within the theme of what we're all remembering and sharing, after a particularly heavy snowstorm one winter, I went out on the front stoop and the walk over to my front door was all cleared and I didn't even know that Bill had gotten himself a snow blower. And, a little later the grass over to his front door was cut by my mower and after the season changed, and this went on season after season, year after year. I would cut over to his front door and he would scoop over to my front door, his snow blower and my lawn mower, and I'm just thinking today for the first time what a wonderful thing that was. Never once did we say, "Hey Bill, let's swap, let's share. Hey Dick, you do this and I'll do that." We just did it without one of us saying anything about it! and that homely neighborhood thing, it seems to me also catches this wonderful gift that he had and he shared with the McCanns next door.

Jack Savenor:

I met Bill on one of the first days when he came to the Boston area. I became acquainted with him in an old poker game, maybe twenty years ago, I don't know how long it was, but I can remember when we were playing poker for a penny or two. I never enjoyed a game as much as I did then. I played poker with Bill almost every week or every month for it seemed like a lifetime. He taught me one thing about poker, I wasn't as good as I thought I was, and there's only one fellow in my life that I wouldn't bet my store against. That was Bill. (Laughter) I remember one hand I played with him and I had a straight flush and we were playing the game of high and low and I had 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 of diamonds and would you believe I lost to Bill .

(Laughter) He had a 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 of assorted colors. He looked me right in the eye and said, "When are you going to learn how to play poker?" (Laughter) I feel like I got all this free advice from him all these years, running an independent store from all the knowledge he acquired at Polaroid, "Thank you Polaroid". (Laughter) And I also will never forget one incident in my life that Alan probably remembers because he was there too. When I was in the Robert Brigham Hospital, completely arthritic in a wheelchair, and he knew one thing I'd really like to do, no chocolates, no fruit, no anything. He come up with a deck of cards and he said ' "Okay Alan, let's give him a good time." (Laughter) And that's the kind of guy Bill was, and I will miss him for all my life.

Samuel Rebelsky:

I didn't know what to say about my father, and the easiest thing is telling a story about his helpfulness. We used to stay on the Vineyard during the summers, and one summer., two girls from Polaroid, low-level people, (Laughter) they were staying in a camp, biking, and there was this rainstorm, and my father had my mother call the camp to get the people to come to our house so they could be dry from the storm, and I think those two people have become very close friends of the family. And he just helped them. He didn't really know them well, but he knew their names and he knew they were on the Vineyard and he just knew that they needed help so he helped them. That's the kind of person my father was, he tried to help people.

Ann Foss:

What Sam didn't say about that is that when Susie and I got the message at the camp we were staying at that it was Susie's mother who called. (Laughter) We couldn't quite figure that out since we were about 28 at that point, and quite independent, and even though we were rather wet, we thought it was strange that her mother from New Jersey was calling Martha's Vineyard. (Laughter) Well of course, it turned out to be Freda, and that was the beginning of many, many years of really fine experiences on the Vineyard and elsewhere.

I guess like everybody, I have nice stories and funny stories and things I remember about Bill. I was always the one who went musseling and managed to pick up as many rocks with the mussels as the mussels, and Bill would always be there to help carry the sack when I got too tired. I guess I'm also one of those persons that Bill challenged. I was at Polaroid for about seven years I guess, starting out in Research, and Bill thought it would be a good idea if I did something a little more with my life along with Susie, and so I become a Production Supervisor. And I was just thinking as everybody was talking that I think back now of why some of those early years of being a supervisor were kind of difficult, and I guess it's because I really hadn't at that point really developed the full appreciation of myself to have real values and standards that I could fall back on when I came-against difficult situations. And I really think what I'll carry with me always about Bill, that I look for in other people, and I hope that I can be that kind of example to people, is a person who has certain things that they stand for, certain things that are non-negotiable, certain things that they fight for and live for.

Semenya McCord:

I'm one of the unfortunate few I think here today that did not know Bill Rebelsky very well and very long, but from sitting here and listening to different stories and experiences that most of you have had, I feel very warm inside and choked up inside and sorry that I missed so much of someone who apparently did so much for a lot of people. I met Bill a few times when he came by the Affirmative Action office. Just by those few meetings, I felt that this was one of those rare

people that is special, is giving and not asking a lot in return, certainly not asking anything that was impossible. I wanted to share a spiritual that to me has a deep meaning and I think it's appropriate for Bill in that it does speak of the hope, and if you will, the double meanings of the words in the spiritual such as heaven, in this case, also meaning freedom, also meaning peace.

Singing:

I am a poor pilgrim of sorrow
I'm left in this wide world alone.
No hope have I for tomorrow
I'm going to make heaven my home.

Sometimes I'm toss-ted, and I'm driven, Lord.
Sometimes I don't know where to roam.
I've heard of a city called Heaven.
I'm going to make Heaven my home

My mother has reached that pure glory.
My father's still walking in sin.
My brothers and sisters won't own me
because I am trying to get in.

Sometimes I'm toss-ted and I'm driven, Lord.
Sometimes I don't know where to roam.
I've heard of a city called Heaven.
I'm going to make Heaven my home.

Freda Rebelsky:

Bill Rebelsky came to Polaroid 21 years ago. He answered an ad in the New York Times that asked for people with advanced degrees in chemistry and physics, and he wrote a letter to Polaroid that said, "I have a BA in philosophy. I've been told my IQ is over 150," (I made up that number.) (Laughter) I can learn anything. Sincerely yours." And he was interviewed by Mark Sewall and Arnold Judson, both of whom are here today, neither of whom are at Polaroid still, and they talked about sailing and they talked about people, and then he was interviewed by the dozens and dozens of other people that Polaroid uses when they wanted to bring somebody in. And as Bill said to Mac Booth the other day, "I'm always grateful to Polaroid for being a risk-taker, and I hope it always stays a risk-taking corporation." For those of you who have not been calling our house or at our house, you should know that Bill knows that you were calling and talking to each other. This was the best year of our marriage, but Bill says that we always said that every year. (Laughter) That's a Bill remark. It was a very rich year with concern about real issues. Our son Sam, who obviously has a gift with words, put it very beautifully when he said, "Of the many things that may inspire or create life, death is the most powerful ." That's a 15 year old boy saying that. On the Tuesday before Bill died, he was crying and he said that he was very sad because he was dying and I said that we were very sad that he was dying too, and that if he died I would certainly miss him and many people would miss him, but that if he wanted to try to live longer, and get more chemotherapy, and his body could stand it, that none of us were tired yet, and we had plenty of energy to keep fighting with him and in his druggy haze, he leaned back from me and said, "Oh Freda, you're incredible." And I said to him what also is true, if I'm incredible, it's because he was incredible. Bill was incredible, I think, because he rounded out the

lives and made complete all kinds of people. When I met Bill in May, 1954, I had collected the data for my Masters' thesis a year and a half earlier, and it was sitting there in a big messy pile, and three weeks after I met Bill I had my Masters. He somehow enabled people to move. (Laughter) I asked Bill at one of the points in the cancer when people were calling and writing and talking to each other (and Polaroid people would report about ten people who wouldn't call us, but would call them), I said to Bill, "Would you have known that you were so loved if you didn't have cancer and if this hadn't have happened?" And he said, "Of course." (Laughter) Typical of Bill, when I on my sabbatical at the age of 48 decided I wanted to play the cello, he said, "sure" and he brought me a cello for our 23rd anniversary last January, and I started to learn the cello, and my two cello teachers Richard Talkowsky and Nora Kornbluh are now going to play for you, and when they are through playing we can go downstairs and have some refreshments and drink to Bill who all of us will surely never forget.

Cello music played by Richard Talkowsky and Nora Kornbluh.