

*Eulogy – given in 2010 by Sheriff James V. DiPaola at the funeral of an officer*

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ON BEHALF OF THE MORANTE FAMILY, I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU ALL FOR BEING HERE THIS MORNING TO HONOR A MAN WHOSE LIFE TOUCHED SO MANY PEOPLE.

RALPH'S FAMILY AND FRIENDS AND EVERYONE HE ENCOUNTERED WILL NO DOUBT REMEMBER HIS WARM SMILE, HIS ENDLESS KINDNESS AND HIS FIERCE DETERMINATION.

I RECOGNIZED IT 7 YEARS AGO, WHEN RALPH BEGAN HIS EMPLOY AT THE MIDDLESEX SHERIFF'S OFFICE. AND I WAS NOT ALONE. WE ALL KNEW, FROM HIS SUPERIORS TO HIS PEERS, THAT OUR DEPARTMENT AND OUR LIVES WOULD BE CHANGED FOR THE BETTER BECAUSE OF THIS MAN.

I AM HERE THIS MORNING ON BEHALF OF THOSE 800 MEN AND WOMEN FROM THE MIDDLESEX SHERIFF'S OFFICE, WHO REMEMBER THEIR FALLEN BROTHER IN ARMS AND HOLD SILENT VIGIL TO HIS LEGACY OF COMPASSION.

THE COLLECTIVE GRIEF FELT ACROSS THE MIDDLESEX SHERIFF'S OFFICE IS HOMAGE TO THE KIND OF PERSON RALPH WAS – AND TO THE KIND OF UNIVERSAL LOVE AND RESPECT HIS CO-WORKERS SHARED FOR HIM.

EVERY SINGLE DAY, EVERY SINGLE SHIFT, RALPH SET THE STANDARD FOR WHAT A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER COULD AND SHOULD BE. HE WAS STRONG AND AUSTERE BUT EMPATHIZED WITH INMATES AND EMPLOYEES ALIKE. HE WAS NEVER TOO GOOD FOR ANYONE; HE WAS NEVER TOO BUSY TO LEND A HAND.

AND STAYING LATE AND WORKING LONG HOURS EVOKED NO COMPLAINT OR CRITICISM. THERE WAS SIMPLY A HINT OF THE DETERMINATION AND COMPASSION THAT RALPH ALWAYS KEPT ON RESERVE, SO THAT DURING THE TOUGH TIMES, WHEN CHALLENGES AROSE, HE REMAINED VIGILANT.

THIS PAST SUMMER, WHEN RALPH WAS IN THE MIDST OF HIS BATTLE WITH LEUKEMIA, I VISITED HIM AT HIS HOME IN WESTWOOD. RALPH TOLD ME A STORY ABOUT ONE AFTERNOON WHILE HE WAS IN HIS HOSPITAL ROOM AT MASS GENERAL A FEW WEEKS EARLIER. IT WAS SUNDAY, JULY 5<sup>TH</sup> – AND RALPH, BEING THE EVER VIGILANT OFFICER, KNEW SOMETHING WAS AMISS AT THE MIDDLESEX JAIL ACROSS IN CAMBRIDGE. HE KNEW SOMETHING WAS WRONG BECAUSE FROM HIS HOSPITAL ROOM WINDOW, HE COULD SEE TOILET PAPER BEING THROWN FROM THE JAIL WINDOWS. TURNS OUT, THAT DAY THERE WAS A MAJOR DISTURBANCE AT THE JAIL. IT WAS JUST LIKE RALPH TO NOTICE SOMETHING WAS OUT OF PLACE. LORD KNOWS, WE COULD HAVE USED HIM THAT DAY!

IT IS THE PERFECT EXAMPLE OF RALPH'S CHARACTER. HE GENUINELY WORRIED ABOUT HIS COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS AT THE JAIL. EVEN IN THE MIDST OF FIGHTING FOR HIS LIFE, HIS PRIMARY CONCERN WAS THE WELLBEING OF OTHERS.

IT WAS A TRAIT THAT HE SHOWCASED THE DAY HE WALKED THROUGH OUR DOORS. WHEN RALPH WAS IN THE TRAINING ACADEMY HE WAS SIMULTANEOUSLY A RECRUIT AND A MENTOR. HE GUIDED HIS PEERS AND OFFERED ASSISTANCE, DESPITE BEING EMBROILED IN THE EXACT SAME RIGOROUS TRAINING ACADEMY AS THEY WERE.

THERE WAS NEVER A TASK TOO DIFFICULT FOR RALPH. AND AS HE GREW THROUGH THE ORGANIZATION, SO TOO DID HIS INFLUENCE ON THOSE AROUND HIM. JUST AS HE WAS A MENTOR TO OTHER RECRUITS WHILE IN THE ACADEMY, RALPH GREW INTO A ROLE MODEL TO THE YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN HE WORKED WITH ON THE TIERS. HE REFERRED TO NEWER EMPLOYEES AS, "YOUNG, YOUNG PAUL" OR "YOUNG, YOUNG MIKE" AND ENDEARED HIMSELF TO THEM IN THE PROCESS.

AND WHEN YOU HEARD HIM TALK OF HIS OWN SONS (AND HE DID SO FREQUENTLY) – AND ABOUT HOW THEY HAD ALL GROWN INTO EXCEPTIONAL YOUNG MEN, YOU UNDERSTOOD WHY THE ENTIRE

ORGANIZATION LOOKED UPON RALPH AS A FATHER FIGURE: HE LED BY EXAMPLE AND HE HAD PRIDE IN WHAT HE DID.

BUT ABOVE ALL, RALPH'S TREMENDOUS MORAL FABRIC WAS WOVEN STRONGER THAN THE UNIFORM HE DONNED EACH DAY. HIS MORAL FABRIC WAS MADE UP OF COMPASSION AND DETERMINATION. IT DEFINED HIM. IT SET HIM APART. IT CREATED AN UNFORGETTABLE AND EVERLASTING LEGACY.

TODAY IT IS APPROPRIATE THAT ON OUR UNIFORMS, WE WEAR A SMALL STRIP OF FABRIC TO COMMEMORATE THE PASSING OF A FELLOW OFFICER. IT PAYS RESPECT TO RALPH'S SERVICE. BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT REMINDS US ALL OF THAT GENUINE MORAL CHARACTER HE WOVE SO INDELIBLY ONTO OUR HEARTS.

THE DALAI LAMA ONCE SAID: "IF YOU WANT OTHERS TO BE HAPPY, PRACTICE COMPASSION. IF YOU WANT TO BE HAPPY, PRACTICE COMPASSION."

AS ANY OF US CAN ATTEST, RALPH WAS A VERY HAPPY MAN.

RALPH, ON BEHALF OF YOUR LAW ENFORCEMENT BROTHERS AND SISTERS, WE LOVE YOU – WE WILL MISS YOU.

WE KNOW YOU WILL BE KEEPING WATCH FROM A BETTER PLACE NOW –  
ON US, ON YOUR FRIENDS AND ON YOUR BELOVED FAMILY.

GOD BLESS YOU. GOD BLESS YOUR WIFE AND CHILDREN. AND GOD BLESS  
EVERYONE HERE THIS MORNING. THANK YOU.