

The Henry Clay Henry Foundation

Origins and Mission

When I think back on the life of my father, George Louis Stelluto, I did not always get who he was or what he was trying to accomplish. When I had grown up we became men of different paths for sure. My Dad's friends used to say that he was the kind of guy who wore a belt and suspenders. On the other hand I was in my eyes a risk taker. Someone who would go out and experience life on my terms, take chances, future be damned! I always felt like it put a gap between us at times, until one day on a visit home from Nashville, standing in the back yard of my parents house, my Dad told me that he envied me... he said he always wished he could have followed his passions and dreams in life, but that early on he had moved from that path to get married and have children. From that point on he became the man "who wore a belt and suspenders." He took his job very seriously. It did shrink the gap between our worlds when he said that though... he let me know he had respect for me and the choices that I had made in life, and that he would be there to help if he could.

The years went by and my Dad's health began to deteriorate. He had already had multiple open heart bypass surgeries, and shortly after I got married, he had a third. He was a remarkably strong person and seemed to shake these off with little problem. A few years later he was diagnosed with prostate cancer. The doctors had not really paid much attention to it and did not catch it early enough. Despite radiation and some chemotherapy treatments he finally succumbed to the cancer and passed from this life.

A few things humbled me when I looked back on my Dad's situation. One was his incredible grace in the way he handled the disease... always still joking and laughing right up until the end, and two was the incredible service and kindness of the people at Washington Hospice Care. They were a constant source of support for both my mother and father throughout this process. My father wished to leave this world at home -- in the home he had bought and created for his family. The people from Washington Hospice Care made this all possible. They arranged for transport from the hospital. They got the hospital bed and all the supplies, and it seemed like every day that someone from Hospice was there helping my mother clean him and make his environment more enjoyable. It was obviously a labor of love from these people who hardly knew my father. Obviously they came to love him, as I seem to remember a couple of them even showed up at his funeral at St. Mary's Church in Alexandria, VA. They obviously cared for my mother as well -- on the day of his passing the woman from Hospice stayed until all the relatives locally had been notified and were on their way, and also made sure that all arrangements for transport to the funeral home were taken care of.

"Henry Clay Henry" was a joke name that my sister and father used for him when playing cards together on those long days and nights before his passing. It is with that in mind that I am going to start the "Henry Clay Henry Foundation" in honor of the folks of Washington Hospice Care. My intention is to annually create a music CD of local artists doing cover songs that they love, and selling that CD at local businesses and events. I also intend to do a series of concerts in conjunction with the CD release to further boost revenue and CD sales. My goal is that every penny after expenses will go to the Washington Hospice Care folks, so that they might know how much they touched the lives of my father and his family. The first CD is under way with a wonderful group of caring musicians who both knew my father and how he lived his life. I think it is common for almost anyone these days to have a story to relate how they have been touched by Hospice workers, and it is my sincere intent to somehow give that back if possible. It is our hope that our music will touch you in some way as well.

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