

Speech for the Inlet Spring Regatta

I'd like to start by thanking Brian Kenny and the Nothin' Dragon Masters team for dedicating this year's Inlet Spring Regatta to my Dad. The weather looks perfect and lets hope the wind stays down so that you can all enjoy an excellent day.

He would be so proud for the honour and also of all of you racing in his memory today. He was very proud to be a member of this team and to take on leadership roles like team captain or dry-land training coach and steersperson. It invigorated him to know you were all working together towards a common goal and the spin-off effects are physical fitness, well-being, a sense of belonging, and most of all friendship.

My Dad dedicated a lot of his last 20 years to this team because he enjoyed all of you – your competitive spirit, your energy, your camaraderie and the strong relationships you forged. He shared many photos and stories with his family from races and the fun you have together at events. Being a part of this team gave my Dad youthfulness, purpose and energy during the last 20 years of his life. And when he was struggling with illness all of you were there to give him emotional strength, a sense of purpose and a drive to continue being a role model teammate. It meant a lot to our family to have all of your support at Dad's Celebration of Life.

I've heard from many of you – and I know first hand from having my Dad as my soccer coach for many years – that he had a remarkable ability for leadership and inspiring the team to do their very best. He led with a zeal for the sport and a passion to encourage each paddler to do their best.

One story that sticks out among the rest that Dad shared with us happened in the first year or two of his time with the team. Dad told us of a revered senior team named the Grand Dragons, from False Creek. He told us that they were virtually unbeatable and that they were your measuring stick. You didn't expect to beat them ever, but your goal was to be as competitive as possible with them. He was so determined that you would show well against them that he dedicated the whole year to training and preparing with the team for that one race. It was all he talked about when he discussed dragon boating. Well, when the race day finally came – I think on Father's Day – you not only showed well against them, you did the unthinkable and actually beat them and captured gold in the senior division. Needless to say that race

was again the only thing Dad talked about in reference to Dragon boating for the following year as well. And rightfully so. He was so proud. That team went on to win the Governor General's Award and 23 more gold medals over the next 20 years.

I have a photo that captures Dad's delight after that big win against the Grand Dragons. I'm not sure who is on the stage receiving their award, but I'm pretty sure that is who the photographer intended on getting a shot of, but somehow my Dad must have known that the photo was going to be taken and he decided to stand up in the middle of the crowd, that was watching the award being given. He turned to face the camera, he had a huge smile on his face and he was holding an even bigger 1st place trophy over his head. He was so proud that you had performed better than expected and beat the Grand Dragons (although I think he secretly believed you would beat them all along). And I love that that moment was captured and preserved in a photo.

Thank you for dedicating the festival to Dad and here's to many more inspiring races, medals, teamwork and friendships. When you are nearing the finish line today and you feel like you have nothing left in the tank, I hope you can draw those last drops of energy by remembering Captain Dan's determination, perseverance and belief in you.

Paddles up Nothin Dragon!