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Hannah Mullen
Retired Associate Justice John Paul Stevens
Funeral
Arlington National Cemetery
Tuesday, July 23, 2019

Good morning. My name is Hannah Mullen. I'm one of Justice Stevens' grandchildren. Thank you all for being here.

My grandfather — the great Justice, the great man — was also the greatest grandpa in the world. He loved us and he showed it. He was an avid patron of elementary school choir concerts. He celebrated our middle school report cards. A high school sports championship was, for him, front-page news. He took pride in what we did and we felt it. Around him, we were special.

So, we loved being around him. Grandpa was fun. He brought sugar cookies from our favorite bakery and boxes of chocolate. He had a sweet tooth himself. Maddie remembers sharing cookies with Grandpa while they worked on puzzles together. When Katie was young, she sat on his lap and learned how to smash ice cream to the perfect consistency of soft-serve. Sometimes, for breakfast, Grandpa just had a piece of apple pie.

He was the kind of Grandpa who taught us how to catch lightning bugs. When a park was dedicated to him, he played with Eddie and Susie on the swings during the ribbon-cutting ceremony. In Florida, he swam in the pool with Haley and they built sand castles on the beach. Grandpa also loved board games. When it came to Monopoly, the anti-trust lawyer spent hours trying to trounce his grandson John. Grandpa took our Scrabble rivalry so seriously he once delayed family dinner because he demanded a rematch.

He didn't "go easy" on us when we played. He didn't go easy on almost anybody for anything. Just ask his tennis and golf partners. Ask anyone who challenged him in ping pong. He didn't

go easy on us in part because he liked to win, but also because he loved us and respected us as competitors — even when we were little kids.

His love of sports never faded. Christine remembers Grandpa gleefully dancing the “Super Bowl Shuffle,” the signature dance of the Chicago Bears. He got to see his long-suffering Cubs win the World Series in dramatic fashion. At 85 years old, he threw out the first pitch at a Cubs game — high, inside, and over the plate. He was a judge who could throw a strike.

He valued education and hard work. He encouraged Lauren to become a doctor and, when she got overwhelmed studying for a medical school exam, he set aside his memoirs to spend the day poring over textbooks with her. His apartment was full of history books, biographies, and law review articles with scribbled notes in the margins. When I started law school, Grandpa began giving me articles to read, so we could talk about them over his morning cup of coffee.

He asked what I thought and listened, even though I knew so little. He was the most brilliant person I ever met, and yet he could make the people around him feel brighter, rather than dimmer, in his presence.

Grandpa loved his family, and we loved him back. He loved his children: my mom Sue and my aunt Liz, who are with us today. He loved his daughter Kada and he loved his son John, who both preceded him in death. He celebrated five of his grandchildren’s weddings and welcomed thirteen great-grandchildren into the world. He was a loving step-father to Cathy, Jerry, Terry, Dan, and Caralyn, and a loving grandfather to their children. We will all miss him dearly.

Facing a world without Grandpa, I want to live in a way that honors him. I looked up to Grandpa because he treated people with kindness but didn’t go easy on them. He showed courtesy to the advocates who came before him, as he cut their case to pieces at oral argument. He respected his colleagues while writing the most separate opinions in history.

Grandpa's life, in public and in private, should inspire all of us to act as much with conviction as with compassion. We need both if we are to speak our mind, without forgetting that our voice is one of many. I hope, like him, we find the compassion to protect those in harm's way and the conviction to stand up to power. I hope, like him, we remain graceful in victory and undaunted in defeat — brave enough to dissent and, if no one will join us, brave enough to dissent alone.

Rest in peace, Grandpa. We love you and we'll try to make you proud.