

He Made the Most of His Dash

To Martin's friends...

I hadn't seen Martin in 10 years. We had simply lost touch. That's at least 50% my fault. It was so heartwarming to see the outpouring of love and support from the Helena community. He wasn't born or raised there but clearly he was welcomed and adopted. We can't thank you enough for that.

Being the oldest of six kids and very intelligent, he was on a pedestal in our family. It was always a big deal when Martin called from Michigan or came home for a visit.

He taught me chess when I was 6 – and this was before he found the “kinder, gentler” method of teaching kids. It more closely resembled beating someone so bad they needed a helmet. It took me eight years to beat him – and I beat him FOUR TIMES IN ONE DAY! (I should've retired at that point).

He came to my school to tell “The Golden Arm.” Even kids that had heard it four or five times still got scared.

When my wife and I were first dating, he took us to a fancy New Orleans restaurant. It was Betty's first introduction to “fine dining”. I was sitting between Betty and Martin. I remember tasting the appetizer (some sort of artichoke dish) and making some sort of “yummy noise”. In true Martin fashion, he said “Wow. I hope you enjoy sex as much.” Betty always appreciated the introduction to fine dining, but was appropriately embarrassed. So was I.

Our second daughter developed “baby jaundice” when we brought her home. The cure is ultraviolet light (think of a mini-tanning booth). Someone had to be with her 24/7 because if she looked at the light she could be blinded. Martin showed up just a couple days after Molly came home and took his turn standing watch without even being asked. This is what family meant to him.

Simply put, Martin treated people the way he would want to be treated.

Anyone who was at his Toasting will remember me as the blubbering mess. Betty figured out that I am mourning opportunity lost. There's no good reason for having disconnected for so long, but here's what I was trying to say...

Tombstones all show something like “1947 – 2024”. The dates mean much less than what you do with the time between them, represented by the dash.

Martin made the most of his dash.

- Mark Richard, *Martin's Younger Brother*