

**CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR
STEPHEN MCWILLIAMS
[1943 - 2013]**

To the World's Greatest Dad...

By Stephanie McWilliams

Here in this great room we all gather today
To celebrate Steve McWilliams in a most special way.

And as any true-blooded McWilliams child should
I won't quibble with tears, for that wouldn't be good.

For dad wasn't the fondest of public displays
Of weepy sad feelings on life's bluer days.

And Dad NEVER would want this occasion to be
Sad, dreary or depressing – he would want lots of GLEE!

Because really, think hard – Stephen kicked lots of butt
He did groovy-cool things -- while acting much like a Nut.

Sure, some folks may just wallow and bum themselves out
But Dad's life makes me want to climb up on rooftops to shout!

Because rare is the person who can accomplish so much
While being kind, fun and caring – with so many lives touched.

There are countless great stories about things dad would do.
Oh, they might sound far-fetched, but they're surprisingly true!

For example, dad spent YEARS pranking his co-working folks
Arriving at work oh so early for a sneaky fun joke.

He would take out the creamer from the kitchenette space
And tighten it TIGHTLY – then back into the cabinet he'd place

Then as coworkers shuffled in for their morning cup-o-joe
Dad would listen, delighted, to the chatter to-and fro

While these brilliant men pondered the molecular configuration
That causes overnight jar tightening – And in total frustration

They would all scratch their heads, and ponder day after day
And then year after year – but not a word dad would say.

Oh no, he was quite content to watch these goofy guys
Be befuddled each morning – dad’s inner prankster grand prize.

And as if that’s not enough to describe my dad’s wacky ways,
There’s another Steve-story from one of my favorite days.

Dad and I were in Brooklyn. Mom was cooking us dinner.
And she needed some things to make our meal a real winner.

So he and I headed out to get lots of things on our list:
Mayonnaise, salad dressing, toilet paper – you get the gist!

And as we laid out the items on the counter to pay,
Dad looked straight at the Clerk, and this is what he did say:

As serious as taxes, he touched the T.P. with bliss
And said: ***“Is this enough toilet paper – for all the rest of this?”***

Without cracking a smile from that crazy nut-brain
He kept staring at the clerk who thought dad must be insane.

And there are a millions more moments like this I enjoyed.
I feel sorry for all the rest of the world’s girls and boys...

Because they didn’t get to have a dad quite like this.
A dad that was magical, mischievous, and with a slightly weird twist.

A dad who invented great things, and had a career of prestige.
Learning Chemistry by age 6, and $E = MC^2$ with great ease.

Yeah, he’s basically a freak of nature with talents galore.
There’s not a thing he couldn’t fix. And his photography you’d adore.

He was a pilot, an inventor and an electrical engineer
And a distinguished team member of his AT+T Bell Lab Peers.

He loved music, and fishing, and blowing up this and that,
Fireworks were a favorite. He loved dogs, birds and cats.

And dad never once met a strange - chatting up any ol' folk...
He could converse with a King. With a Hobo. The Pope.

With an entrepreneur's spirit, he dreamed big and dreamed bold.
This was no TYPICAL mere mortal – he's a Soul that's most old.

But many don't know about one of dad's favorite things
He was the KING of self-help – studying all psychological things.

He was reading about Zen and how to Think and Grow Rich,
Being that darn enlightened must have been quite a bitch!

For example, when I went off to college in good ol' NYC
Mom and dad would send care packages that made my friends want to pee

Because Instead of sweet goodies or homemade yummy treats
I would open the box and say: ***"Oh, geeze oh Pete!"***

Inside were cassettes FILLED with topics about self-reflection
And how to be a good person – but I still must make mention

Mom also helped fill those boxes, as the alfa female
Filing the rest of those packages with lots of tin cans of Kale.

Yeah, it was far far from normal to have the McWilliams last name.
And for every person who doesn't have it, well it's a cryin' darn shame.

You've missed out, I must tell you. Not to make you feel bad.
But simply to highlight what a spectacular dad I did have.

Dad dreamed of making a difference and changing the planet,
I only wish we could take all that inspiration and CAN it.

Because if everyone could get a dose of that kind of desire.
What a world it would be. There'd be peace. We'd reach higher!

Many don't know every week he tutored poor inner-city kids
Teens who had very little – but dad had SO much to give!

And sure, there were some things dad still wanted to do,
Like rob a small bank, and smoke a doobie or two...

But so many of the things dad had always wanted to
Are MY very same dreams that have already come true.

Because Dad taught me just how to put mind over matter.
Miracles are quite easy when inner-limits are shattered.

It started 17 long years ago when life became most profound
And dad was diagnosed with the worst kind of brain tumor around.

Then the well-meaning doctors shook their heads all around, saying:
“Get your things all in order – soon you’ll be 6ft underground!”

But what you THINK, you create. So dad refused to think “sick.”
And heal the tumor he did – oh so fast, oh so quick.

Dad just looked at the Docs with a mild bit of pitty.
He knew they were all wrong, and their advice was MOST shitty.

Dad had a wise inner knowing, and 0 intention
Of taking things lying down, and he did his own intervention.

Because even when all the doctors throughout all the land
Poo-poo’d dad’s will to live as he took a rare, ballsy stand

He believed. He stood strong, and laid out his own plan
He did self-hypnosis and meditation as only Steve can.

He completely cured a rare condition that NO ONE survives.
When all other folks kicked the bucket, dad just decided to thrive!

“Maybe we mis-diagnosed him?” his doctors all scratched their head.
“No one lives from this thing – this man ought to be dead!”

But if that’s not impressive – he got the same tumor AGAIN!
And he cured it a 2nd time, right back on the ol’ mend...

So the only thing sad about this Celebration today
Is that OTHER people don’t know how to live in this way.

I think dad’s here to show us just what we all can do.
If we opened up and put ourselves in those big ol’ Steve-shoes.

So for today, and tomorrow, how about try on this phrase:
“What would STEVE do right now?” It could be the next craze!

And lucky me: I got 17 more years with the world’s bestest dad –
Hands down some of the MOST precious years that I’ve had!

And while dad's life was spectacular enough for this rhyming rant,
There's someone he'd want me to mention... not his mother. Not aunt.

It's his wife of 48+ years – the Judy-Mom by his side.
Because none of this would be possible without their close-knit life ride.

While dad may get the credit for many wild-n-wonderful things,
Without her support and green smoothies, no telling what life would bring...

She's as loyal and determined and dedicated as they come.
She's the wind beneath wings. He's the Earth. She's his sun.

Dad adored her and was content to spend all of his days
Following her like a puppy dog in a love drunken haze.

And that kind of close bond is something I rarely see
It's what inspires my life – the kind of person I want to be.

So to me, this is a celebration not of one life – but two.
Because without each of them, ***I don't know WHAT I would do!***

So it's worth raising a glass to toast these 2 rare gems
The people I'm proud to call: My parents. My family. My friends.

Hip Hip Hooray for Judy! Hip Hip Hoorah for Steve!
This is a blessed celebration – and makes me still believe

That love is forever. It's a bond you can't break.
It's the most precious of things – for granted we must not ever take.

And if that sounds woo-woo or a bit airy fairy...
I send you one of dad's famous big fat raspberries: PHHHHHHTTTHTHTHTHTH!

For today is not about endings - it's about a whole new beginning.
And if Marin Sheen were right here, he'd agree -- Today dad is "WINNING!"

In fact, dad's made it quite clear that he's still around since he passed.
Oh the funny stories I could tell you -- Dad is still quite the gas!

So if you think that he's gone, and no more seeds he can sow?
You've got another thing coming -- I call this: Dad 2.0!

Here's one fun example from later on the night dad had "passed"
One example of many – all because my mom had asked:

***“I want Proof, Steve McWilliams, with my own eyes I must see...
A light bulb blown in this house... No, not just one – make it THREE!”***

So then mom and I snuggled up to watch a bit of TV
And in one of the very first scenes, those bulbs blew – 1 – 2 – 3!

Doubting Thomas? I get it – I was once Thomas too...
But there are mysteries in life that I once never knew.

Catch me later tonight – there’s lots more I can say
About the 40-some other odd things that happened that day.

So just as I’m sure of the stars up in the sky
Dad is right here in this room. With those sparkling blue eyes.

He’s with us. We’re together – always, till the end.
Love is what most truly matters – there’s no time it can’t bend.

So smile at this celebration of a most beautiful life
No sadness, regret or loss – they cut the heart like a knife.

Just get your butt out there, and live at 100%.
Don’t sweat the small stuff like taxes, or paying your rent.

Because this life is fleeting. It’s no one’s permanent home.
There’s a bigger place waiting – no matter where you might roam.

So tonight grab a dictionary and look up the word “celebrate”
You’ll see a picture of dad – a man that is wise, kind and great.

3 cheers for Steve McWilliams --- toast him red, white and blue...
But no words say it better than: ***Dad, I love you!***