

October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2002.

In memory of Ralph Hertz.

It is with some fear that I address you now, for no remarks which any of us could ever make would do justice to Granddad's life. Of all the men that I have known, he was the greatest. I have no words to ease what we feel, and no power over what you knew of him. I can only speak.

Most of us walk through this life and encounter hundreds or thousands of people every year. A handful of them we encounter again and again, for they are our friends and our family, the people whose lives make ours change and whose lives we change by being a part of them. But the very great mass of mankind that we encounter, we pass by with soothing words or wit, and they glance by the exterior that we have learned to show them.

Granddad never let people pass him by. Without pretension, without hypocrisy, he would ask who they were, and *he actually meant it*. He asked why people did what they did, not in words, but simply by the manner in which he addressed them and the strength of his character. If you look around this room, and across the rooms of many, many families aside from ours, you will find people who have been profoundly affected by him. He didn't do it by questioning our practices or trying to change who we were. He changed our lives because he was the person he chose to be, and I thank him for that.

He had a good, long and productive life. A part of him left us a few years ago, when he started having some trouble putting things together and speaking on the phone to those that could not visit him. Even then, he knew every plant and flower on Maui, he never stopped worrying about others, and I know for a fact that he continued to shape the lives of those that knew him and even those that he met for the first time. Now another part of him is gone. But a part of him we get to keep. What part we keep depends on what we knew of him, and of what we can learn of him from each other.

One more thing about him I can tell you. With all his knowledge, and all that he cared for, he loved his wife best. She is an extraordinary woman who could not only put up with him, she could somehow from time to time put up with the rest of us, and she holds a place of her own in forming our lives. Remember him, and let her know how you're doing every once in a while. Don't bother her too much now, but every now and then, when you think of him, think of her.

He was Ralph Earl Louis Thomas Henry Hertz.