

My first memory of Dad is in 1986. I was almost 4 years old and, like most other mornings, had been dropped off at daycare by my mother. Every morning, I would stand at the window in the daycare center and wave to mom as she walked to her car. She would always wave back – except this morning was different. This morning, mom was walking and talking with a mysterious man who I had never seen before - and was so caught up in the conversation that she didn't even think to wave to me in the window. Who was this man? I thought. The mysterious man was dropping his son off at the same daycare center that morning – his son Noah, who unbeknownst to me at the time, was soon to become my brother. And little did I know at the time what an important part of my life this mysterious man would become.

Soon, we became a family, all living together first at Dad and Noah's house in Damascus and then in Lisbon. Despite the fact that I was another man's son – from my mother's previous marriage – and despite the fact that I was, in many ways, a little brat *at the time* - dad immediately took me in and began treating me as his own, even integrating me into his own family, including Uncle Ralph and Aunt Pat and cousins Karen and Foster. I also gained a brother – Noah – who I would grow up with and have been so fortunate to have in my life. And soon enough, I became well versed in what we call Wayne Smith's laws. Some of you may have picked up the little card at the funeral home yesterday, listing these laws that in many way dictated our every day lives together. I won't share them all – but I would like to share a few of my favorites. *Five-minute jobs take at least 30 minutes* – this describes many chores and odd jobs around the house that Noah and I would be tasked with. *One-hour jobs take at least three hours*. This reminds me of the year we picked out a Christmas tree that was far too large for our living room. Dad was certain it would be easy to trim the thing down so it would fit – and I remember opening the basement door that afternoon

and peering down the stairs, and there was Dad, on the floor and wrestling with that Christmas tree, yelling and screaming at it with his tools in hand. And finally – what seemed like several hours later – he had the thing standing up in our living room. *All-day jobs are never started.* This best describes our garage – the infamous garage, heaped high with all kinds of odds and ends – and somewhere underneath all of that, there *was* an actual car – the garage that was off limits to visitors. The garage that Dad always said would be cleaned out – yet year after year after year would pass by, and the garage always looked the same. And then my favorite – and I’ll paraphrase – *opening the can of paint is the hardest part of the job.* I was often instructed to clean my room growing up, and I always complained with something along the lines of “but it’s soooo hard or it’ll take soooo long”. Dad would always smile and remind me that “opening the can of paint is the hardest part of the job” – meaning of course that once you get started it won’t be so bad. There’s a lot of truth to that, and it’s something I’ve remembered to this day and always remind myself of when faced with what seems like a daunting task. Dad taught us many things growing up, things that will undoubtedly stay with us and guide us for years to come. I’m grateful to have grown up in his house and look back fondly on the many times we shared there.

And then there’s Maria. When my sister Maria was born in 1994, there was a lot of excitement in the house. Finally someone new, something different. But the life that Maria had the biggest impact on was almost certainly Dad’s. The two of them became like two best friends. When Dad was diagnosed with cancer in 2005, the prognosis was grim. But Dad refused to let it get him down, and I think Maria – more than anyone else – gets the credit for keeping him active, energetic, and happy. The two of them embarked on plenty of home improvement projects together – finally things started to get done around

the house! – and embarked on many journeys together. Maria and Dad traveled the country together during these past few years, covering thousands of miles, seeing numerous new places and landmarks around the country, and no doubt enjoying each other's company every step of the way. It was clear that Dad's determination and energy originated with Maria and the desire to spend as much time as possible with the daughter who he loved so much. Dad's passing has been extraordinarily difficult for those who loved him so much – for me, for his family and loved ones, and especially for Noah and Maria – but we take comfort knowing that during the last years of his life, Dad had such an amazing daughter who he was so close to and had so many incredible times with. A daughter to look out for him, spend time with him, and in many ways be his best friend. So, Dad, we love you and will miss you – but we'll also cherish the great times we had together and will always be thankful that you had Maria with you to keep you happy and full of life until the end. Thank you.