



Matthew J. Miller, M.D.
1961 - 2014

I bet most people here today remember the first time they met Matt. You couldn't help but notice him. Striding into the ER or a patient's room he filled it with his presence. After knowing him for more than two decades I was still struck by his stature. But not one inch was wasted on him. He was packed with so much talent, intelligence, drive and love I don't think it would have fit in a smaller package.

I was lucky enough to experience many sides of this modern Renaissance man. As a physician, I quickly learned who could take care of the sickest patients and who I trusted with my own medical care. His vast knowledge base, diagnostic acumen and persistence allowed him to diagnose and treat thousands. He wanted the best for his patients and wanted the best from those he worked with. As an Internist for Eureka Internal Medicine he cared for the sick, comforted their families and mentored nurses. He was always a strong advocate for his patients. When he left for Oregon we wished him well and waited for him to miss us as much as we missed him. Thankfully we didn't have to wait too long and Matt returned with all his talents and some new skills and ideas about healthcare systems and how to take better care of people. Given Matt's less than stellar reputation for timely charting I know many of us thought the idea of Matt being in charge of getting other people to dot their i's and cross their t's was puzzling. But we also knew that if anyone could make the hospital a better place it was Matt.

We trusted Matt could make things better. When our kids were in pre-school we looked to him for the answer of what to do when their first pet goldfish died. He answered the call with the calm reassuring

authority that gave us all comfort: Stand together. Remember the good times. And sing Kumbaya...Then flush!

Matt turned squirrely little boys in cleats and shins guards into fine soccer players. He coached older boys into skilled young men on the basketball court. He transformed blank canvases and tubes of paint into beautiful works of art that adorn the walls of his home. Soil and seeds became bushels of peppers under his care. Water and grain became beer. On the famous fly fishing trips he took with friends and colleagues, fish and their pursuit were both the reason and the excuse to take a break from his day-to-day responsibilities. I was never quite sure how many fish those guys caught, but the stories made us all laugh and wonder just how many cases of wine they'd brought each year.

Matt made music. He played and sang with Jerry and the Pacemakers at medical events, partnered with other musicians for Arts Alive and private parties, entertained us in living rooms and around campfires and serenaded those he loved at home. He performed Van Morrison songs better than Van Morrison. He sang soulfully, wrote and played artfully. He made it look easy.

But nothing was as effortless for Matt as loving his family. His mother LeVonne was his first love. On behalf of all of us here today thank you for raising such an amazing man. He has enriched our lives and will be remembered in our hearts forever. Mary and Matt went to the same high school. She has said that back then she would see him hanging out by himself playing guitar and looking far too cool to talk to at the time. Years later she and Matt would come to Eureka with two young boys and hopes of becoming a part of a community which they did. As Ben and Quinn grew (and grew and grew!) they changed from boys to men. As they moved between sports and art and music Matt was always with them. He was their number one fan; their greatest champion. As a father, there is a unique pride in having a son and watching him grow

into a man. Matt knew this pride twice over. Matt never stood taller than when talking about his boys.

Ben and Quinn, many people have been telling you great things about your dad and how much he loved you both. We hope you will remember these stories in the long days ahead and that these words can bring you some comfort

Traci, his life partner: no one will feel his day-to-day loss more than you. The love you two shared was like him: bigger, broader and stronger than most couples will ever know. You know that we love you and will hold you close in the days and weeks to come.

For many of us here today life without Matt seems unbelievable. He was too big and full of life to be gone. But as shock and disbelief subside we will come to terms with our new reality and our loss. Through faith, music, art, friends and family we will remember this great Renaissance man and know that he is still a part of our lives. With the passage of time we will begin to heal and be thankful for the many gifts he brought into our lives. Above all I am thankful for his friendship. I will always miss and remember my friend.