

Dear Margaret,

I attach a few words which I was going to ask if I could say at Gerald's funeral. Alas I did not think I would have been able to.

They are just a few words on paper that all of his friends could have said and are also intended to thank him.

If there is ever anything I or Sheila can do at any time do not hesitate to ask . We owe you both.

Kind Regards

Alex

Alex & Sheila

GERALD

I have known Gerald for exactly 47 Years. Well, to be exact he has known me for 47 years. Throughout those years I have seen nothing but generosity, kindness, consideration and love. Apart from his terrible jokes.

My first memory of him was actually when I was about 5 years old and that in itself is evidence of what he meant to me because that memory was probably one of the first I ever had of anything. That memory was actually of him getting a telling off from his mother, my granny, but more importantly it was my first experience of his generosity and his sense of humour. That day he was giving me some money. At that time it would have been a penny or two but this is where the humour appeared. He then held out his hand which contained pennies and big shiny half crowns. He then said I could pick which coin I wanted. It goes without saying that I grabbed the half crown but then I noticed something strange. The back of the coin was rough and I started to pick off some of the silver. Then to my horror the half crown turned into a penny. He had wrapped the penny in a milk bottle top. Nanna heard my whinging and he got the telling off.

If a hurricane or a tidal wave or an avalanche brought any good they could be one description of Gerald. He spent life at a hundred miles an hour and engulfed everything before him. The difference is that he engulfed people with his presence, spreading his generosity and kindness. The power of him doing this was awesome. If you were within a mile of him you experienced it. If you spent a second with him you experienced it. When you left his company you felt good. You always left with a warm glow. You talked about him with pleasure, with his enthusiasm and no one could ever think a bad thought about him. We were all envious of his energy and it was always infectious.

And then there was his terrible sense of humour.

His generosity was not necessarily financial but more importantly he was also generous with his time. He was always keen to listen, to help, to advise and to share. He could spend 5 minutes with you and it felt like hours of most other people's time. He was always interested in what you had to say or how you were doing.

At this point in time I, and hundreds of others, but especially you, are experiencing a great loss, a great sadness and there is no denying this will continue for a long time. However, I have thought about sadness and perhaps real sadness is when someone dies and there are 2 or 3 people at the funeral and the loss is not felt as great. If there is a good feeling at the moment it is from the consolation that hundreds of people feel the way that I do and any one of them could be writing this eulogy.

And then there was his terrible sense of humour.

Joking apart, His sense of humour was magical. We all need humour. We all need to laugh. I feel it is one of life's most important attributes and he certainly had it. He made you laugh and I do not know of enough couples who do as you two did. That made it obvious to all what you meant to each other. This is also a very important part of Sheila and I's life. I was also comforted by your own ability to laugh over the last few days and Linda, Sharon and Gerald. It was very hard but admirable. I must also thank you for helping me with your laughter. Each time I visited I was dreading the opening of your gates and hearing the bad news. But each time I saw you come out smiling it helped me a great deal and must have been very difficult.

The better news is that Gerald has passed on leaving a wonderful family in good shape having inherited all of the personality that you and he have worked so hard to give them. He died knowing that he had left you all in good shape with wonderful memories and knowing that you would be more than capable of carrying on that great work.

I only know of one other man who has been as great as he was and who has given me so much.

Finally, I don't know if Elvis is up there looking down on us but if he is you can bet that he has started doing Gerald impersonations.

Alex