

Eulogy for Jerry W. Ross  
February 23, 2008

- ✓ How are you?
- ✓ A question we often hear people ask
- ✓ A question we almost always heard Jerry Ross ask
- ✓ The difference
- ✓ Many people don't really listen to your response
- ✓ Jerry truly wanted to know
- ✓ He wanted to know how you were doing
  - How your wife or husband was
  - How your mamma was
  - He wanted to be sure everyone was all right
- ✓ Today, I would tell Jerry I was hurting; although, he would already sense that, put his hand on my shoulder, and offer me reassurance that everything was OK
- ✓ We all feel the tremendous loss of this great man and are here to honor him, pay tribute to him, celebrate his life
- ✓ This is the hardest thing I have ever done, but I wanted to share a few thoughts expressing my feelings toward Jerry
- ✓ I have known Jerry for almost 30 years and although pictures of both of us today may seem to show a different image, he has always remained the same in my mind
- ✓ A very caring man
  - Always had a warm handshake
  - A welcoming smile
  - A good word for everyone he met
- ✓ During the past 30 years, I have had the opportunity to travel, work, and socialize with Jerry and have seen his sincerity first hand
- ✓ I have been in the audience many times listening to him speak, reflect on stories, tell jokes, and teach profound lessons to audiences of all levels. He was a great speaker and felt comfortable speaking with Generals and with Airmen...they both felt comfortable with him
- ✓ I first met Jerry shortly after coming into the Air Force in 1978 and soon after that had the opportunity to interact with him "officially" as he inspected the pharmacy at Maxwell AFB and again not too long after that at Kadena AFB Japan
- ✓ The second time was just like the first...clear attention to detail and abundant fairness
- ✓ He had an amazing talent for being able to perform his duty superbly and be your friend simultaneously
- ✓ I was fortunate enough to follow Jerry in several of his assignments and therefore had the privilege of knowing first hand how he interacted with the folks he worked with...it was obvious how much he was loved and respected. He always left the places better than he found them but it sure made it tough on those of us following as we could never live up to the expectations he had set. He always set the bar high
- ✓ Yes, he was very focused on his work, but then that was a big part of his life

- ✓ I don't think I ever spent more than a few minutes with him that he didn't talk about his family. There is no doubt that his family was his priority
  - When we talked, he would tell me about his grandchildren and learning about the "Polar Express"
  - Going to the lake and "wallerin' in the water" with the family
  - He would talk about his children with such love, respect, and passion, and I could easily see the pride
  - Among the many stories we shared, one of my favorites is how he "found" Jason a wife on the airplane. I think that is a perfect example of how proud he was of his children...even talking to strangers, and showing them pictures, of his family
- ✓ Although I knew his feelings for his children were strong and could see him swell with pride when talking about them, there was absolutely no doubt about his love for Miss Sally
  - He would tell me about all the things she did to support him
  - All the things she was involved in back home like entertaining large crowds of people
  - All the animals she had rescued
  - All of their trips together
- ✓ Although his career required much travel, he was always eager to return home
- ✓ I am certain that he passed up many career opportunities simply because they may have required that he either move away from Murfreesboro or travel even more
- ✓ I also know that being here provided him the opportunity to help his Mom and that was very important to him also
- ✓ In addition to being a wonderful father for his children, a wonderful grandfather for his grandchildren, a wonderful husband for Sally, and a wonderful friend to the world, he was also a very devoted son to his Mom
- ✓ When I reflect on my time with Jerry, I think about
  - His stories like the one about the Big Mouth Frog
  - The famous Chicken joke
  - His "meager existence" eating nachos while Sally was at the Academy before joining him at Keesler
  - The "submarine" he had while assigned to Keesler
  - "Discussions" about the University of Tennessee football team, especially when they played the University of Georgia, and painting his dog
  - How proud he was to be part of BOMO
    - ✓ I know there are BOMO rocks in the pockets of Air Force pharmacists all over the world and there may be some here today
    - ✓ Sally, I can't help but imagine the experiences you must be able to reflect upon having spent a lifetime with this man we all loved
- ✓ General P.K. Carlton often used the phrase "It's a privilege and a pleasure" when referring to his opportunity to serve our beneficiaries. I too feel that sentiment now, for truly it was a privilege and a pleasure to have known Jerry and to have had the opportunity to serve with him
- ✓ Jerry was the most well-known and well-respected person I have ever seen
- ✓ He is an icon and a giant among men

- ✓ I have heard from so many this week and one person stated that Jerry was the epitome of an officer and a gentleman...a gentle man. I couldn't agree more
- ✓ He has mentored more young technicians and pharmacists, including me, than probably even he knew
- ✓ I recall the time when we named our AF Pharmacy Awards Banquet, the "US Air Force Jerry W. Ross Annual Pharmacy Awards Banquet"
  - This was such a special occasion for him
  - This will always be a visual reminder to those who come after us that we shall never forget what he did for all of us
- ✓ Many people pass through our lives and some become acquaintances and a few become lifelong friends
- ✓ I am honored to have had Jerry Ross as a true friend
- ✓ On my desk at home sits a retirement gift and the inscription reads, True Friends Forever Jerry R. and Jerry W. We will see each other again!
- ✓ I cannot describe to you the importance of that to me
- ✓ I realize I have been talking for probably too long and I am almost through but just remember, if Ross was doing this it would be longer...after he got through talking he would want to shake everyone's hand and ask, "How are You"
- ✓ He has touched the lives of the people who have met him in a very special and lasting way...we shall always remember him with great fondness, admiration, and respect
- ✓ Jerry, I salute you my friend, and I thank you for all you have done for me personally and for so many others