

I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS THE APPRECIATION OF MY FAMILY TO OUR RELATIVES, NEIGHBORS, FRIENDS, AND THE COMMUNITY FOR THE TREMENDOUS SUPPORT WE HAVE RECEIVED. JOANNE, PAUL, KARYN JOIN ME IN A VERY SINCERE THANK YOU FOR THE INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE EFFORTS OF THE GOOD PEOPLE AROUND US. IT IS NOT ONLY MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO COPE WITH OUR LOSS, BUT IT HAS GIVEN US NEW MEANING FOR LOVE AND COMPASSION. PLEASE KNOW THAT YOU HAVE GIVEN US STRENGTH AND THERE IS A DEEP, WARM GRADITUDE IN OUR HEARTS.

I HAVE SPENT SEVERAL HOURS DURING THE PAST FEW DAYS SEARCHING FOR WORDS THAT NOT ONLY DESCRIBE MY SON GARY, BUT MORE TO FIND A THEME TO HIS LIFE. I KNOW THERE WAS PURPOSE FOR GARY'S LIFE BECAUSE HE LEFT SO MANY PEOPLE WITH SUCH STRONG FEELINGS FOR HIM. I KNEW MY SON WELL. I LOVED HIM WITH ALL MY HEART, HE SHARED HIS LIFE IN CLOSE FAMILY TIES, AND YET IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR ME TO VISUALIZE THIS THEME.

IT BECAME APPARENT TO ME THAT GARY HAD SEVERAL QUALITIES THAT WERE BROUGHT TOGETHER BY HIS ABILITY TO REACH PEOPLE IN A SPECIAL WAY. AND IF THERE IS A THEME TO GARY'S LIFE IT IS SIMPLY HE TOUCHED PEOPLE. GARY MADE YOU LOVE HIM- BUT HE GAVE IT RIGHT BACK. MANY OF HIS FRIENDS AND FAMILY CONFIDED IN HIM.

GARY HAD A TREMENDOUS ZEST FOR LIFE - HE LOVED TO MEET NEW PEOPLE, VISIT NEW PLACES, DO NEW THINGS. HE WAS THRILLED TO FIND OUT HE WAS ACCEPTED TO THE STUDY PROGRAM IN LONDON - FOR IT GAVE HIM OPPORTUNITY FOR A NEW LIFE STYLE.

THERE IS IRONY IN THIS. GARY WAS A SHY AND BASHFUL CHILD IN HIS EARLY YEARS. HE WAS RELUCTANT TO GET INVOLVED IN ACTIVITIES. JOANNE AND I SPENT A GREAT DEAL OF TIME BUILDING HIS CONFIDENCE AND SELF ESTEEM. GARY INTRODUCED US TO A NEW MEANING FOR THE WORD FRUSTRATION.

BUT THE BEAUTIFUL PART OF GARY'S LIFE FOR JOANNE AND ME WAS THE TRANSITION HE MADE IN HIS HIGH SCHOOL YEARS. WE SAW OUR SON MATURE, DEVELOP A WONDERFUL SENSE FOR PEOPLE'S FEELINGS, AND ACHIEVE A GREAT DEAL OF POPULARITY.

I THINK AT THIS TIME GARY SENSED HIS ABILITY TO TOUCH PEOPLE AND HE GAINED CONFIDENCE AND BECAME MORE OUTGOING. HE DEVELOPED A WONDERFUL SENSE OF HUMOR. BUT UNDERLINING ALL OF THIS CHANGE WAS A BASIC QUALITY OF RESPECT.

GARY LOVED SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY. I KNEW IT WAS THE RIGHT FIT FOR HIM FROM THE BEGINNING. IT HAD THE EXCITEMENT OF BIGTIME SPORTS, ONE OF THE LEADING SCHOOLS OF PUBLIC COMMUNICATION - NEWHOUSE, AND AN OPPORTUNITY FOR HIM TO MEET MANY NEW FRIENDS. THE WONDERFUL PART OF THIS IS THAT IT ALL CAME TRUE - IT WAS THE RIGHT FIT. THE TRAGEDY IS HE WILL NEVER FINISH IT.

AS LONG AS I LIVE I WILL BE GRATEFUL FOR THE DECISION JOANNE AND I MADE TO VISIT GARY IN LONDON LAST MONTH. WE HAVE AN EXPERIENCE THAT WILL CARRY US THROUGH. GARY WAS SO ANXIOUS TO SHOW US WHERE HE LIVED, THE PEOPLE HE MET, AND SHARE HIS STORIES. I'VE NEVER SEEN MY SON LOOK SO WONDERFUL, ALIVE, AND INTO HIS LIFE. JOANNE AND I LEFT HIM, SO VERY

PROUD OF WHAT HE WAS ACCOMPLISHING.

THERE IS TRAGEDY AND WONDER IN ALL OF THIS.

THERE IS TRAGEDY BECAUSE A GOOD, RESPECTFUL YOUNG MAN, WHO FOUND HIS LIFE'S MEANING WILL NOT EXPERIENCE THE ACHIEVEMENTS THAT WERE WITHIN HIS REACH. THERE IS TRAGEDY BECAUSE GARY WAS TALENTED, INTUITIVE, AND VERY CREATIVE. THERE IS TRAGEDY BECAUSE HE WAS AT THE TOP OF HIS GAME, GAINING MOMENTUM IN CONFIDENCE AND THE RIGHT SET OF VALUES.

THE ULTIMATE TRAGEDY IS THAT HIS DEATH WAS NOT THE WORK OF GOD.

HOWEVER THERE IS WONDER BECAUSE HIS FRIENDSHIP, SENSE OF CARING, AND PERSONALITY WILL LIVE IN THE PEOPLE WHO WERE CLOSE TO HIM. THERE IS WONDER BECAUSE GARY'S LIFE THEME OF TOUCHING PEOPLE WILL CONTINUE IN THE MEMORIES HE HAS LEFT US. THERE IS WONDER BECAUSE MY FAMILY HAS THE STRENGTH AND CHARACTER TO OVERCOME OUR GREAT LOSS. AND THIS IS THE WORK OF GOD.

A PERSONAL NOTE TO MY SON:

GARY, WE'RE GOING TO MISS YOU BUT YOU WILL ALWAYS BE A PART OF OUR FAMILY. PLEASE KNOW THAT WE LOVE YOU VERY MUCH.