

## Sample Eulogy 1

Candice and I met in 1982, discovering each other before we discovered rock music, long-haired boys, or how to keep our thoughts to ourselves. I'm sure everyone at Adams Jr. High, including our 9th-grade English teacher, gave us about 3 months before we killed each other.

We beat that by a mile and then some.

Candice was, hands down, the most hilarious of all my friends. No contest. Her humor got me through my parents' divorce and countless traumas – both make-believe and real – from junior high through high school and into college, and beyond.

Some Candy-isms stay with me, even today.

*"Take it easy, and if it comes easy, take it twice."*

*"The wine list at McDonald's is longer than the letter you just wrote me."*

*"Don't eat yellow snow."*

And perhaps the best: *"Turn that frown upside down and have a Candy Day."*

Her humor even got me a better love life. One night in late 1987, at a party in her apartment, she asked the Ouija board, "Will Katie remain a virgin forever?" and then pushed it to YES.

The entire party roared with laughter and my weekends for the next two years were suddenly booked – full of long-haired boys who hoped to be first. Those relationships never went anywhere but I got free movies out of it.

Picking my favorite memory with Candy is impossible. There are so many.

That time we snuck aboard a British ship in Harbor Island. The sailors made us drinks with lemonade and beer and we managed to avoid a trespassing charge, thanks to Candy's quick wit and irresistible charm.

That time we met a car full of boys and, with the worst British accents ever, convinced them we were lost and had to get to the airport. When we got to the airport, we realized we knew two of them from 6th-period Biology.

That time we went to a kid's house who'd been threatening my little brother. We convinced his mom to let us talk to him, even though we showed up with a baseball bat. We pushed the kid around a little and, with tactics the IRA would find impressive, convinced him to find another victim.

No matter what I was doing, I always got better results with Candy than I would have on my own.

When I needed help, she didn't ask a whole lot of questions. She just came through for me. Period. Every time.

Between the summer of '85 and autumn of '88, she drove me everywhere.

In 1987, about 12 hours before high school graduation, I needed a way to avoid that particular ceremony. Somehow she secured for me an ace bandage, some crutches, and taught me how to limp.

It worked.

Candy made sure my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday went off without a hitch, and that included filling up garbage pails with rum and fruit juice with Malick and then later talking me off a ledge when Judy invited half the town, and we ran out.

She even helped my sisters keep the other half-dozen or so bridesmaids in line the day I got married.

And, perhaps most importantly, Candy showed up to my kids' "Rock n Roll-themed" tenth birthday and gave them their first-ever *Pink Floyd* CDs. Or was it *Beastie Boys*?

What can I say? She had a heart as big as a house and good taste to boot.

Everyone who knew Candy was thrilled for her when she found the love of her life – Martin – whose big heart matched her own. He provided Candy with love and support – an eternal best friend who would protect and honor her for the rest of her life.

Together they formed a bond and created a haven - a hard-earned happiness she truly deserved.

Throughout the years, no matter how many miles between us, Candy had a lovely way of letting me know she was still on my side. I'll miss the periodic coffee mugs with a middle finger on the bottom and Wham! or Jeff Goldblum t-shirts that would come in the mail.

Over a decade ago, Candy paid me the highest compliment of my life. She trusted me to find her birth parents.

And so I did, ending decades of curiosity and confirming what most of us already knew – that Candy was more Jewish than me and Judy combined.

I'll let you in on a secret. Something you can't tell from sarcastic one-liners or acerbic Facebook posts. Candy was a tender soul.

Yes, she'd been wounded. Our girl had been through some shit.

But throughout the years, and especially as we grew older, this girl with "unapproved hairdos" grew into a woman of grace.

A woman of substance.

She didn't just talk about the value of forgiveness, she lived it.

And I'm not just talking about how she forgave me for dating Jeff Logan.

She forgave lots of people. It's as if she realized, sometime in the mid-90s, that she deserved peace and love and reached out and grabbed it. And as she prioritized her own mental health, years before it became trendy, she encouraged other people – including me – by her example.

Her example will continue to live on, even as we are broken-hearted at the idea of a world without her. But whenever I feel overwhelming sorrow, I will take a deep breath and imagine my lovely, lifelong friend whispering, "Turn that frown upside down and have a Candy Day."

And I'll try, love. I'll try.

## Sample Eulogy 2

My dad, who had never been much of a father figure, left us when I was fourteen. When people ask me, "How come you never got bitter or distrustful about men?" I would tell them about my Uncle Jeff.

To many people, Jeffrey Simpson was an educator and a leader who led the charge for excellence in education. To me, he was an uncle who stepped up when needed and looked out for me and my brothers all our lives.

And it bears mentioning that he did this without resentment. Without vitriol. I never heard him say a bad word about my biological father. Instead, Uncle Jeff would mention periodically that he prayed for him.

Cause that's how my Uncle Jeff rolled.

From a very early age, because Uncle Jeff lived the values he believed in, I learned that men could be relied upon and trusted. Uncle Jeff stayed steady. Always checking after me and taking me aside at family gatherings to make sure I was doing okay.

He did this whether I was 14 or 40.

"Do you need anything?" he would often ask, before giving me an envelope with money in it.

"Just in case," he'd say with a wink.

He was generous and kind. Always ready with the appropriate words of wisdom I needed.

When I was about ten years old, he said, "Carolyn, if you sit at the grown-up's table and keep quiet, you might learn a thing or two."

Solid advice. Uncle Jeff knew what he was talking about.

And I did learn a thing or two.

Sitting at that table, year after year, family event after family event, often between him and Aunt Jackie, I learned a lot. From my vantage point, Uncle Jeff seemed to respect two things above all else: Strong-willed women and an opposing viewpoint.

This encouraged me to be me. An invaluable gift for any young girl, especially a rowdy one.

So I learned how to form an argument and tell a story. I learned to listen, sit in silence, and use humor to sell an unpopular opinion. He also taught me the value of taking different points of view into account.

Uncle Jeff was proper. Dignified. I never heard him curse or say something crass.

And he didn't seem to hold it against me that I did.

That taught me tolerance, wisdom, and understanding.

He was the only person I ever knew who had a permanent keg installed in his kitchen. So naturally that was a gathering place for all the men in the family, both young and old. Around that keg, Uncle Jeff

showed me how to hold the glass at a 45-degree angle under the tap for the perfect pour - as well as how, through our actions, we respect our elders and show up for them before they even ask.

He was charming. I loved watching him "tell someone to go to hell in a way they look forward to the trip."

Because a lot can be conveyed with a well-worded sentiment and a smirk.

He taught me that I didn't always have to agree with someone to get along with them.

While visiting him a few years ago, I remarked that he still had so many of the same appliances (stove, washing machine, etc.) that he had in the 70s and 80s. He said he was frugal.

I said they were a lot like him – resilient and reliable.

Uncle Jeff was devoted to his family. Whenever anyone tells me that, as a mother of two sons I'll soon lose them to their partner's families, I think, "Well, that's not how it works with us."

I knew my Uncle Jeff and Uncle Tom's kids like I knew my Aunt Maureen's kids. And that strong precedent continues with this generation. Family is family, no matter the gender, and all our sons and daughters continue to gather for love and support.

We're all a part of his incredible legacy, after all.

I knew I could count on Uncle Jeff for anything, anytime, anywhere. It didn't matter if I was in Tampa, Boston, Colorado Springs, or Chicago. This reassurance allowed me to take some risks, knowing I had a strong foundation to fall back on if I needed it.

He was generous with his time, too. Always available to listen and provide good opinions grounded in experience and reason.

He took me to my first Red Sox game where I got to meet the famous groundskeeper Joe Mooney - and Uncle Jeff didn't hold it against me when I left during halftime.

Kidding. I know the difference between baseball and football.

Speaking of football, the highlight of my kids' college experience in Chicago wasn't a rave or witnessing a robbery or even trying weed for the first time.

It was attending a Bears game with their Uncle Jeff and afterwards, at a famous steakhouse, he didn't hold it against them for ordering veggie burgers.

Whether at Ditka's or Jordan's, my sons loved seeing Uncle Jeff hold court, and laugh with pride while combining the things he loved: family and friends discussing the Green Bay Packers.

And although I'm not ready for a family where he isn't at the head, he taught us all how to carry on without him. He taught us with his words and his actions.

And by his example, with treasured memories blended with broken hearts, we will.