



Mortimer J. Melican

December 17, 1925 - June 09, 2011

Mortimer Joseph Melican

12/17/25 - 6/9/11

RIP

In the distant future, when we all walk among the stars, there will be only one memory having any power. All human glory and influence will have passed into the circle of time, but there will be one thing which will echo. That sole thing which is the most compelling in human awareness is that of the performance of acts of kindness. Those among us who are aware of what matters most in life know this to be true and are called wise. With unparalleled wisdom, Mort was a compassionate man who understood the best way to live life, and who always chose to be kind.

We will share some memories of Mort and his amazing life:

In Mort's own words from one of his essays as a child, "On December 17, on the sunswept fields in KittyHawk, NC, 1903, man first flew." On December 17, 1925, Mortimer Joseph Melican became alive.

Mort passed away as he slept in the loving arms of his family.

He was born in New York City to Elizabeth and Peter Melican, Irish immigrants who came over on the Lusitania, and just missing the fateful last voyage of the Titanic. Peter drove a trolley car after returning from WWI. Elizabeth worked as a seamstress in a hospital and raised four kids by herself after Peter died a young death. Mort grew up on the Upper East Side of Manhattan with his three siblings: Thomas, Frances, and Betty, who all predeceased him. As a city kid back in the day, he played stick-ball out in the street, swam in the Hudson River, and went sleigh riding down Broadway. "There were no cars in the street." Imagine that.

Mort went to Catholic schools in NYC and to St. Joseph's Seminary where he was ordained as a priest. Then he earned a Master's Degree in Counseling from Iona College. Mort was a priest of the Archdiocese of NY for 20 years, and then resigned. He married Carol Lynn Kluzek and together they made beautiful music, having three children...You know their names. They were all named after him: Mora Carolynne Melican Walp, Mort Joseph Melican, and Barbara Morea Melican Gleason.

Mort established and ran the first Group Home for Handicapped Men in NJ. He also founded and directed three day camps in New York State. He lived in downstate NY and various towns in NJ, but in his heart his hometown was Washington Heights. He always had a special fondness for the NY Baseball Giants. Notre Dame's victories determined his mood, he always listened to talk radio, and he gave daily updates of worldwide current events to family members. He belonged to a Breakfast Club for 15 years in which the two topics of discussion were politics and religion. His friends were of different faiths and all ends of the political spectrum. He knew one key: just be good to one another.

Mort loved talking about the family tree, rattling off names and dates - and could be quizzed and got it accurately time and time again. His sharp mind and winning personality never ceased to impress - to him it was normal to memorize all his children's social security numbers and recite them as easily as the poems he was taught in his childhood..."I think that I shall never see a poem as lovely as a tree..." Committing to memory was very important to him; "Repetitio Mater Est

Studiorum," or in English, "Memorization is the Mother of all Learning." Each of his kids earned \$20 for memorizing the Gettysburg Address. Application and practicality were paramount. He would always ask, "What good is it?" and layer questions for a real understanding. He was the Great Inquizator. When around Mort, it was also a good idea to use proper grammar. Mort's sense of humor was hard to top. He was fond of the following Latin quote: "Si hoc legere scis nimium eruditionis habes. Sed contra, scientia est potentia." The translation is "If you can read this you are overeducated. On the other hand, knowledge is power." He enjoyed April Fool's Day - and got most of us each year. We only got him twice in all the years we tried. We'll share those tales elsewhere.

Mort lives on through his nine grandchildren: Kara Ashlyn Walp, Bridget Erin Gleason, Brenna Beryl Walp, Ronan Mortimer Gleason, Matthew Thomas Melican, Joseph Michael Melican, Peter Davis Walp, Sean Patrick Melican, and another Melican baby due mid-November.

His best advice according to his immediate family is: Always be charitable; Be positive; Use your own best judgement; Finish the task; Be prepared. He did not merely say his philosophy. He lived it.

His immediate family each thought of three words to sum up Mortimer: My Best Friend; Kind, Wise, Nonjudgemental; Strength of Character; Father-figure to Many; Greatest Possible Daddy. His friend summed up the essence of Mort's life in these words: "The man, the mind and the manner that was Mort has touched many...and he rests in peace not at peace..."

Tribute Wall

B Barbara

I am sorry my letter to "Father Melican" did not reach in time. He provided so much care for kids like me in Yonkers, NY back in the late '50's and early '60's. My home life was no fun but Fr. Melican was more than kind and caring. He brought joy, fun and relief from that home into my life. I never forgot him. My best regards go to his family. I am SO happy he got to have one!

D Dawne Cohn

I will always remember Mr. Melican's joking ways, and his kindness to everyone. He had a way of making people feel comfortable around him by the way that he talked and listened. My thoughts and prayers are with all of you. With Deepest Sympathy, Dawne Cohn and Family

F Francis Mckiernan

I am sorry for your loss. Mort will be greatly missed Francis McKiernan

D Denis Ryan

After all these years, it's hard to imagine a world without Mort in it. Though separated by many miles, our friendship never ceased. I will treasure his good humor and optimism, his regular updates on all our old buddies, and swapping stories about our much-loved families. I'm really going to miss our phone conversations. Gloria and I send our love and prayers to Carol and all of Mort's family.
