

# Omer Reed Tribute by Kary Reed

*Omer's Celebration of Life, Leap Day 2020*  
*La Casa de Cristo Lutheran Church, Scottsdale*

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Welcome, we meet again. Love the suits and Spooners [iconic Hawaii shirts], what a real representation of my dad.

I'll start with a direct quote from Alice, a cute little 95-year old Italian gal who was a patient of Dad's. Hearing of his death, she said [raising her arms], "How could he *die*? He was *so handsome!*" ...Mom and I concur.

When Dad chose to go home to The Lord, we went to Hospice of the Valley. In the wee hours of the night, our nurse asked me to tell her about my dad. I replied, I didn't know where to begin.

## **How do you begin to describe my father?**

When she suggested, "with the alphabet?" I didn't skip a beat.

Aviator, Agitator, Amazing. Australia.

Boy Scout, Ball of energy,

Cumulonimbus clouds ('Q-nims'), Cal, his friend, and the '49 Caddie.

Dad. Dentist.

Eagle Scout. Essence of human kindness.

Faith: *belief without proof, trust without reservation.*

Granddad, Grand Canyon, Gold Inlays, Guns. Gratitude vs. Attitude.

Henry Swenson [fictitious associate dentist who got the office subscriptions],

Handsome, Hawaii, Harley. Honorary Consul.

Iceland and Ice Cream.

Jokester. Jovial.

Karl, Kelly, Kevin, Kirsten, Kary, Kristoffer, Kori, Kyle, Kasey, Katy, Kirsten and Kaylin.

Leap of faith (hence Leap Day). Las Vegas Institute. Limo.

Marci, *his wealthy woman.* Mooney.

Naomi. Napili and its huge family. Nakedness.

Omer and his Omerisms.

Pentegra and the family that followed.

Quick, like *the 90-second Crown Prep.*

Reed. Read. Room keys on a long-term borrowing basis.

Soaring, Sewer lids, *Seating by primary intent. Shift happens.*

Tarbells [restaurant]. Travel.

Unique, like Leap Day.

Vincent's [restaurant], Volkswagen convertible. and Viktor Frankl.

Whimsical.

X-ray.

Young at heart.

Zippy, Zesty.

She said I'd painted the perfect picture, stopping along the way to explain. It was wonderful and warming to do this as I held my dad's hand, knowing he could hear me.

**His wishes for today and throughout life were to keep it simple.** When people would apologize for something, he would often say, *Sorrow is for funerals, and this is not a funeral.* He's right. This is a celebration of *our* lives, and how he affects us; how he affected you. Every one of us in this room had their life impacted by this great man in one way or another; that is why you are here.

**Cherish the memory of the man, and let it live on in you.** But let the memory of how he affected your life move forward with you. Let it continue to affect your life in a way he would have wanted.

**Every time an Omerism slips from your lips:**

*Time is unimportant; timing is critical. So, sew a button on a balloon – and get a big bang out of it! The best dentistry is no dentistry. The teeth are fine, but the gums have got to go. If it's been done, it's probably possible. If you quote me, date me. If you can believe it, you can achieve it. To whom do you owe what?*

and many more that I'm sure come to mind, you'll be living in Omer's memory, and you'll be living in the memory of Omer.

**Choose to remember the man, and please choose to remember my mom, as you and she move forward in memories of Omer.**

What a big man, with a big voice and a big smile, huge in spirit. He hopped a train, rode a Harley, soared with eagles and he flew on the clouds lining heaven. You know my dad, so every cloud had a silver lining. He rode the Colorado River rapids 31 times in forty years.

He was the true meaning of *Aloha*, and he loved his *Ohana*. He was a prewar generation man, full of class and culture. He taught, and *when you teach you learn twice*. He mentored. He held hands, saved lives, changed lives and smiles. He eased minds as he graciously gave his children and his grandchild to The Lord.

He was a Viking, and my Mom his shieldmaiden willing to go to war for and with her Viking. He loved the movie *The Lion King* and the life lessons it had to offer. One of Dad's favorite lessons was *hakuna matata*, the Swahili words for "no worries for the rest of your life." My dad was all about *that worry is interest you pay on a debt you don't owe*. He loved the way Rafiki gave Simba the lesson by hitting him over the head, teaching that you could choose to learn from the past or you could run from it. He was all about learning, and choices, and not running.

He was about paradigms and paradigm shift, and *Significant Emotional Events* that change all of our lives. He was about *doing the right thing at the right time, for the right reason*. He was about *we don't have, because we don't ask, and how much is enough? And if you must speak, ask questions*. He was about *not picking up the rope*. He was all about you and your well-being. He was about bringing yellow flowers for my mom and singing *You Are My Sunshine*... even though he knew she didn't really care for yellow flowers.

**I found this little piece of paper amongst Dad's wishes**, and I'd like to share it with you.

Life is like the weather, it changes on us. People come and go, jobs come and go, relationships come and go, health comes and goes. Every passing hour, there's something new coming into our lives, or passing out of our lives. With all the changes, the tempter seeks the opportunity to bend and twist God's promises, to play on our uncertainties and despair, to try to get us to doubt God's goodness and abiding presence. Yet Jesus' parting words to the disciples are: *Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. God never leaves us nor forsakes us. God's love never falters. God's grace and mercies are new every morning.*

**My dad believed.** *Lay your head down. Hand your load to me, a heavy heart needs rest. So when you are weary, lean on me. If you feel lost, follow me, for I am Faith, I am the Lord. And after the rain, the rainbow; and after the darkness, the light; after the misty cloudy times, the beautiful and the bright. The shooting star will remind you of me in darkness and in light.*

*I am leaving you with a gift: peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give you is not fragile like the peace the world gives. So do not be troubled or afraid. Remember what I told you: I am going away, and I will come back to you again. If you really love me you will be happy for me, for now I can go to the Father, and who is greater than I am. I have told you these things before they happen, so when they do, you will believe in me. – John 27-29*

**When the rain brings rainbows, please think of the Reeds:** all of us, past and present. When you look in the sky or see an airplane or a contrail, remember Omer. *Remember money is funny. If you don't got some, get some.* When you board that flight and see that pilot's wings, think of the man who loved to fly, and encouraged his grandson Kyle to do so too.

When you raise your flag and salute it, honor this country and Omer's love of it. Remember the flags he flew for you when you came to town from wherever you were coming from. When you remember *Your Father's Hands*, Naomi, remember your brother's too.

When you have some Haagen-Dazs with Hershey's syrup, make it an extra scoop. When you are cared for by that special nurse who goes the extra mile,

remember Omer's granddaughter Katy. When you see or hear a Paolo Soleri wind bell, his favorite, think of Omer, especially the one on your new patio, Megan, it was Granddad's. When you step across a sewer lid, remember Omer and all of you crazies who sent them to him. When you feel peace that passes all understanding, let's thank Beau for passing that positive white light and energy onto all of us. When you hear a Harley-Davidson's familiar rumble as it rumbles by: smile, and know that Omer is too. When you sit in my dental chair, or see me smiling: smile and remember my dad. (Fill one of Jacob's socks with change, and pass it along, Kirsten, even if it's all pesos. When you see a silver dollar, all of you, remember Granddad and your special coins, Tom).

When you remember something you learned at a Napili seminar, remember the power and pride behind the scenes: Marci, Ginny, and Barbara. When you look at your practice management and think of your wealth advisors: think of Neal, Deb, Irma and the team at Pentegra.

When you remember the last time you spoke with him, remember his words (Kaylin, you know what they were, and you always will). When you wander through Costco snacking, remember my dad. He did that well, with Kasey and his Costco friends following with great admiration. And *Kori, let me tell you something: Tylenol with applesauce is no good* (my dad's words to Kori fifteen times in one evening).

*We all have fat fingers, and they still fit in peoples' mouths. And when the rapids in life seem bigger than big: put your life vest on first, help yourself and then turn and help your neighbor, as my dad may have turned to help you.*

#### **Dad would say:**

*Nobody cares how much you know, until they know how much you care. Not to decide is to decide. The price of perfection is prohibitive. And you can't give from an empty pocket.*

*And when I leave you, pass the wine around, and remember how my laughter pleased you. Look at one another smiling, and don't forget about touching. Sing the songs that I love best, and dance one time all together. As for me, I'll be running off somewhere on the beach, probably Napili Bay. And I'll fly to the top of the tree I always meant to climb. And when you're ready, I'll be waiting for you... take your time. It is a good life, Dad, and even for you, it's not over yet.*

#### **For you, Mom:**

Strong people aren't simply born; they are made by the storms they walk through. You and I are walking through yet another storm, Mom, with grace, and dignity and pride. Dad taught us this: *if you are going through a storm, weather it and keep walking*. Walk we will, Mom.

Remember, *worry is interest you pay for a debt you don't owe. He married a wealthy woman, and he's inherently lazy*. You are that wealthy woman, and trust me, he

was inherently lazy! And it looks to me like *you're* moving to Hawaii! [*When one of us dies, I'm moving to Hawaii*].

And for you, Mom: a Maile Lei, which is worn as a symbol of peace. Its leaves protect the wearer, bestow good luck and possess healing powers. Drape it over one of your pictures at the house, like Dad did, to bring you peace, good luck and protection. Remember this too, Mom: *I like me better when I'm with you*. You will still get yellow flowers, and you will always be his Sunshine, and mine, too. I love you, Mom.

Aloha and Mahalo, Dad, we love you too.