

*Remarks given by Gerald Slavet at the memorial service of Francis Hunnewell on Friday, February 5, 2010 at Harvard University Memorial Church:*

Elizabeth, Susanah, Oaks, Lee.....Family and friends:

I am deeply honored that I have been asked to share some thoughts with you about Frank in the context of From the Top and our friendship of more than 20 years.

Friendship..... What can I say? We were from as different backgrounds as possible and yet we were 2 peas in a pod. We had great times together and I will miss a great friend,

Frank, that's how we referred to him around the office, was with From the Top almost from inception, along with me and my co-CEO, Jennifer Hurley-Wales. He began as CEO of From the Top and then transitioned to Chairman of the Board. He had his own cubicle in our office and was there every day over the last 10 years if he was in town. He helped build our organization, establish our board, bring us new fans and supporters, and craft our case for funding.

All of us in the office lived with him, laughed with him, worked with him, celebrated with him. I suppose you could say that the mere fact that the Chairman of the Board chose to come to the office every day and to conduct all of his business activities from his little cubicle at 295 Huntington Ave already says something about the man. He was part of our "team." He loved being surrounded by the staff, feeding off their crazy ideas and creative personalities and we loved feeding off of his crazy ideas.

What was most valued by us was his passion for music, kids and education. His passion was infectious and it deeply affected all of us. Frank is famous – or should I say infamous - for his tenacity; there's an old joke: what's the difference between Frank and a pit bull? The pit bull eventually lets go... Frank was a force to reckon with; there was no one more persistent. He was the guy you'd want in your foxhole and that was one reason we loved having him day in and day out in our office.

I could go on and on about the extraordinary ways he helped us to blossom... so that this year we at From the Top are celebrating our 10th anniversary season... but I would rather share with you the endearing and wonderfully quirky day to day life with Frank.

So... here we go... one day an email went out to all staff from the receptionist...

Hello,

There is a message at reception regarding a salon appt. I couldn't catch the name exactly, so if anyone has a beauty appt this week, please listen to the message at reception.

Thank you, Jane

... to which Frank promptly replied....

You all probably think it's me, but it's not, as my beauty does not need to be artificially enhanced like some others.

Frank, by nature, was very transactional. He had his own way of staying engaged with

the staff on a daily if not hourly basis... whether he was screaming HEY HEY HEY from his cubicle for someone to tell him how to spell a word even though he had "spell check" or asking how to fix something technical, ....

.... these were his ways of reminding us that he was there for us, and we of course were there for him.

Not a man to be defeated by anything, he kept up his daily wrestling with technology with the help of his 20 something From the Top tutors. In exchange, he taught the staff a thing or two about contracts and finances, spending hours scrutinizing legal documents and financial reports, carefully combing through every detail, always finding one way after another to catch inconsistencies or to strengthen the position for our organization.

Most of you probably know that Frank loved good food and good drink. But you might not know just how passionate he was about food around the office. Many of our staff-members fondly recall memories of Frank and food.

We in the non-profit world are accustomed to making use of scarce resources. Frank's genius in this respect was displayed on a daily basis.

A member of our development staff fondly recalled this story:

Since Frank had such an affinity for free food, last year, as an added incentive to sponsor our Gala, I told him that I would bake him a batch of cookies when he made his gift. For weeks after the Gala he'd ask me "Where are my cookies?" to which I always responded "Where's my check?" and he would chuckle and walk away.

Not surprisingly, when I reminded him that I had only a short time left to make cookies since I would soon be leaving for my maternity leave, his check quickly appeared. I kept up my end of the deal bringing in a few dozen cookies for him. I took it as high praise when he came by my desk later that day to say "those are some serious cookies-you know how to make a cookie" before walking away.

A week later, Frank asked our IT Director to fix something on his computer.....after fixing the issue, Frank came back to Victor's desk with a container of home made cookies "If you do something good for me, you get a cookie". Victor was touched by Frank's generosity.

It was only later that Victor discovered the origins of the cookie Frank had given him: it was from Rebecca's bribe... Classic Frank, making use of scarce resources.

There are two classic Frank Hunnewell e mails that most of us saved:

EMAIL TO STAFF AND OTHERS

Dear all, I told some of you about Elizabeth making Julia Child's famous cassoulet for me on my 70th birthday, the recipe of which is 6 pages long and takes 3 days to make. I am still eating it every morning for breakfast with 2 eggs on it. About as close to heaven as one can get without having to take the Big Step. When I told one of you about this great culinary endeavor you said "I have a cookbook which refers to Julia Child's cassoulet but says that if you don't want to spend 3 days out of your life making it here is a recipe that you can whip up in a matter of minutes/hours(?) which is about as good". When I told Elizabeth this she gave me one of her WMD looks of which some of you may have been a victim of at one time or another, though I hope not and said "I hope you can remember who told you that so you can get the cookbook because you have eaten the last Julia Child 3 day cassoulet as prepared by your first wife".

Life in my sunset years without cassoulet is hard to imagine let alone endure so here is my problem. I can't remember who told me about the cheater cassoulet. Above, I have copied everyone I talked to or met during the 2 day period that this conversation took place so please, please identify yourself or go to your grave carrying the guilt of causing an old man pain and unhappiness in his remaining years on this planet.

Thanks, Frank  
And then.....a few days later....

I know you all have been holding your breath waiting to hear if my cassoulet conundrum has been resolved so that I may spend my sunset years relieved from the anxiety of maybe never eating cassoulet at home again so I want to get the news out as fast as possible. Jerry Slavet has acknowledged that he told me about the cheater cassoulet from his cookbook from Dean & DeLuca. However, the really good news is that collectively you sent me/Elizabeth 11 other cassoulet cheater recipes 10 of which referred to Julia Child's famous 3 day cassoulet and 4 of which claimed they could match it. I hope to now be on my way to cassoulet heaven having finished the last of Julia Child's this morning for breakfast with my usual 2 eggs on it. Delicious!!

Jennifer and I and all the From the Toppers are grateful for all that he gave to us. We will miss every aspect of him

As Frank so loved young musicians, there will be two performances in his honor.

The first will be George Li, 14 years old, a From the Top alum and a student at Walnut Hill School for the Performing Arts and New England Conservatory Preparatory School playing "La Campanella" by Franz Liszt.

And the second will be violinist Gergana Haralampieva 16, a student at the Walnut Hill School for the Arts where she is sponsored by the Hunnewell family. She will be performing Vocalise, Op.34, No.14 by Sergei Rachmaninoff, accompanied by From the Top's host, Christopher O'Riley