

A celebration of life

David Evans

28 May 1953 – 20th December 2021

Thursday 30th December 2021, Eden Valley Woodland Burial Ground, Kent



a personal goodbye

Humanist
Ceremonies

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Despite a difficult childhood in Woking, as the eldest of six children, the fact that David was a “walking brain” meant that he was always going to flourish. His high IQ and analytical skills were things hugely valued in business circles. Meanwhile, his sensibilities and humanitarian impulses meant that he understood not only business, but people – not something that every business analyst understands.

As a young man, David found himself sharing a flat with someone else called David Evans, an unusual coincidence, and one which seems to have led to rather fluid banking arrangements. The other David Evans worked in IT. David 2 mentioned to David that the firm he was working for couldn't get skilled staff – the new university graduates simply weren't good enough, and he encouraged David to go to an open recruitment session that his company was running. And he was just what they were looking for. He went on to work in IT for 30 years, implementing accounting and control systems around the world for many different industries, and becoming experienced in the methods needed to manage multi-lingual, multi-currency businesses.

As an analyst, he always worked alongside salespeople, many of whom he really respected. But I'm sure any salesperson here today will also acknowledge that David, though not a salesman himself, could work magic on customers just because he knew they shared his analytical skills, and he could describe to them exactly what they were buying. He formed strong partnerships with some of his sales colleagues, particularly Scott, who became a firm friend as well, and took David to a boxing match at the O2 only a few weeks ago, getting him there and back safely even though David was by then very frail.

The connection with Scott had begun because back in the day David had got to know Scott's mum, Cindy, through babysitting circles when David junior and Harry were small. Scott, in turn, introduced David to the wine business, not a natural field for someone with no sense of taste – so Joy's tastebuds were to become very useful in Hong Kong, France and Switzerland.

And Cindy worked her magic in getting Joy and David together too. She knew Joy a little, and when Joy was at her lowest and needed somewhere to stay she offered her the key to a friend's flat, because the friend was working in Switzerland. The friend was, of course, David. A couple of weeks after moving in, Joy rang her benefactor in Switzerland to thank him for letting him stay and received the usual warm and generous response which people got from David. And a month or so later, he was even more generous, ringing her to tell her that he'd booked her onto a flight to Switzerland that Friday night and two days skiing tuition.

And that was that, really – she went to Switzerland almost every weekend that winter, and both her skiing and her feelings for David became stronger. It was not long after he came back to England that they moved to Beckenham together.

Together they enjoyed lots of holidays and weekend breaks. I mentioned before what a humanitarian David was, and how generous. This had rather an impact on their holidays. They would stay in luxury hotels, but Joy would know that, sooner or later, David would be getting them driven off into the bush to visit a local settlement with a van full of rice or candles, and that the edge of the next My Thai would be taken off a little by her new knowledge of the poverty in which many people were living. David gave money to establish a school in Senegal, and they rarely left home without a suitcase full of footballs or stationery for local children. Nearer to home, they enjoyed many city breaks, often inspired by there being a visual arts blockbuster which David knew Joy would want to see.

He loved Greece, and he loved the sun – in memory of which, while we are all in “smart casual” wear today, he is being buried in his beach shorts and flip-flops.

And wherever he went, he would like and trust people, sometimes getting himself into rather strange places as a result – like being driven long-distance across China by a group of Russians and ending up in an Irish Pub.

His last working partnership was with Green IS, working on sustainable timber projects in Brazil, which tied in well with the BSC in Environmental Studies he was by then studying for. For other people, that might have been a retirement project, but David did not anticipate ever retiring. Sadly, he never did. This last job involved three planes and a truck-ride to get to the plantations, but David was never daunted, and only Covid and then his illness put a stop to him making this gruelling trip.

We will now hear some memories of David from his family.

Sally's contribution:

My brother David was the most kind, generous, thoughtful man. I was so very fortunate to have had such a wonderful brother.

David once said to me “Sal, I will never be as rich as you”. He measured wealth by the amount of great friends I have.

He was wrong, he was as rich as me because all my friends were his too, they all loved him.

There are so many wonderful memories of his visits to New Zealand. On the last visit with Joy we spent a lovely time in the Coromandel where Dave would take Bruno on long walks on the beautiful beaches.

He was so much more than a brother-in-law to Tim.

Dave was a very special man who will always be in our thoughts.

Rest in peace, Dave, you will be greatly missed by your New Zealand family.

Carry's contribution:

*To young me you were mightier and bigger than a mountain
Through my childhood the prospect of seeing Uncle Dave filled me with such great excitement
It scared me at the age of 11 to move away from you to the other side of the world
All of my years are filled with you
You are one of my favourite people on the planet
There are no words to explain what you meant to me and the mighty Evans clan
You are a part of me and a part of my children
You lived in our kiwi homes, and I lived in many of yours
You gave me a home when I needed to spread my wings and fly
Sharing your bachelor pad with me in Kent*

Where you would encourage me to get out and embrace the world when sometimes all I wanted to do was hide

When I broke my foot you gave me a home again even if it was in the top bedroom which had 3 sets of stairs

So many summer times in NZ

More airport pickups and drop offs than I can remember

My life is littered with excited hellos and teary goodbyes

You were charming, sarcastic and witty

Your charisma could fill a room

You were my confidant, my uncle, my friend, my inspiration

You're my renaissance painting timeless and forever

My recorded rock song in the hall of fame and your song will forever haunt my soul

I was and am beyond proud to be your niece

I will strive to make you proud with each new day

I will listen for your voice in the wind

I will look for your face in the kiwi sunsets

I will search for your laughter to be carried to me by the summer breeze

And I will remind myself to go out and embrace the world even when I want to hide

You are woven into the fabric that is me

You are the symphony to my life's song

A backing song which will forever encourage me forward

Oink, Oink to my young tender ears

Bursts of fun Uncle Dave woven across all my years

I love you.

(David junior explained that his father would ring New Zealand and greet the family with "Oink Oink" on the phone. He then went on to give his own tribute.)

Jeff's contribution:

David was my brother for 67 years and as long as that may seem it still wasn't nearly long enough. As children growing up with just 18 months between us we'd played together, we'd fight each other and we'd fight side by side or more often than not big brother would fight for me Our days consisted of getting into all sorts of scrapes and causing no end of trouble. As long as we were having fun there were few rules that applied to us and we did our best to break them all, him leading and me happy to trail in his wake And David loved nothing better than breaking rules and not conforming boy and man. But I always knew I could count on him being there and caring, that was his thing I'm going to miss his advice, his time, and attention, his quick wit, and dark humour, I'll even miss his sarcasm, his scathing comments and his put downs, but not so much. I will miss him big time though period. Been good to know you Bro goodbye.