

It is such an honor and privilege to deliver Tim's Eulogy with you today..... although I have to admit that my first thought was Dear God....how in the world can I ever find the words to adequately share what this man has meant to me and to each of you here today. I decided that the best I could do was to just share from my heart.....and that it shouldn't be too hard....because there is so much love in my heart for Tim....and I know that I speak for all of you as well. Tim had a very special way of forging connections with people....and was dearly loved by so many. He had an incredible zest for life that just lifted you up when you were in his presence. As his sister Terry said during one of our hospital visits.....Tim has the life force of at least ten people! I wholeheartedly agree!

As I talked with Gloria and other family about plans to honor Tim.....Gloria decided that Tim's favorite song....**All My Life's a Circle**... would be featured as the central theme for today's service . Tim's Brother Kevin, being the math whiz that he is.....brought to my attention that an Arc is a part of a circle. I found that to be very interesting symbolism and a wonderful tie in for what I would like to share. For a very large part of Tim's life was being a part of The Arc. And it was my greatest privilege to be a part of his circle at The Arc!

Tim worked for over thirty years to help people with intellectual disabilities to live full and meaningful lives, and The Arc had the great fortune of having Tim as our Executive Director for twenty of those years! In fact, ... he was awarded the Executive Excellence Award through the National Council of Arc Executives this year.....so he was quite literally the best Arc Executive Director in the Nation!

Throughout his tenure.....he was tenacious in his quest to break down the barriers of segregated services. In fact within the first year at The Arc....he succeeded in closing all of our group homes and workshop settings and transformed our agency into a community building organization that promotes inclusive communities. This was revolutionary at the time....and to talk with some of the families and staff who were around at that time....they thought Tim had lost his mind when he closed the doors of the workshop! But Tim was a "can do" kind of person and proceeded to do what was right. Those naysayers became Tim's closest allies and supporters and they now embrace the positive outcome of Tim's decision as they see their sons and daughters living a much larger life than they would have if things stayed status quo. The people at supported by The Arc are now living with expanded opportunities as taxpaying citizens who are involved in many ways in their communities. Several folks have even gone on to own their own homes. Most important, He has created an environment where people are able to be strong self advocates and able to choose their own life course.

Tim also had a great love for children and worked tirelessly to establish a Treatment Foster Care program for children who would have otherwise had to find a home outside of our county. He attended many of the adoption parties and was so excited when a child became a permanent member of a family! He believed in others....and that belief encouraged others to believe in themselves and their ability to effect change. He knew how to rally the troops and empowered families to have a voice in Annapolis to effect legislative change. Families would come out in droves to share their voices with our legislators. In fact, he had such an impact on our families that one of the mothers who received support at The Arc named her baby "Quinn" after Tim.

Getting back to the circle theme.....there are many lighter things to share as well. Some things really do come full circle. Some of the traits of Tim as a young boy.....compassionate yet mischievous with a keen sense of humor carried over into his life as an adult. He always found the humor in situations and had a full arsenal of jokes. Sometimes we got to hear the same jokes on numerous occasions.....but we laughed anyway.

Another constant was that he always maintained loyalty to his Irish Roots. Your average person tends to revere holidays like Christmas or Thanksgiving.....but No....at The Arc.....our sacred holiday was St. Patrick's Day. We went green before going green meant being environmentally conscious.

Just as when he was a little boy.....and reminded Maggie of a leprechaun.....he carried that magic full circle and emerged as a leprechaun for the Arc each St. Patrick's Day.

I'd like to read a quote from our Family Services Team:

*"Tim is the Fred Astaire of the DDA world, circling the various departments of The Arc in his green suspenders and pointy leprechaun shoes, looking for tasty snacks and leftover tidbits. He makes his work as Executive Director look effortless and fun, as did Fred Astaire. There is a twinkle in his eye and laughter in his voice as he shares the stories of people triumphing over adversity, and living meaningful lives.*

Tim also loved sports and knew how to keep all of us on our toes. He had this little ball that was made up of hundreds of rubber bands.....and I'll never forget the first week I came to work at The Arc he said "think fast" as he threw his rubber band ball my way and the darned thing hit me in the head. Needless to say.....I had to sharpen my reflexes to survive at The Arc!

He loved to participate in any activity that involved sports and led the charge to get everyone excited about coming out. He loved our annual ice skating party and was a real hot dog out on the rink. He also loved to participate on our unified sports teams and had a blast playing in a recent wheelchair basketball tournament. He kept pushing himself hard even as he began to have more health challenges. Chass, our Recreation Coordinator liked to tease him.....and told him that she felt the need to look out for him because afterall..... he was the oldest member of the team!

Again.....Tim just had a love of people and a love of life. His energy was palpable and we all are feeling a sense of profound loss and sadness and are wondering how we can possibly go on without him.

On that note....I thought it was fitting that I close with some of the lyrics from his favorite song "All My Life's a Circle"

All my life's a circle  
But I can't tell you why  
Seasons spinning round again  
The years keep rollin' by

It seems like I've been here before  
I can't remember when  
But I have this funny feeling  
That we'll all be together again

No straight lines make up my life  
And all my roads have bends  
There's no clear-cut beginnings

And so far no dead-ends

My spin on these lyrics is that.....Life here on Earth is so fleeting....but our spirits are eternal .....and so interconnected.....And I believe that Tim's spirit is still strong among us and that he will continue to go around with us and will always be a part of the circle of The Arc

Let's honor Tim's legacy and keep the circle intact.....working together to improve the lives of others....and giving this life all we've got.

*Torri Dietrich*  
*Community Liaison*  
*The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region*