

Donahue, Mark John
Dates in the 57th – 69-71
SP-5 – Crew Chief/Door Gunner
Birth Date: August 9th 1949
Elmira, NY
DAT Date: February 9th 2023
Rochester, NY



Posted by Marks daughter, Jenna.

Jenna Donahue, posted for Mark Donahue

I suppose it is time to share. Bear with me, for this one will be lengthy. A week ago, today my father passed on from this Earthly realm, leaving his body forever. It has been a shock to us all, as it happened suddenly and without real warning. My heart is grieving immensely. All hearts who truly knew him and could see his beauty, are grieving immensely. My father had a heart as mighty as a lion, and a soul that was transformed by the Buddha nature as he aged. His heart embraced every facet of life as fully as humanly possible, the good, the bad, and the inexplicable.

He has taught me so much about joy, humor, compassion, suffering, and most of all, LOVE. He taught me how to move through life with grace and lightness, always finding a way to seek joy and to help those around me bravely laugh through the challenges life brings us. I have many regrets, as I will not have him by my side through many life accomplishments that I have yet to experience, especially the dream we shared of someday sharing the stage together. But I know that he would not want me to dwell on that for too long, as he is now always by my side. He is my protector.

His body and mind had been through so much, from serving time in Vietnam as a helicopter door gunner, to serving time in the American prison system. Through his life's greatest challenges, he was able to understand what it meant to really be compassionate and to really understand what kind of suffering this life is capable of revealing in the depths of humanity. On the flipside, he stepped into the roles he played as an actor with so much force and magnitude, his performances could have moved anyone to tears of joy and laughter.

He loves my two older sisters, Brianna and Tarah and I with all of his heart, and I know that if you would ask him what his greatest life accomplishment was, he would say that it was being our Daddy. He gifted me with the most wonderful bonus mother I could have ever imagined, Rickie. Her love brought him back to life, and I was able to see him in his life's happiest years, which is the biggest blessing to my heart. I am forever grateful for the love you two shared.

Moving forward in my life without him is going to be hard. There is no doubt in my mind about that. But I take comfort in knowing that his BOOMING voice, laughter, and love lives on in my sisters, their children, and myself. Joey says I have his face, and I think that is one of the greatest compliments I have ever received. My love for him has never once wavered and will only continue to grow stronger as the days pass by. He died on his half birthday, my great grandpa Kiel's birthday, and the day after my birthday. He called me the day before my birthday and twice on my birthday, something I will always cherish. I even missed a call, where him and Rickie left me a voicemail, and will forever have a recording to listen to on my birthday. I received a handmade card from Rickie with a message from him in it a couple days after his passing. His message to me rings more true than ever before. His words were, "the distance between us pushes our hearts together". I cherish every moment and memory that I have shared with him, the good, the bad, and the inexplicable.

I announce to the world that I love my father with every fiber in my being! He is my life's greatest muse and I could not be more proud to call him my daddy doodle, papa poopy, faja, daddio, dad, and daddy. I will forever be his Jenna Caitlin, baby beanie, doodle bucket, rattle snake, and measles bucket (a weird one, we all know and have never understood LOL). I imagine I will be sharing even more as the days and months pass by.

I take comfort in knowing that he is no longer bound by his mortal vessel that caused him great physical and psychological pain. I know that he is at peace, walking beside his best friend once more, Master Brown. I like to think they are in Valhalla together, partying like gods every night forevermore. One day, I look forward to being able to join the party with them. For now, I chant the Buddhist chant NAM MYOHO RENGE KYO, and pray for world peace. For us to all pray for peace, would bring his heart joy. Thank you for reading this far, and may blessings wash upon us all during this challenging time. As he would often say, from his beloved Ages of Empires game, ARDDAMENGA!







Written by Brianna Donahue

My face, red and raw from a torrent of tears.
My heart, empty and aching, longing for more years.
My ears yearn for your voice to hear.
My nerves, overcome with sadness and fear.
My soul... now, she knows better.
No longer at war with his thoughts or his vessel.
We shared memories over years
Overcame countless fears and tears
His ear, always there to hear.
He saved me from despair.
For him, I will always be grateful.
Rest in peace, my daddy dear

Here is one of the eulogies from the very small and short service we had for him on Monday 02/13/2023

Written By Leslie Gordon, Mark's sister in-law

Eulogy, Mark Donahue

Mark Donahue was the biggest guy I've known. The only son to his loving parents Dan and Doris, the only brother in a loud family of three sisters, Mark was used to a crowded playing field and learned early to distinguish himself.

Mark's talent on the stage and as a teacher were legendary, and I will leave it to his student, colleague and friend Greg Natale to tell that part of his story.

But first. At the risk of stating the obvious, Mark was a man of impressive appetites.

Not just for good food with lots of salt or Johnny Walker. He had a hunger to experience and participate fully in life. He did not do small; he did not do tentative. So if he played poker, or the boardgame risk, it was with a take-no-prisoners commitment. We have seen him dance, and it often culminated in him clearing the dance floor. No one could compete with his energy, or his moves.

He embraced Buddhism with a curiosity both intellectual and spiritual.

More than anything, though, Mark was hungry to find in his world joy, laughter, even silliness. His determination to make the people he loved smile, to find something to laugh about must be seen in the context of equally mighty demons of trauma and sorrow that held him in a tenacious grip. The pain was real and left deep scars so the resolve to fight back and find joy could only have come from a lion-hearted giant.

It was Mark's daughters who had the best view of his dogged pursuit of happiness. I asked them to describe celebrations with their dad, and Tarah said he did not need a holiday to find reason to have fun, to find something to celebrate. He had, as Jenna described, his own way of finding the silly. And do not underestimate the power of silly or funny. He taught his daughters that life can be difficult and painful and that we might make mistakes we deeply regret. Yes, and with all that there is reason to smile. With all that we must find a reason to smile.

I know how much you three will miss your father. But I also know, as Tarah said, that he made you strong. And he left you with a gift that will be yours for the rest of your lives. He

taught you how to see someone fully, with all their pain and all their beautiful imperfections, and to love them just as they are. He taught you this skill, which is very rare, by his own example, by loving you unconditionally. As Brianna shared, "tortured as he was, I always felt accepted. He loved me as I was."

I can confirm that, Brianna. Within minutes of meeting him for the first time he regaled me with stories of all of you, your accomplishments, your passions, the unique beauty he saw in each of you. His support was unwavering, his generosity unrestrained. You knew the blessing of being bathed in his love and support, for no reason other than because you were his. and I hope you know the pleasure you all brought him. Alexander, Owen, Avaleigh, Janet, Amber, Tyler, were just beginning to learn the depth of the grandfather's love for them, so you will need to tell his stories, and show them those photos of Santa Mark, and the videos of Grandpa plunging headlong down the snowbank.

Jenna has said "My father is my inspiration and muse, to be kind and compassionate because you never know how people are suffering." I hope that as you all heal, you will continue to be especially compassionate with each other.

Achrona, achrona chaviva, the last is the most beloved: So finally we must acknowledge the enormity of the love Mark shared with Rickie. This is not just her sister speaking when I say Rickie was Mark's steadfast companion when it was easy and when it was not so easy. She was

the most enthusiastic fan of his work, encouraging him to return to theater and then running lines with him. She was the tender salve when he was most raw. He doted on her, showering her with gifts and with praise and with this look that I know was for her alone.

I know this is not news to you, Rickie, but it bears saying out loud on this day. Brianna, Tarah and Jenna all express their gratitude for everything you did for their father. You brought healing to Mark's relationship with his daughters. You led him, in their own words, to be the best version of himself. You gave him not just more years, but better years, more and better than he ever expected.

It's interesting to note that in the remembrances of his family, Mark's patriotism and his courage in battle were never mentioned. Not because they were inconsequential or modest. Mark was a hero who fought with his whole heart on the battlefield, and afterward, in the journey to a life of peace with his family and friends.

Rest well, Mark. Your struggles are over. You have gifted all of us with your outsized capacity for love. Zichroncha livracha, your memory will be a blessing.

Here is the other Eulogy

Written By Greg Natale, one of Mark's former acting students and peers in the Buffalo, NY acting community

Mark Donahue
Eulogy

Good morning. My name is Greg Natale. I am an old friend of Mark's. I was speaking with my wife yesterday as I struggled to find a way into what to say about Mark. I was stuck... and scared. Being the smart person she is, my wife said, "Well, just talk about the circle." "Ahhh... what circle?" I said. Then she said, "The circle of your lives together." I said, "You mean like from... the Lion King???" She nodded yes, some how imparting you moron into her nod. She then did one of those points with her finger, you know the kind I mean, like get back to work cupcake. As always, she was right.

So, here is Mark's and my circle of life. It began in 1979. It was the fall semester of my sophomore year at the University of Buffalo. I was a Phys. Ed and Athletic Training major, and living my life just fine, thank you very much. I needed to add a course to my schedule that was outside of my major for what we used to call distribution credit. My older sister suggested that I take an acting class that she had taken the year before, but to make sure I took it with the same teacher she had. She felt that he and I would hit it off, and that I would love his super intense demeanor, which she freely admitted terrified the hell out of her, but, for some reason she thought I would get off on it. However, there was this perquisite to getting into the class. You needed to have permission of the instructor, which meant I had to have a face-to-face interview with the teacher in order for him to determine if I belonged in his class. So, I went to his office, we talked for about 20 minutes. We talked about our favorite TV shows, favorite movies, favorite actors, favorite foods, what were my favorite classes, stuff like that. We were having a very nice conversation. I wondered, what the hell was my sister talking about, this guy doesn't seem so bad. I'm thinking, I got this permission of instructor crap in-the-bag. THEN, Mark STOPS talking and just looks at me for what felt like forever. In that time his whole persona completely changed. Something deadly serious was going on now across the desk from me. I felt like he was doing a CAT scan of my soul. Any of you ever experience that with Mark? He finally broke the silence with, "What do you want to do with your life?" Now I'm thinking, "WHAT??? COME ON MAN!!! it's 9 o'clock in the morning... what the hell is going on here?" I kind of panicked and started stammering some kind of a gibberish answer, eventually getting to something about, "What I really want is to be excited every day about what I do for a living and wanting to make a difference in other people's lives for the better." Jesus Christ, that was some kind of Miss America pageant answer. Oh God, I'm so screwed. The whole time he was just looking at me with his X-Ray vision, not saying a word. When I finally finished there was another long uncomfortable silence. He scribbled something down on a piece of paper and said, "Take this to the registrar's office. You're in." He was now smiling and shaking my hand, and had kind of a childlike, playful quality. My sister was completely wrong about this guy. He wasn't intense. He was FREAKING NUTS! But damn, if I didn't really like this guy... a lot.

On the first day of class Mark walked in and bellowed in his best drill instructor voice, "OK, LET'S GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER! BIG GUY (He was pointing at me.) GET YOUR ASS UP ON THAT FIREPLACE MANTEL AND FALL BACKWARDS INTO OUR ARMS. WE WILL CATCH YOU... WE PROMISE. NOW MOVE!!" I'm looking at the rest of the class who were all sheepishly nodding like "sure man we'll catch your 240 pound ass. We'll do whatever the sarge says." So, I climbed up onto a five-foot high mantel and fell backwards, and my life was forever changed because of Mark Donahue. I only lasted the rest of that year as a Phys. Ed major before I transferred over to the theatre program. With four decades of hindsight behind me now, I think Mark saw something in me back then that he liked and more importantly that he trusted. Even though his Viet Nam experience was 12 years behind him at that point in time, it still had a powerful hold on him, making trust a very difficult thing for him to have with others. Even as a 19 year old kid, I could see he was dealing with some serious demons. But he was always kind to me, and genuinely cared about me, even if it was sometimes as my personal drill instructor. We pretty quickly became good friends. Outside of class I was now his workout partner. We ran (him barefooted, year round)... intense, we lifted weights, which was my thing as a competitive power lifter, it was the one thing I was better at than he was. Which really pissed him off. We did Tai Chi (outside, year round)... intense. And we talked and talked and talked about everything. Over the next 20 plus years, while I chased an acting career between Buffalo, New York City, and Los Angeles, we remained friends, but very rarely saw each other except for the occasional actor's party when I'd be home for holidays. But we were always thrilled to see each other and able to catch up like we had never been apart. After being away from Buffalo for 12 years, my pregnant wife, toddler son, and I returned home from LA. Shortly thereafter I started

teaching acting... guess where? In the same theatre program that Mark had taught me some 20 years earlier. This is the beginning of my wife's whole "circle of life theory." Apparently, if you ask my students, I too am known for my intensity. My students say my face always looks disappointed in their work. I don't know what the hell they're talking about. Do you? A few years after that I started to direct theatre in Buffalo, eventually turning Mark's and my relationship 180 degrees. I hired Mark to play "Ben" the dead brother who from beyond the grave was controlling "Willy Loman's" suicidal thoughts in *Death of a Salesman*. Mark was amazing in the role, as well as very trusting of me yet again, but in a new way. This time he trusted me to help guide his special acting talents into the beautiful performances he gave. Never breathing a false word or moment on stage. The tables had turned for us. I was now the teacher. "The circle" thing again. Now being back in Buffalo, Mark and I were able to pick right back up where we were before I had left town. That's when Rickie, Mark, my wife, Beverly, and I began to go see plays together, have dinners together, and be more of a regular presence in each other's lives. A few years later, my step mother, Kelli Bocock-Natale was directing a play called *That Championship Season*, and cast me and Mark in her show. "The circle" was now complete. My teacher and I were now peers, finally able to play together on stage as actors. Mark's character was my former control freak of a coach, and me, as one of "his boys" who won the state championship for him 30 years earlier, but had a dark secret about that win that we were all hiding from. It is hard to describe the level of pride and joy I had being on stage with the man who began my life's passion so long ago. This was one of the biggest highlights of my career to be acting in a professional production with Mark, and both of us doing some pretty damn good work if I may say so myself. Whenever Mark would come to see a show I had directed or to watch me act, after the show he would give me one of his patented bear hugs that lasted a very long time. He would talk softly into my ear about how he felt about the work. I could feel the pride he had in me. No more so than after he watched me play "Lennie" in *Of Mice and Men*. Where at the end my character is shot and killed. Mark was sitting only a few feet away. I could literally have reached out and touched him. The lights went black and as my body fell to the ground with a thud. In the blackout I could hear Mark gasp and moan, and cry. After the show, all we could do was hold each other and cry. And we both understood without a word spoken what the other guys was thinking.

Rest easy dear friend. Thank you for a lifetime of your love, your caring, your mentorship, and your friendship. Theatre people have a special way of saying eternal goodbye to each other. It is with a quote of Horatio's in Shakespeare's, *Hamlet*. "Now cracks a noble heart. Good night sweet prince. And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."

Here are some memories written by my fathers long time friend, Gerry Rangwald

MEMORIES OF MARK

(February 11, 2023)

I am still reeling from the news that one of my best friends is gone. I've known Mark for nearly 50 years. I am at a loss for words to describe how his passing has been a gut punch to me.

There is no way to sum up a person's life in a few pages. Especially a man who was larger than life as Mark Donahue was. He would need several volumes to even scratch the surface. So, all I can do is provide certain moments that Mark and I shared over the past five decades.

I first met Mark at the University of Buffalo in September of 1976. I was about to start

my third year of college as a Theatre major. We were both auditioning for Eric Bentley's play, *Are You Now or Have You Ever Been*. It was a given that Mark would be in the play. But for me, it was a crapshoot. I had transferred to UB after graduating from a local community college near my family's home on Long Island.

Mark played the chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee, and I was auditioning for the two small parts of film director Edward Dmytryk and actor Larry Parks. I was nervous and hyper-critical of my own acting abilities (which has never left me). But after my audition, he walked up to me and told me I did a good job. I was grateful. I had known through the local theatre grapevine that Mark was one of the main go-to males in the UB Theatre department.

Needless to say, we became fast friends. Even though we didn't have a lot in common. He had fought in Vietnam. I turned 18 the year the war ended, so I didn't have to serve. I was some nerdy kid from Long Island who didn't know his ass from a hole in the wall. He had nearly got his ass shot off on several occasions in some faraway jungle. Mark was very popular with the ladies and exuded confidence. I was nervous and awkward and tended to put my foot in my mouth in most social mashups. He was popular with the guys too. He was a guy's guy. He loved sports and talked about his days as a high school wrestler. I couldn't wrestle a Siamese cat.

Yet, Mark and I found common ground. We both loved movies. We'd talk about movies and acting for hours. And I envied his self-confidence and worldliness. In short, I had never known anyone like him. And that is true to this very day. Mark was like my big brother. And I leaned on him like a little brother would. I have two sisters and I would have gladly traded them for Mark and a "brother to be named later" anytime.

Mark was the first person to introduce me to David Bowie and the Doors. One night, when we were both high as a kite on hash (another thing Mark turned me onto), he did an impromptu dance rendition of Bowie's song "Station to Station". I can't describe it in grand detail, but it was mesmerizing. That's what hash and a good song can do to you. He followed this with a super Jim Morrison homage of "Petition the Lord with Prayer" and "L.A. Woman."

He also introduced me to good pot. We'd get stoned and drink a lot together. Both of us smoked several packs of cigarettes per day. He smoked True menthols and I smoke Marlboros. We were like a pair of walking, talking ashtrays. Luckily, most of our mutual friends were too, so we didn't stick (or stink) out.

During runs of shows, all the guys would go to Mark's house and play marathon games of Risk. Not only was Mark good at taking over a crowd, he also was pretty good at trying to take over the world, which was the whole point of that particular board game.

Mark could also adapt to any group of people. When my parents came up to visit me in the dorms, Mark was invited to join the Ringwald clan. Mark made quite an impression on my father. They got along famously. I think my old man would also have adopted Mark in a heartbeat. That is, if Mark didn't already have a loving family in Horseheads, New York.

In March of 1976, Mark and I drove to my parents' house in Merrick, Long Island for a visit. Mark was an instant hit with my family all over again. I can remember vividly that my mother made corned beef and cabbage on St. Patrick's Day. Mark put ketchup on the corned beef, cabbage, and potatoes. My mother was speechless. I just laughed.

During the famed Buffalo blizzard of 1977, Mark spent a lot of time with me in the dorms. For those that don't remember this, an incredible amount of snow fell on Buffalo in just 48 hours. Snowdrifts...I kid you not...were as high as telephone poles. The city was shut down. The National Guard had to deliver supplies. UB was shut down for three whole weeks. The liquor store across the street was bought out by the inhabitants of the two UB dorms across the street from that tiny stretch mall in a matter of hours. Mark attended many of our all-night

parties that went on nearly unabated during that time.

One night during this period, Mark, myself, my childhood friend Gary, and Paul, another actor friend, did tequila shots together on “4 shots of tequila for a dollar” night at the Worst Place, a divey bar only a few stores down from the aforementioned liquor store. I stopped counting at ten rounds. We toast to every conceivable cause know to man, from world peace to big breasted women. I think you can get which toast was first and which was last.

Mark and I were in *The Bacchae* in the spring of 1977. I was just a silent spear carrier.

Mark had a pivotal speech, describing a pivotal bloody event in the hills. Our Greek masks were all made from scratch. Unfortunately, the art department used “plastic glue” as the molding ingredient. It was a chemical compound that gave off noxious vapors. Wearing those masks was

like sniffing airplane glue, non-stop, for nearly three hours a night. Most of us got dizzy and high every night. One night, all six silent gladiators got silly. One of Mark’s lines was: “You could see a cloven foot thrown to the sky.” On this particular night, all six of us spear carriers simultaneously looked up at the imaginary cloven foot, then followed it to the ground, then pretended the foot hit the ground with a giant “boing”. I’m sure no one really noticed it, but we thought it was funny. We never told Mark that we did that silly thing. By the end of the run, we all called the play “The Backache”.

The following year, Mark and I were cast in *Wannsee* a medieval play written by Eric Bentley. A world premiere. Mark was cast as the lead and I was the main villain. There was a Robin Hood-Little John-type fight with staff sticks as the climax of the story. Mark wanted to make the fight scene as realistic as possible. So, he choreographed the entire fight scene. It took weeks. One wrong move some serious bodily damage could have occurred. Like everything else, he took every theatre performance very seriously. The rest of the cast constantly made fun of us for working on the fight so precisely. On opening night, Mark hit my stick so hard that a piece of his staff flew into the front row at full speed. Luckily, no one was sitting in the first few rows, so no one was hurt. After that, the fight was a hell of a lot shorter.

After I graduated, I went back to New York. Within a few years, I had moved to Brooklyn. Mark and I still kept in touch. One day, he called me to tell me that he was moving to the Big Apple. And as it turned out, he moved to Brooklyn as well. Since I had last seen him, Mark had gotten married to Catherine. And the Donahue family steadily expanded. It seemed in no time at all they had brought three lovely daughters into the world. The Donahues lived in a large apartment building near where the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) now resides. Then I got married as well. My first wife, Norma and I moved to the East Village. By the time we moved back to Brooklyn a year or two later, the Donahues had moved on. At least that was my recollection.

Mark and I didn’t see each other again for several years. Though we would chat on the phone every few months. Eventually, Norma and I moved to Los Angeles. And we got divorced a few years later. That’s what L.A. does to you, I guess.

By the early nineties, I was single and living in South Pasadena. One day, I get a call out of the blue from Mark. He wanted to tell me that he was performing in an industrial show for the Ford Motor Company. He and our mutual friend, Lorna Hill were in it. The show was in Anaheim, in Orange County, a distance of 50 miles from where I lived. Mark gave me the date that he was arriving and asked that I pick him up at Los Angeles International Airport. I said sure. But he didn’t know the actual date and time that he would be arriving. He told me he’d call me when he landed in LAX. After all, it was only an hour’s drive to airport from my apartment. The phone rang at 3 a.m.

Bleary-eyed, I arrive at the airport two hours later. Since it was now five a.m., Mark needed me to drive him directly to Anaheim from LAX, a distance of 30 miles. But in Los

Angeles 30 miles was not a short trip. It was a long slog. And the performance was beginning in less than eight hours. Halfway there, Mark then wanted to an IHOP for the Rooty-Tooty-Fresh-and-Fruity pancakes. Luckily, we passed a sign for an IHOP on the highway. Man, Mark loved his sugary confections.

About a year or two later, Mark called me out the clear blue to tell me that he was moving to L.A. to try his luck with acting for T.V. and the movies. Mark and Cathy were going through a rough patch. I didn't pry. Mark and I hung out again, like we did twenty years prior, but the vibe wasn't the same. He missed his wife and left town without saying good-bye. I understood. These things happen.

Many years passed. Mark's marriage went from bad to worst. There's no need to rehash those dark times here. But the only constant was that his kids were his pride and joy. He could never stop talking about Brianna, Tarah, and Jenna.

The next time I heard from Mark, he was married again. By this time, Mark was living in Rochester, New York, and had met a lovely lady named Rickie. Mark used to say that she "saved" him. I didn't fully understand what he meant until I met her a few years back for the first time. Thanks to Rickie, Mark started doing theatre again. And he felt alive again. I could hear it in his voice. He sounded decades younger. Rickie put the skip back in Mark's step. One day, he called me let me know that the theatre company he was affiliated with in upstate New York was performing in an Irish play festival in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in a few weeks. By this time, I had moved to Chicago with my new wife, Jean. We drove the 100 miles to see him perform. He was brilliant. And he won the "best actor" award for the festival. No surprise whatsoever.

I met Rickie for the first time that day. She graciously greeted me with a big grin. Jenna was there too. And I finally got to meet the one man that I had been hearing about for decades, Mark's best friend, Jim Brown. Sadly, we've lost both of them way too soon. During that weekend we spent together in Milwaukee, we polished off a bottle of Johnnie Walker Red and went out for a nice dinner. It was a magical weekend.

Since then, Mark and I would talk on the phone every couple of months. When he turned 70, he called me. He was the youngest sounding 70 year old I have ever known. I told every Irish joke I had ever heard. We talked about our families. Mark sounded as positive and optimistic as he was when we first met all those years ago.

The last time we spoke was just a few weeks ago. Jim Brown had passed away about a month prior. Over the past year, I knew that Mark had had some health issues. When I was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, eight years ago, Mark called me all the time to see how I was doing. I think at that time, we both thought our burning-the-candle-at-both-ends lifestyle was finally catching up to both of us. So, here we were, two people who used to talk about movies and sports in our youth. Now, we were comparing which of our respective body parts was presently performing below expectations. But we were never maudlin about the fact that we were both closer to the end than to the beginning. Quite the contrary. We both had a "fuck 'em" quality towards the whole "getting-older" thing.

That last time we spoke, I closed the phone conversation with one of my new favorite sayings: "The last time I refused a drink, I obviously didn't understand the question." In a rare moment, Mark just laughed and said: "I love you." I was greatly touched. I said "I love you" back. But I had no idea that that would be the last time I would hear his voice. In my mind, we were immortal. And neither one of us was leaving the earth any time soon.

I will close with something that's near and dear to my heart. I think Mark would appreciate it. Because I think it describes Mark's journey on this planet to a tee. It's from a radio interview that Harry Chapin did a few years before he died.

My grandfather was a painter. He died at age eighty-eight, he illustrated Robert Frost's

first two books of poetry, and he was looking at me and he said, "Harry, there's two kinds of tired. There's good tired and there's bad tired." He said, "Ironically enough, bad tired can be a day that you won. But you won other people's battles; you lived other people's days, other people's agendas, other people's dreams. And when it's all over, there was very little you in there. And when you hit the hay at night, somehow you toss and turn; you don't settle easy. It's that good tired, ironically enough, can be a day that you lost, but you don't even have to tell yourself because you knew you fought your battles, you chased your dreams, you lived your days and when you hit the hay at night, you settle easy, you sleep the sleep of the just and you say 'take me away'". He said, "Harry, all my life I wanted to be a painter and I painted; God, I would have loved to have been more successful, but I painted, and I painted and I'm good tired and they can take me away."

Now if there is a process in your and my lives, in the insecurity that we have about a prior life or an afterlife. God, I hope there is a God, if He is - if He does exist, He has a rather weird sense of humor, however. But lets just - but if there's a process that will let us live our days, that will allow us that degree of equanimity towards the end, looking at that black implacable wall of death, to allow us that degree of peace, that degree of non-fear, I want in.

I want to believe that Mark left us "good tired". He chased his dreams. He fought his battle. He lived his days his way. Like Sinatra. That's all you can do. Do it your way. Sleep well, big guy. I love ya, man.