

EULOGY FOR DR. DAVID H. JACOBS

I want to celebrate with you today the passion of David Jacobs. David was a life force. The phrase “half-way” did not exist in his vocabulary. Whatever he undertook, he undertook fully and without reservation.

Did you ever, perchance, lock horns with David? If not, then you must not have been very close to him. On the Jewish-to-WASP continuum, David was on the Semitic end of the spectrum. Raising of the voice, he did not consider a sin. David let you know frankly when he disagreed with you. And then eventually he would hug you and kiss you. In fact, my children always referred to Uncle David as “the Kiss Monster.”

As you know, David was a gifted athlete, across many sports: baseball, tennis, soccer. He began college at Duke, where he was a pitcher on the baseball team. As David became politically sensitized and opposed to the Vietnam War, he found himself at odds with the coach of the baseball team, a noted Fascist. One day, David met with the coach to notify him that he was quitting the team and leaving Duke; he would transfer to the University of Wisconsin — a radical hotbed. When the coach asked him “why?”, David responded: “Because I’m going to dedicate my life to fighting everything you represent.”

David’s passion for his patients was legendary. To become his patient, you had to accept his social contract: he would cure you, provided that you did what he told you to do. He did not treat an illness or a symptom: he treated the whole person. David was an aggressive doctor, relentless in doing whatever it took to make his patients well. He personally saved countless lives, and for that alone merits a place in the world to come.

David’s office staff was an extension of himself and of his family. I can imagine how much he demanded of them. I know how much he loved and appreciated them.

David had two other great passions in his life. One was the land of Israel. His kibbutz family had a special place in his heart for decades. He thought about making aliyah nearly as often as he shaved or regrew his mustache. In recent months, he devoted himself to a new project for the people of Sderot, a village on the border with Gaza. As David wrote in the mission statement: “The citizens of Sderot have lived under a constant state of siege with a barrage of missiles and terror attacks for more than a decade. During my visit in

November 2013, I was taken by the spirit of the leaders as well as the men and women on the street. Our mission is intended to offer some healing, and to send a strong message that our brothers and sisters are not alone." Working with the group American Physicians and Friends for Medicine in Israel, David was establishing a program of periodic visits to Sderot to treat the physical and emotional needs of its residents. I hope that David's Sderot project will go forward in his name and memory.

The only thing that David was more passionate about than Israel was his family. No father ever loved and cherished his children more than David did Aviva, Ilana, and Benji. No brother ever loved another more than David did Johnny. No husband ever loved a wife more than David did Charlotte. May his spirit and joy be with them forever.

As we say goodbye to this greater healer and friend today, I pray that you will always carry with you David Jacob's passion, joy, and zest for life. Baruch Dayan Emet.

March 23, 2014