

November 2, 2012

Dear Mr. Barutta:

I greatly appreciated the warm hospitality of Dignity Washington today in celebrating and sharing Bill's life. This may sound weird -- but I really didn't know Bill that well or for that long ... yet it doesn't seem to matter if you had known him for four years or twenty-four years. The consistency of stories about Bill (and from such a diversity of the support networks he kept) demonstrates how genuine a person he was, which I believe is why it was so easy to connect with him. He was the real deal.

I shared some things in common with Bill, especially as an agency spokesperson/public affairs professional. Yet in all honesty, I would probably not have thought all that much about Bill Line, except that I just happened to have lunch with him one day Just sat next to him during an NPS work function. He never knew that what he said to me -- the positive encouragement that I needed -- touched me deeply. I have continued to work very hard to pursue a rich, fulfilling life. I'm not there yet, but I know that I will get there. And Bill gave me some ideas about different directions I could take.

Without even knowing Bill so well, I was unusually disturbed by his death and of course troubled by it -- now particularly because Bill was so motivating and uplifting and working so hard to live his life to the fullest potential - which is what I so desperately want for myself. Today's Mass helped me understand. After the service, I shared with Margie Ortiz -- "sometimes the barber needs a haircut." It's a little cliché that I've only ever heard from my mother. It sort of helps answer that horrible void for me. Bill took such good care of others, and he did try so much to help himself and was doing all the right things. But something was still missing. I hope now it is answered for him.

I grew up in the Catholic faith, which I no longer "formally" practice because of my own negative experiences with the church. So the open arms of your Dignity community was very moving for me... and such a reflection of Bill's open arms.

Thank you for being so welcoming and for providing the opportunity to heal. I feel it made a big difference for me. For better or worse, sometimes it only takes one small gesture to make a big difference. I can see that your support provided Bill with the strength to live as he did and to share his kindness with others. It's not "what could we have done to save him?" ... it's "wow, we helped him stay that much longer when he was ready to go a while back." The manner in which you welcomed me and others is an honor to Bill ... and I'm sure a great reason that Bill continued his work on this Earth for as long as he could.

Today's service was an important opportunity in my own journey. Thank you so much for providing it.

Kind regards,

Theresa Eisenman
National Park Service Colleague of Bill Line