

A few words about my father

This article is from the “Edifying the Body” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s Web site, churchofgodbig sandy.com. It was posted for the weekend of April 2-3, 2011. Jake Osborn is the son of Jeff and Joan Osborn. After Jeff Osborn died on Saturday, Feb. 26, 2011, Jake gave this eulogy at his father’s funeral on March 2. The Church of God Big Sandy received permission to print Jake’s heartwarming comments.

By Jake Osborn

GREENCASTLE, Ind.—Thank you, friends and family, for coming tonight. That my father was greatly loved and respected is evidenced by the many friends he left behind.

My father was a giving man who enjoyed teaching others about the things he loved. And, although his lesson to me on internal-combustion engines, lovingly and thoroughly administered at the ripe age of 6 weeks, didn’t stick, a few things did.

And that’s what I wanted to talk about tonight.

I was young, probably 7 or 8, and we were watching *Back to the Future* together. A character named Goldie Wilson was running for mayor at the time. Goldie was African-American, and his opponent was white.

I don’t remember what precipitated my comments, but I turned to my dad at one point and said, “I’d vote for the white man because he looks like me.”

It only takes one hand for me to count the amount of times I saw my father get truly livid. This was the first of those times.

He scolded me, like I’d never been scolded. “Don’t you ever judge a person because of their skin color. Don’t you ever.”

And while I doubt my dad expected that he was instilling in me more than an egalitarian attitude, he truly was teaching me what I consider to be the true meaning of life and happiness.

Standing up for other people and for what is right has stuck with me to this day. My father was a champion of causes—from the right of the small congregation he pastored to be independent from the bonds of an umbrella organization to literally cleaning up the streets of the town of Fillmore, my dad was a fighter.

But through all that, the only other times I saw my father get truly enlivened with anger were when he was defending me. My dad went to bat for me many times, defending me passionately against teachers and clergy who thought that because I was young they knew what was best for me.

My dad didn't believe in "above" and "beneath." My dad believed in "respect" and "equality." Of all the things he taught me, this was the most important. By watching my dad stand up for just causes, and indeed stand up for me, I learned in turn how to do the same.

We may not have always agreed on what causes were worth fighting for, but I know he was proud that I was willing to voice my opinion and stand my ground. In some ways I am the man I am today because of the man my father was.