

**Eulogy**  
**Ross Perot - July 16, 2019**  
**Highland Park United Methodist Church**

Welcome.

Distinguished guests....Thank you for being with us today.

We are honored by your presence.

And have been moved by the outpouring of love and support we have received over the past few days.

On behalf of our entire family, we thank you.

My father was always prepared and loved to plan...He was a man who paid attention to the details.

The one thing he did not plan, however, was his own funeral.

But I can assure you...Looking across this sanctuary today and who is here...Dad would have loved every minute of this. This is an extraordinarily special event for him.

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I remember in 1992, a reporter looked at me and said:

“It must be tough to be the son of Ross Perot.”

I looked at him and thought – “define tough.”

Because if you were a part of our family...You were in for an amazing adventure...One filled with unconditional love and lots of action with Papa.

In our family, he was our hero.

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Ross Perot had a strong set of values and those values guided his actions.

He was born to Gabriel and Lulu May Perot in 1930 in Texarkana, Texas. Dad always said his first big break in life was being born to two loving parents.

They taught him and his sister Bette the value of faith and family.

In his youth, the Boy Scouts instilled in him a sense of duty.

He earned his Eagle Scout rank at the age of 13 and lived his life by the Scout Oath:

“On my honor, I will do my best, to do my duty, to God and my country – and to help other people at all times...”

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Dad’s next big break was his acceptance to the Naval Academy where he learned the value of leadership.

He was President of his junior and senior class, and the brigade commander....The Academy also taught him the value of honor.

He chaired the Committee that wrote the first Naval Academy’s honor code that’s still in use today.

These core values – faith, family, duty, leadership, and honor -- formed the foundation of his life that would impact millions of people around the world.

But the person who had the greatest impacted on him was our mother, Margot Birmingham.

They met on a blind date...And married on September 15, 1956.

A banker's daughter from Greensburg, Pennsylvania, and the son of a cotton broker from Texas....It was the beginning of a beautiful love affair.

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After finishing his service in the Navy, my parents drove to Dallas with all their possessions in the trunk of their car to pursue the American dream.

Dad worked at IBM. Mom was a teacher at Greenhill School.

They lived in an apartment only a few minutes from this church.

My first memories of those early days are of Mom and Dad coming into the room I shared with my sister Nancy....We would say our prayers together each night.

I remember Dad would give us a big hug and say:

“BUDDIES TO THE END.”

In those early days, my father became the top salesman for IBM...His focus and work ethic were extraordinary.

He was a born salesman, starting at age 6 selling flower seeds, Christmas cards, and newspapers.

He sold so much at IBM, they put a cap on his quota.

I assure you at all Perot Companies, there is no limit on our sales teams!! And my father would make that clear to them on a regular basis. And he would use a phrase from my grandfather. He would say “sell it, you can’t eat it!”

At age 32, with a wife and two children and 1,000 dollars, he started his own company – EDS.

His vision was a technology service business and a new industry was launched.

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At EDS, the recruiting motto was “EAGLES DON’T FLOCK. You find them one at a time.”

He built his teams by recruiting directly from the military because that's where he knew he could find proven leaders. And he liked combat veterans.

Dad always credited that early leadership team as being the foundation of his success.

As EDS started to grow, Mom and Dad's family started to grow too -- Suzanne, Carolyn and Katherine were born.

As children, we watched what one man could do.

Ross Perot would not sit on the sidelines. He entered the fight—full speed.

We watched him IN THE ARENA as he came to the aid of the Prisoners of War in Vietnam.

He focused the world's attention on the plight of the POWs...and the North Vietnamese were forced to improve the conditions for our men.

I remember a few years ago, former POW and Congressman Sam Johnson. Sam, thank you for being with us, today. Sam

toured Dad's museum...When he saw the photos honoring POWs, he looked at Dad and said:

“Without your efforts, I would not be alive today.”

In the 70s, as EDS was expanding around the world, Dad still prioritized being home for dinner with his family....Sometimes he even brought the world home to us.

I remember having incredible guests around the dinner table: astronauts, fighter pilots, business leaders and political figures, including Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher and Lord Mountbatten.

Our lives were changed again in 1979 when two EDS employees were taken hostage in Iran.

Again, Dad was in the arena.

Winston Churchill had a famous quote “ACTION THIS DAY” but even that was not fast enough for our father. As Pete talked about “Ross time.” Dad wanted “ACTION NOW.”

So he risked his own life to visit the two men imprisoned in Tehran.

He also assembled a team of EDS volunteers and under the leadership of Colonel Bull Simons, the men were freed and brought back home.

It became the largest jailbreak in history, a legendary act. The story is told in the book “ON WINGS OF EAGLES” by Ken Follett. And Ken, thank you for being with us today.

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His life of service took a surprising turn in 1992, when he entered the arena yet again....This time running for President of the United States.

He knew we could do better as a country and he felt compelled to serve. Our family followed on yet another amazing adventure.

After the 1992 and 1996 campaigns, he focused on getting his company, Perot Systems, into “ship-shape.” It would become the second company he took public—a very rare feat.



Just like all things he tackled in life, Dad focused on every little detail.

When Dad met clients, he would give them his direct telephone number...He would tell them: “Call me day or night if you have any problems.”

I can tell you this, our team made sure, Dad never received that call.

Our father always taught us that financial success is a gift, and a resource to help others.

His generosity supported individuals and organizations in our community, nation, and around the world, including:

- The Boy Scouts of America,
- The Perot Museum
- UT Southwestern Medical School,
- The Salvation Army,
- Gulf War Syndrome research, and
- Teach for America to name a few.

In honor of their mother who fed those in need during the Great Depression, my father and his sister Bette, were founders of the North Texas Food Bank and donors.

To honor our incredible mother, his lifelong partner, my father also funded the Margot Perot Women's and Children's Hospital at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital.

In the past few days, we have been overwhelmed by all of the NEW stories we are hearing about what he did for others over the years.

Many of which we never knew.

These were also the quiet acts, or quiet investments my Dad made in everyday people – some were veterans, others just needed help or a compassionate hand.

These quiet acts were the most valuable and the most important investments my Dad made.

Because through these efforts, our father improved the lives of thousands.

My father was focused, he worked hard, and he had a lot of fun along the way.

- He never missed a chance to dance...Mom and Dad were always the last to leave the dance floor.
- He had a love for horses, a love for Texas, and a love for all things fast.
- His practical jokes were also legendary.

And, of course, my father loved to celebrate. You couldn't attend a celebratory event – no matter who was involved or what was being celebrated – without having him call for three cheers....Hip, Hip, Hurray.

Some of my happiest memories in life were spent on the water boating with my Dad.

As soon as my Dad could afford it, he bought our first lake house.

I also remember going to the boat dealer to buy our first boat – it was used OF COURSE!....Dad loved a good deal, he loved to trade and he only paid cash.

Every Saturday on the way to Lake Grapevine, we stopped at the Howard Johnson's for hot dogs and peppermint ice cream....Those were the makings of a perfect Saturday together for our family.

The Navy gave Dad his love for the water. And as the years went by, his own fleet started to grow.

The boats got faster and louder...When the boats outgrew Lake Grapevine. We moved to Lake Texoma. Then on to Bermuda...He could not outgrow the Atlantic Ocean.

Nothing made him happier than jumping the waves in his speedboat or pulling his grandchildren on a banana boat.

The Need for Speed was year 'round. We had decades of wonderful memories skiing as a family in Colorado.

Our father was always the first one up on the mountain every morning and the fastest skier down on every run and Pete what you didn't realize, he was racing you. And in his mind, he was always winning.

Whether it was boating, or skiing, or business, he loved to win and hated to lose. As he once said in a speech...

“There’s no ribbon for second place.”

Dad never wanted to slow down. But in February of this year, our family knew we only had months to go.

The Lord gave us another 5 months with Dad.

During that time, he was still going to the office on the weekdays and the lake each weekend.

He was surrounded by his family, friends, and wonderful caregivers.

Mom and Dad would spend their nights holding hands and watching classic movies...And Dad still wanted to dance with Mom.

Our last trip to the lake was three Saturdays ago..

I arrived 5 minutes late...And I still got the look...

On the way out, Dad insisted he stop and give Mom a kiss.

At the lake, we sat together holding hands looking at the water.

We did not say much....we did not need to ...

We had said all we could to each other.

He sat in his father's rocking chair....We looked at photos of his mother and his father.

My father passed away in peace...

Surrounded by his family, holding my mother's hand.

Condolences have come from around the world, as my father touched the lives of millions.

From Zimbabwe, a family friend wrote,

“THE TOM-TOMS WILL BEAT IN OUR VALLEY -- FOR  
THE LEGEND THIS WEEKEND.”

My father had courage, character, and integrity – legendary qualities. A true patriot.

My father will be missed, but never forgotten.

Ross Perot did his duty to God, his country, his family, his friends.

He helped other people at all times.

His legacy will live through all he touched.

THANK YOU, GOD, FOR THIS WONDERFUL MAN.

BUDDIES TO THE END.