

Mark Cizynski's tribute to Scott
February 2, 2008

As we go through life we meet hundreds, maybe for some of us, thousands of people, and out of that we have acquaintances, then move on to friends perhaps and then the friends become our best friends. My circle of best friends, outside my family, includes 5 people and with the loss of Scott my circle has been torn never to be replaced. For 37 years I had the pleasure and the honor of calling Scott my best friend.

When I moved here from The Bronx in 1971 I was introduced to Scott by my other best friend, Mark Hinkle. It didn't take long for Scott and me to realize that we would be friends for a very long time, I only wish it could have been more. The first time I played basketball against Scott he came down the lane and I knocked him to the ground on purpose, all 130lbs of him dripping wet, to see what his reaction would be and he didn't let me down. He didn't make the shot but more importantly he did not call a foul even though his teammates urged him and when I went to give him a hand up, which being from The Bronx we never did, he pushed it to the side and said words I can not use in front of God's house. As we went down the court we just laughed and we laughed continuously after the game.

In our senior year Mark and I urged, pleaded with him to go out for the team because I knew he could make it. And when he did and he received his uniform from Coach Kelley there was never a prouder day for Scott, I felt in my eyes. When we came out for our first home game it was like Jesus Christ himself was in the gym there were so many people rooting for Scott, the same way with his first basket. But Scott never let onto that, he wouldn't let onto it until we were down in the locker room changing then he had a few words to say. Which brings us to our historical game at Ridgefield as you all know. As Scott is remembered for the only person to cause a riot in the history of Ridgefield. We all know he made the shot from the left side at the buzzer and pandemonium broke loose, but more pandemonium awaited us when we got on the bus. As the bus was being pelted with rocks, bottles and kitchen sinks from Ridgefield I was sitting with him and we were laughing had our heads down and with the noise, glass flying, the cheerleaders going crazy, anyway I said to him, way to go you had to make that shot didn't you, he looked at me and smiled and said "that was real fun, we should do it again real soon". When we lost in the state quarter finals I felt bad for myself, for my teammates, but especially for Scott because I knew how much he enjoyed the season, because I don't believe he ever thought he could have the effect on our team that he did. It's a season that will go down in history with me, not because Scott has passed, but because it's one of the most enjoyable I ever had in all my years of playing organized ball.

On behalf of Mark Hinkle and his family I would like to say a few words. I know how heavy Mark's heart is with sadness because he met Scott in 1959. As I look through the crowd how many of us can actually say we have had a best friend for almost 50 years. They grew up together doing all the things good friends do. Mrs. Wilder will know and Mrs. Hinkle will know, I'm sure they have had many conversations about them. In fact Sandy made reference to this just recently how he asked Mark do you remember when I

came to your house in 1959 for the Super Bowl. Of course Mark said sure and he was only 3 years old. But Scott did something for his best friend that a best friend will always be known for. In 1975 Scott introduced Mark to Jean Zeoli and they were married 4 years later. Two wonderful girls, Jessica and Shannon and in 1984 Scott stood tall as godfather to Mark's daughter Shannon. Next year will be 30 years of marriage for Mark and Jean all because of Scott. These are the things best friends do.

When Mark and I went to see Scott after his accident he couldn't speak because of the tracheotomy but his sense of humor never waned and we found that out quickly. When he spelled out one day on the chalkboard, as you go through letter by letter and it said "I'm not deaf!" We found ourselves yelling at him thinking that would help his situation. His sense of humor never waned even when I spoke to him Monday from my office after Mark had called me to let me know about his surgery. It didn't take long to have Scott give me some ribbing about his Giants beating my Cowboys and when was I going to send him the \$10.00 I owed him from our bet. I never got the chance to because on Tuesday morning Mark gave me a call, gave me the news.

When we went to the hospital Thursday we had Scott for a couple of hours to ourselves. There were tears of happiness and tears of sadness. The happiness is because we carried on a 2hr clinic as stand-up comics do digging deep for stories to get some response out of Scott. I pulled a hair on his goatee, sorry Mrs. Wilder, and that still did not illicit a response. A Franciscan priest of Indian descent came in and we knelt down and prayed for Scott. We did everything we could as best friends to have Scott give us a response. And when we left the hospital later that evening, after spending the whole day with Scott, as we walked out after we stopped crying, we knew we couldn't have asked for a more perfect friend than Scott. When I said goodbye to him on Friday I kissed him on his forehead and told him to go to sleep all was well. When they let us know he had passed I got on the elevator I was happy for Scott. We had prayed for Scott to wake up on Thursday and on Friday morning I had asked God to take him and end his suffering and accept him into His kingdom.

I would just like to point out to Ella, Scott's nurse, caretaker and friend of 20 plus years. You are truly an angel sent from Heaven to watch over Scott for so many years. It is not easy, I come out of the rehabilitation field for 20 plus years, I know what she has done for Scott. You will surely dwell in the House of the Lord forever, for years to come because of the work that you do.

To Mrs. Wilder and her family. No son could be more proud of parents that you and Mr. Wilder did pre-accident and post-accident and all your family. Rest assured he thanked God every day he woke up for having you. And if I wasn't born a Cizynski I would ask God to make me a Wilder.

And I would just like to finally say on behalf of Mark and myself Scott, we will miss our acquaintance, we will miss our friend, and we will miss our best friend.

Rest in peace.

