



Melvin J Milberg

January 7, 1944 - August 6, 2023

Written by Dr. Susan Spitzer,

My uncle, Melvin Milberg, passed away on August 6, 2023. He was my mother's younger brother by five years. Ever since I was a young child, I have loved him and called him, "Googie". Throughout his last year, I held the honor of being his next-of-kin. I write this about Googie from me, my late mother and Googie's sister, Sharon Myrna Milberg-Dick-Rothman, my brother and Googie's nephew, Alan Dick, as well as several distant cousins. He was loved by all of us.

Googie was still a teenager when I entered the world. Just a few years earlier, he and my mother (his sister), shared a celebratory weekend when he became a bar mitzvah and she became a bride. I'm told that a large tent was erected in the backyard of his parents' home (Harold Sydney Milberg and Nettie Cohen-Milberg) within the south Florida community of Coral Gables. Later on, Googie studied Journalism at the University of Florida in Gainesville, FL. While working on his bachelor's degree, he also played the trombone as a part of the marching band.

Throughout his young and middle adulthood, Googie worked for newspapers in south Florida as a sports editor. He spent a gazillion hours writing his columns on manual typewriters and eventually computers.

Googie was fascinated with the capabilities of typesetting and he told me several stories about it. He said that, as a kid, he produced a typed page of text, fully justified, using a manual typewriter. With today's tools of computers and word processing programs, this is an easy task. But armed with only a manual typewriter, it must have been daunting. Googie told me that he precisely calculated the exact number of letters and spaces needed to fill one line of text where the last letter of each line would end at the same horizontal location as it did on the prior line. The end result was a beautifully formatted piece of text that could have been used in any newspaper.

But it was during his early retirement that Googie blossomed as a culinary artist. I was recently told by his good friends and neighbors (Sarah Elizabeth Destefano and daughter Charlene Destefano of Fort Lauderdale, FL), that Googie loved to frequent the meat market. Always mindful to manage his weight, he focussed on creating protein rich meals. Frankly, he was not able to keep up with his cooking. Googie left two freezers' full of meals. Aside from always being prepared for hunger, Googie explained to me about his younger method of weight management and how it left him dissatisfied. As a teen, Googie would chew up his food and then spit it out without swallowing any of the fattening juices. Crazy or dedicated, huh?

Yes, Googie had a few crazy and eccentric cells running through his veins. My mother did too, as do I. Perhaps it was our shared insanity that caused our family dinners to become our time to connect. Dinner at his sisters house regularly concluded with most family members lingering around the table. It was during this time that Googie and I sweated it out in the backyard smoking cigarettes. We would spend at least an hour amongst the pine trees and under the stars, talking about our craziness. Through laughter and tears, we shared these precious moments. On one such occasion, Googie taught me that smoking a menthol cigarette was like smoking an air

conditioner. What a creative way to reframe fire into relief from south Florida's sweltering, summer heat. Anyway, Googie never judged me and I intend to honor his secrets that were revealed to me during those south Florida nights.

When the time was right during the early 2000's, the entire family migrated to North Carolina. That is, everyone but Googie. His roots were where they were. So, he remained in his home of Fort Lauderdale at 2232 SW 14th Court for 45 years. I'm told that he mostly kept to himself, with the exception of the Destefano's who accompanied him to appointments. But Googie and I got to continue our family dinner meetups at my mother's home in North Carolina. His presence managed to bring an extra light to Thanksgivings and Passovers for many years.

The best part of our North Carolina family dinners was the delightful breakfasts he created from leftovers for my daughter. Googie never married, nor did he have any children. He told me he used a condom every single time, without fail. So I'm pretty certain about the no children thing. Years of Hannah/Googie breakfast times gave my daughter an opportunity to know Googie like I knew Googie.

Not all of Googie's stories were crazy laden. He loved to talk about Broadway shows. His favorite song was, "Hello 12 Hello 13 Hello Love" from the show, "A Chorus Line." Frequently in his presence, all would break out in Broadway show tunes such as, "Hello Dolly," "What I did for love," or "Singing in the Rain." He always managed to insert fun into all occasions.

As for funerals, Googie wasn't really bothered by them. At my father's funeral, he pretended to get his finger in the limousine door. I'm sure that if it had been raining, he would have locked the limousine doors while everyone banged on the windows to get in. That's just the way our crazy family does

things, and Googie always took the opportunity to be a bit of a nut.

I will miss Googie, but am happy to have had him in my life. I promise you, Googie, that I will always honor life's insanity and use it to maintain joy.

Please leave the family a note of condolence, light a candle of remembrance, or order a floral remembrance piece.