

Dear Bill,

9/6/98

What happened to your father has been on my mind, off and on, for quite a few years, since 1975, or for 23 years. I'm sure that at least since what he defeated not so long ago it was also on your father's mind, whether or not he ever mentioned it to the rest of you. It was too bad that he had to go but in my mind has been the desire, when the time comes, as I hope for a while longer it does not come, to go that way. Peaceably is the wrong word but I mean without agony and without long suffering for the family and friends.

This is not much comfort to survivors but they do not have that kind of agony, of seeing loved ones suffer when nothing could be done for that suffering. From our experience it is a shock for the survivors. My father went that way, he was standing and he just fell down and it was all over. We were really shocked because we had no clue he had any heart trouble.

I suppose there is no way that going is any comfort for the survivors but knowing that the departed loved one did not linger in long suffering may be one and have been spared the agony of it may be another.

We are, of course, very sorry.

We had just come back from a pleasant lunch at Hana's with a friend I'd not seen since before he was married and he has a ten-year-old son. Lil was in the kitchen talking to them when I checked the mail. I did not tell her until after they left. (Her father went in an industrial accident when she was a little girl and her mother made it to 98, as mine did to 92, with her last five or more years in confinement and the last more than a half year unable to get out of bed.

That he was your hero makes it harder but it also leaves you the best kind of memory.

You do not have the feeling we had when my mother languished and lingered, that when it finally came it was a blessing.

We are sorry that it happened when it seemed he had it beaten. We are sorry that it happened, period. And we hope that all of you can handle it as you would like if you had considered it academically, the best way you can. Which is not easy.

This kind of situation is much on my mind for an added reason: what Lil's situation will be when we had no children to care for her and it is not possible for her remaining brother and remaining sister. Because Lil can't handle stairs, if Gloria were willing and if Lil accepted transfer to a Phila. suburb where she knows only Gloria and her family, so Gloria's split-level is out. That worries me but I've figured nothing out that I can do for her if as is likely I go first.

It sounds hackneyed but we do mean that we are sorry.

Best note: Clay has Waketh. With our sincerest regrets,

Harold