

Good morning. Thank you for coming this morning. Over the past few days, we have received such a showing of support from Robert's friends, family, and local community. Your support has meant a lot to my family in this difficult time and has helped us handle the sadness of Robert's passing. It is a reflection of Robert's influence on the people that he met - whether it was at work, at home, or in the community. Robert always had time to share his talents, his enthusiasm, and smile with all whose path he crossed. In typical Robert fashion, I had an email in my inbox last Wednesday before I even landed at the airport saying lets go to a baseball game next week. While I won't get to that game, I look back on the times Robert and I spent together over the years. We shared many happy memories growing up together in Brooklyn - going to school, playing games, helping Robert move into his college dorms. I remember many hot days carrying boxes up stairs to his dorm room. Apparently, I got so good at it Robert later dispatched me to carry an air conditioner up five flights of stair for a friend and he wasn't even there. He'd always say - "Hey kid, you can do it." We also often talked about the future - our ambitions, dreams, how we'd take care of each other and our family. Being five years younger, Robert used to tell me I'd have to help him with his walker and change his diapers. While there are many things that we will never do together, I will remember the experiences we had for the rest of my life.

For me, the events of the past few days have seemed surreal at times and the days ahead will be difficult. After today, we will be faced with moving on without Robert. He has been such a positive influence on our lives with his guidance, support, love, humbleness, and energy. But the healing process must begin.

In looking to the future, I remember back to something I said on Robert's wedding day. On that day, I read Archie Ammons' poem "Salute." The poem reads,

"May happiness pursue you, catch you often, and, should it lose you, be waiting ahead, making a clearing for you."

For me, Robert was always that force which helped steer me back on track in difficult times - to help me find that happiness. His presence in my life will be missed. While we at times saw the world differently, he always encouraged me to be myself and not to try to be him. This was a message I will always remember. Not a day will go by where I will not think about him. His influence on my life will endure. I was proud to be his brother and to have had the opportunity to contribute to his life. I can only hope that he will continue to be proud of me as I carry on. Thank you.

Andrew D. Wone

Brother of Robert E. Wone