

## FRANCINE GAIL ROSENFELD FUNERAL REMARKS – August 3, 2022

I met Fran when we both were in our late thirties. It happened in Cape May, one enchanted evening during the 1979 Labor Day weekend. Then, I saw a stranger across a crowded room and I knew then and there that I had found my true love. I laboriously pursued her – she was not easy to get – and finally won her.

We were married for forty years. Over time, I came to realize that it was not her beauty, or her intelligence, or the strength of her character that was her most outstanding feature: it was her heart. Physically, due to a birth defect, her heart was weak and required multiple treatments and constant care. Spiritually, however, her heart was a priceless golden jewel.

From an early age, she felt an urge to help those less fortunate than herself. Her childhood dream was to become a nurse. In fact, she became a social worker, assisting underprivileged children with foster care, protective services, and adoptions. Years ago, I met her supervisor during the early nineteen seventies, who related to me Fran's tireless and passionate efforts to help the children in the community. She would drive hours, day and night, over two-lane country roads, to secure the placement of a child at risk in a suitable home. She would go at all hours to unsafe neighborhoods, sometimes even before the police arrived, to rescue an abused or neglected child. In a few years, she became a hero in the eyes of the social worker community and her clients.

She continued her formal education and in 1973 received a Master's Degree in Social Work from the Catholic University of America. Her new degree, her experience, and the enthusiastic endorsement of those who knew her professionally led to her appointment in 1975 as the Child Protective Services Supervisor for the city of Alexandria, Virginia, a job which entailed leading a team that provided services to families whose children were in need of protective supervision. She held that job for seven years; she was still doing it when we first met. Our own wedding had to be postponed for a few days because she had to testify in court, as she often did, in a case involving the welfare of one of the children under her care.

I witnessed how hard she worked for the clients and how disappointed she became when funds were cut significantly so that the agency became paralyzed.

Ultimately, she quit government work in frustration in 1982 and went into private practice, where she had a successful career spanning over thirty years.

Again, she was regarded by her colleagues as among the best and most skilled social work practitioners, applying the highest standards of practice to the care of adolescents, single adults, families, and couples. Some of her former clients still contacted her for comfort and advice many years after her retirement in 2015. One of them reached out to her for help only a couple of months ago.

But there was always room in her heart to give out love. In 1999, we adopted Nastya, an eleven-year-old girl from Russia. For the following twenty-odd years, Fran showered our own child with boundless care, firm guidance and affection, helping her navigate the storms of adolescence until Nastya became the lovely young woman she is today. Fran and I were both touched and awed by the love and attention that Nastya provided her mother throughout the course of Fran's illness.

The beauty of Fran's heart was displayed outside the family as well. She had many friends at all levels of life, both on account of her community activities and arising from her numerous interests, from jewelry making to flower arranging, which she pursued with unflinching skill and good taste. In the last five days, I have received a deluge of messages of condolence with words like these: from Bolivia: "My children and I are very sorry for your loss, she was a great and lovely person, our prayers are with her;" from Virginia, "She was a great gift to all of us. She will be missed" and from California, "She was an exceptional person who will be missed."

I can truly say that Fran was a loving wife, mother, daughter, sister, aunt and friend to many people, known and beloved for her kindness, empathy, and generosity. Nastya and I will hopefully manage to live through our terrible loss, but Fran will never leave us. As my favorite song says: Once you have found a person with such a beautiful, exceptional heart, you never let her go. And we won't.

Thank you.