

To many of you, Constantine Papadakis was an innovator of higher education, a wise businessman, or a trusted friend. I've seen him as all of these things as well, but at the end of the day, he was just my dad: the man who gave me countless hugs, provided me with endless advice, and the person I would normally ask to help me when I had to make a big speech like this. Most of all, my father was a man that I loved so much and admired. So thank you for honoring my father today and coming to pay your respects. And while the death of my father has been incredibly difficult for me, I realize today as I look at all of you that I am not the only one hurting, and that we all wish we could see him one last time or have the opportunity to tell him how much he meant to us. But the number of people here today and the many letters I have received filled with love and prayers are a greater tribute to him than I think he could ever have imagined. My father would have been so honored to know that he made a difference in all of your lives. I know my dad would want today to be a day celebrating his life, a day where we can laugh about stories we remember of him or share some the lessons we learned from him.

Although I'm an only child, my father loved telling people that he had 20,000 other children—by that he meant his Drexel students. And he told people he had hundreds of thousands of extended family members across the world, and he didn't mean our Big Greek Family, he meant Drexel alumni. He took such pride in everyone involved in any capacity with Drexel—students, faculty, staff, and friends, supporters of the University, and the people of Philadelphia. He truly viewed all of you as family.

Seeing you all here today, and knowing so many of you who could not be here are watching on television or the Internet, you prove that my father's words about family were true. My mother and I feel today that we really do have the world's largest extended family, and we thank you.

Being of Greek heritage it's common to take care of family. But with respect to his Drexel family he headed, he wanted to make a difference in the lives of his big extended family. He did

that by helping some of you personally and some of you on a grander scale through Drexel, or through the Greek community, or his involvement in the city of Philadelphia. But I knew my dad for 23 years, and I never thought he truly realized how much he really changed people's lives. I'd always tell him how proud of him I was and how proud he should be, but he was so humble about it. He would tell me he was grateful to help anyone in the smallest way, and how fortunate he was to help others or make their dreams a reality, just like those who had been there for him and helped in so many different ways to make his dreams come true.

He lived for helping others, and lived for his dreams and Drexel so passionately. I think that's why he succeeded so much. He always told me, if you don't have passion for what you're doing, then you're definitely not doing it right. My mother and I joked nervously that the day he couldn't work anymore was the day he'd go. In an ironic twist of fate, only days after he stopped working, he left this world.

Maybe God wanted a university up in heaven—and God wanted the best man for the job. Knowing my father, he'd manage to convince Socrates teach philosophy, Albert Einstein to run the science department, and Alexander the Great to handle university expansion. As of course, my father would only want the best of the best working with him in heaven, as he believed he had the best of the best around him here on earth.

And although his time was too short, and we feel cheated that he was taken so quickly from us, because we know he had so many more things he wanted to do, I know that all of us are so grateful he came along at all. In some ways, he lived enough to fill hundreds and hundreds of years to come. Not many accomplish that in their lifetime.

In speaking today I wanted to give you some insight to the man my father was outside of the office or when he wasn't wearing the "Drexel University president's hat," so to speak. But the

truth is, my dad never took off that hat. Every lunch, every party, every family vacation had some tie to Drexel University or Philadelphia. And for every one of you who had the opportunity to meet my dad or hear him speak, you should know that the charisma you loved, his intelligence, and the integrity that he displayed was unwavering. It didn't matter if he spoke to the pope, the Dali lama, a Drexel student, or to my mom and me, he was always the same person.

Another insight to the man I called daddy was that he lived by his own set of rules. We liked to call them the "Papadakis Laws," and these are real—seriously, he had them written down:

1. Believe in miracles, just don't try and schedule them.
2. Learn from the mistakes of others, you'll never live long enough to make them all yourself.
3. If you can't beat them, join them, and then beat them.
4. When given a choice, take both.
5. Patience is a virtue, but persistence to the point of success is a blessing.
6. If it's worth doing, it's got to be done Right Now.
7. (He sure proved this one.) Multiple projects lead to multiple successes.

Another Papadakis Law is, don't just let things happen, **MAKE** them happen. And if you leave with anything from knowing the man, know he believed that you have the power to do anything with hard work and truly believing in yourself. Not just having hope and faith, but truly believing. And although some might say, with all his hard work and believing, he still wasn't able to overcome death, I have to disagree. As I look around here today, and I see all the people he has affected, I realize he'll be alive forever through all of you. He lives in every incredible memory that we have of him, in every life that was touched by his intensity and vision, in all the wonderful things you all will go on to do because of his influence and inspiration. He lives in every student whose diploma says Drexel University, and still lives in every one of his

dreams that are yet to be carried out. So in the true essence of the word death, he's not gone. He'll only be gone in passing. But he'll continue being a part of us forever, and a part of a city that he loved.

I really love you daddy—and while kids don't always get so close to their parents, I considered you my best friend since the first moments I could remember. I was 2 years old and we lay together on a hammock while you told me stories. That's my first memory of you. I was in awe of you from that day forward. I spent the rest of your life always by your side through everything, learning from you, being guided by you, and hoping one day to be like you. Although I will miss your stories and your voice that had this magical ability to soothe everything, I wouldn't trade the 23 years I had with you, or even the pain of losing you, for a thousand years with anyone else. I know everyone here and those watching who had some time with you feel the exact same way.

You left us valiantly into the sunset, just like the Greek warriors you'd tell me stories about as a child. One day we'll lay in hammocks with our children and tell stories of you and what you meant to us.

You'll be with us forever.

We love you always.