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*Julia F. Bator*†

I love the piece that Ellen wrote about her dad that you have in your programs, and I'm grateful to Ellen, Julie, and Martha for asking me and my brothers to add something to this service. We were very fortunate to know Phil these last four years. In a short time he became a dear part of our family. He managed to move into our lives without displacing anything, and, by expanding our lives, he made a space of his own that now seems very empty.

I first knew the Kurlands through Mary Jane, who used to come up the back elevator to chat with Mom, to bring groceries, and always to welcome us to the Powhatan when we came home for vacation. We all loved Mary Jane and thought of Phil as a mysterious figure that lurked in the apartment downstairs. After Mary Jane died, Mom would sometimes report by phone that she'd been to a concert with Phil or had sat next to him at a party, but I was surprised when, the next summer in New Hampshire, letters began to arrive with a return address of Apartment 3B. The letters began to come with regularity. Then there were phone calls, flowers, crossword puzzles—and suddenly, I found that Phil had become a daily part of our New Hampshire lives, without even being there. When Mom went back to Chicago in the fall, she went back to someone who had earned her friendship and trust in the gentlest way possible.

Later, when Mom and Phil were engaged, she called me to say that she was putting all of Daddy's photographs away—because she didn't think Phil would like to see them in his new home. But when I came out to Chicago after their wedding, I saw pictures of Dad and Mary Jane all over the apartment, and that was, to me, the best indicator of Phil's understanding and care for Mom and for all six of us children. In becoming our stepfather, Phil took our family for what it already was, and—as Ellen has written, too—his loving and complete acceptance was an extraordinary gift.

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† The writer, Philip Kurland's stepdaughter, lives in New York. These remarks were given at a memorial for Philip Kurland on May 4, 1996.

While talking about this service, Tom and Mike and I all recalled a story about Phil and Kate Bator, Tom's daughter. When Kate was two, she and Phil were lying in the big lounge chair on the porch up in New Hampshire, and Kate got very close to his face and said loudly "I love you Pheeeel!" I know that many times I used Kate's line to say to Phil how I felt about him. It seemed just right—a special way of saying it that didn't touch upon things that I wanted to reserve just for my parents. Phil was fatherly without ever trying to be our dad, observing us from an approving distance, always supportive and never intrusive. I don't think his was an easy role to play, but I can't imagine anyone doing it with more grace. Many of you know that Phil used to carry around a card in his pocket that said "don't embarrass Al-lie"—an unnecessary but sincere expression of his desire to do the right thing. How wonderfully kind and how perfectly Phil. He gave us what children, whether stepchildren or children-children always need—unconditional affection, good advice, and unfailing reminders to be careful.