



TERRY DILLNER, CGCS 1955-2005

I stood in the warm morning sun and felt the sweat trickle down my back. The minister had just asked the pallbearers to remove our corsages and place them on the casket. A lady with a coffee can full of grass seed then stepped up to the end of the casket. Everyone attending was asked to take a handful and sprinkle the seeds over the casket. Connie, Terry's wife, was last.

Just about an hour earlier, she gave this eulogy:

If you ask anyone who knew Terry to describe him using only one word, the first thing they would say is "hard worker."

For 33 years in the golf course industry, he loved his work out on the course. Terry always strove for excellence, took pride in a job well done and instilled these principles in anyone he knew. "Good enough is good enough" is NOT a motto he lived by. Everything had to be perfect, or as close to perfection as the budget, manpower and Mother Nature would allow. And even those obstacles wouldn't daunt him . . . he somehow always found a way to "get it done," long before that phrase became popular. He always referred to the course as **his** golf course and would protect it as fiercely as a mother protects her cubs.

Terry loved home remodeling projects. He was always working on something, making things better for me and the kids. He always knew he was in trouble when I would begin a phrase with, "Wouldn't it be nice?" because that meant he'd have another project to add to his "Honey-Do" list. And then once into the project, when I started a phrase with, "Can I make a suggestion?" he knew he was in trouble because I thought of new ways to make the project more complicated than it already was. But he never complained because he enjoyed the challenge, learning along the way and taking pride for a job well done when it was finished.

As a father, he was their hero. He would always stand up for them, running interference between me and the kids. I was the disciplinarian and he always leveled the field with kindness, gentleness, understanding and tolerance—both behind-the-scenes as well as up front.

As a husband, Terry was my best friend. He was my soul mate, life partner, lover, confidante and equal. He truly was my "better half." Terry gave me balance and taught me tolerance and patience. We thought alike and had the same ethics and principles. It was my honor to have such a wonderful man love me as he did. I will be eternally thankful for that one blind date back in 1981 that led to a lifetime of happiness and joy. I am truly a better person because of him.

Terry wasn't a religious man. He did believe in God but hated the politics behind organized religion. He believed in treating others as you wanted to be treated, work hard and do the best job you can, be truthful—your word is your word, and respect is earned—not demanded. He always said God doesn't close a door without opening a window somewhere. I just pray I recognize that window once it's opened.

In closing, one saying he was fond of was, "Leave things better than you found them." During his brief but full life, he accomplished this with flying colors. His golf courses, his homes, his family, friends, coworkers, his children and myself . . . we are all better for knowing him.

Connie is one hell of a lady. Terry loved his profession. He had an infectious way of inspiring people, just by watching him work. I have said this many times over the years. The week I started at the Evanston Golf Club, I knew what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I will miss him, as well as his wife and three children. Thanks dear friend.



A memorial service for Terry G. Dillner, CGCS, will take place on Sunday, September 18, 2005 at 2:00 p.m. EDT at Arbor Hills Country Club, 1426 Arbor Hills Road, Jackson, Michigan, 49201. Please call the clubhouse at 517-750-1400 if you plan on attending so we can get an approximate estimate for banquet requirements.