

Scott Hoover Wilder

Good afternoon-----I would like to thank Nancy and her family for the honor to say a few words about a great friend, Scott Wilder.

I've known Scott for a long time going back to Little League days as a member of our archrival the Jaguars, working at The Arrow Restaurant, and playing basketball at the Assumption gym on Saturdays. He helped make me an honorary alumnus of Staples High School. So many of the good, close friends I have today are because of my friendship with him. I'll always be thankful for that.

At Christmas, I traditionally give books as a gift to those in my family. For the last few years, I would search high and low at Barnes and Noble for a book that had plenty of pictures in it that was related to a subject close to Hoover's heart - like ladies swimwear. That wry smile that came over his face when he saw the book covers was priceless.

There are two books I never had to give Hoover as a gift because he was the living embodiment of their titles:

One was *Profiles in Courage* by John F. Kennedy. Scott never complained about the fate dealt to him 33 years ago. He was a role model for all of us. Scott was not the only one in his family blessed with this gift. His mother, Nancy, and dad, Milo, are two of the most remarkable people I have ever met. Mrs. Wilder, you have the love and admiration of everyone here.

The other book was *Band of Brothers* which is based on the story of a group of individuals that rallied together and survived 3 years together as a combat unit in World War II. Hoover had a tremendous band of brothers and sisters that rallied to him but more importantly; he would always rally to one of us whenever someone is in need. I'll never forget how often he called me to find out how my father was when he got ill and passed away in 1999.

Just a few comments about our friendship....We shared a lot of common interests like the same sports teams, the Yankee, Giants, and Rangers. Then there was music-----It was anything that included Eric Clapton or his house band, the Allman Brothers. I'll always remember the road trip to Oakdale in the summer of '99 and sitting in the special seating section next to him when Dicky Betts was playing the classic song "Blue Sky." A classic song and classic memory.

Hoover had this other great passion, Auto Racing. He and his fellow motor head Kash took me down to a NASCAR Truck Race at some track in the middle of nowhere – Flemington, New Jersey. I sat next to Hoover in seats that were virtually front row. When they dropped the flag to start the race, the noise nearly blew me out of my seat. He took one look at me and started laughing. He had more fun watching me cringing every time the trucks roared by or bumped into each other. If that was not enough of a baptism by fire, I had to drive the van back home. It was my first time at the wheel of the van. Hoover should get in first ballot in the 'Back Seat Driver' Hall of Fame . I think he gave up on my conversion to being a motor head after the trip to the Annual NASCAR banquet. Scott and his pal, Kash, wanted to go to the Waldorf Astoria in New York where the banquet was held. The idea was to hang in the Waldorf's Grand Lobby while all these NASCAR celebrities were making their way through and to get a picture taken with them. I was the guy holding the camera. Now I knew about Dale Earnhardt and Jeff Gordon. But I had no idea how big Bill Elliot was. You would think I might have gotten a clue by seeing all the #94 cars in Hoover's room or the bumper sticker on the van. No. Well no sooner did I leave the two of them alone to find the men's room,, Bill Elliot came out of the elevator right next to the Hoover and Kash. "Where's Johnny?" "Where's the camera?" "Where's Johnny?"----I came back---Imagine the flack I got---I took 24 perfect pictures but no Bill Elliot picture. It was a long car ride home with the verbal abuse flying, We still laughed about that up till the other day.....

The biggest meeting ground of our friendship had to be golf and the special place that is Longshore. I'll leave the patio bar stories for someone else. I never had a chance to play a

round with Hoover but I was part of the “Dream Teams” that he was the captain of for the PAL and Fire Department tournaments. Those were big days for him. I’m glad we won the last one played in 2007. He was always with us—every shot of the way. It was like the Masters and the U.S. rolled into one. Can you imagine him giving an All State player like Bob Uly swing tips or a pep talk?

Scott, being the guy he was, had this great idea to start a fantasy golf league that I gave him a little help running for the past 15 years. It was his way of keeping good friends together and having a good time. Just like his Labor Day and Peppermill parties. The annual draft day at his house was a priceless time for all of us, especially the one we had last month. We had a lot of laughs

One last golf story...Most of my friends know that I have a habit of playing until it’s pitch dark like the kid in the Foot Joy commercial. It was in 1998 in the fall and Scott came out to follow me around the 10th hole at Longshore’s halfway house. By the time we got to the 17th tee, there were cars passing us by with their headlights on. This guy pulled over in his station wagon.. It was my father. He took one look at us and said ,”Don’t you guys know it’s dark out !” We all had a big laugh. The next day, I was talking to my father and he said, “You know, Scott’s gotta be a good friend to be following you around in the dark.” -----All I could say that day and especially today is that no truer words were spoken.

Thank you,