

429 West Elm Street
San Diego, California 92101
The United States Of America
+1.858.733.0891 | stloescher@primarts.com

**In Memoriam:
The Reverend Glenn Stuart Allison 29,742 Days of Life.
May 5, 2007, All Souls Episcopal Church**

On behalf of our extended family near and far, thank you for coming together today to celebrate and reflect upon the life of Glenn Stuart Allison.

It would be easy for me to take this opportunity to deliver a typical family reflection of a string of loving memories; there are plenty to be recounted. However, we are not an ordinary family, and as you know, Glenn Allison was not an ordinary man. My grandfather and I both acknowledged that we never had the opportunity to get to know each other as well as we had hoped, but we understood each other precisely. With love, admiration, and truth to guide me, I have chosen to explore a very different endeavor. This is what he would have wanted. And with this preface complete, I will begin.

For days after my grandfather's death I contemplated two numbers: 29,742 and 300. As his grandson I was flooded with recollections and emotions, but remained focused on a singular thought: how was I to accomplish the task of providing insight into this man now at rest, deliver a message on behalf of this family, and convey his final message to you. The essence of this challenge lies in understanding those numbers: 29,742 and 300.

It is a monumental task: to encompass the Alpha, the Omega, all that fell in-between, with the hope of providing insight. Careful examination of every facet of his life is necessary to understand his motivations, achievements, and sacrifices. So I outlined and sketched, remaining undaunted. Pursuing a solution in the spirit of how he lived; in his own words from his bed at hospice, "I did the best I knew how."

How do you outline his family's structure?

- Do I start with his youth and the warm summers at Lake Donnell Michigan or with the cold sobering sorrow he felt for his fathers' alcoholism?
- With his struggle to find acceptance from his mother or his developmentally challenged sibling?
- Without flow-charts and visual aides how to demonstrate the complex infrastructure of his five siblings, four marriages, two children, two grand children, two great grand children, his two step children, and five step-grand children. All were loved, but with relationships flawed.

How do you sketch his motivations?

- The thirst for self-worth and belonging that was never quenched.
- The gravity of guilt that weighed upon him over his part in the deployment of the atomic bombs over Japan. In a single flash a pacifist was born and driven into a lifetime of making amends for that, which was beyond his control.
- The dichotomy of his life, the moral pursuits and immoral evocative.

How do you delineate his accomplishments?

- The peace demonstrations.
- His work with holocaust victims and as a civil rights advocate.
- A lobbyist and pioneer of the Nation Association of Social Workers.
- His work on Title 20.
- His enabling Medicare coverage for people with end stage renal disease
- His advocacy for those with out articulated voices or dreams.
- There are simply too many to name in short time we have together today.

How do you explain that his triumphs came at a tremendous personal sacrifice?

- Three previous marriages. My grandmother Anne Allison of Cambridge MA, Lee Allison (Deceased), and Elizabeth Keith of San Diego.
- The diminished time and attention to his children, my mother Lesley Anne Allison and his son Glenn William Allison.
- Most certainly his dedication to service put strains on his marriage over the last decade with Patt Allison and her children and grand children.
- It was the collective price we paid so he could practice his personal theology of the rapture of suffering and bliss, so he might further the greater good.

Every outline I made returned me to those unyielding numbers of permanence and the question. How do you go about compressing the 29,742 days of Glenn Stuart Allison's life into the 300 seconds I have been allotted to speak here today? Furthermore, provide insight into whom?

"If all the world's a stage" then which of the dozens of roles that he played should I provide insight to? Is it not most appropriate to label him as he always was, a human: perfectly flawed, drawing strength from his weaknesses, an impatient procrastinator . . . a futurist with a vision of peace, love, and equality for all.

Like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle each event and role he played was important. However, that which is logical as a whole often times makes little sense when broken down into its individual components. Herein lies the touchstone of anguish that many of those who loved him have had to bear. We are but one piece of a complex picture, not the focal point of a life more ordinary. Many still struggle with how they fit in.

The only insight I can offer is that a life of vast scope deserves a better fate than that of the body. It should not be scaled down to fit into a box or laid to rest. It cannot be diminished by fire or understood in brevity. Therefore, I resolved that this statement should not be a representative package of convenience for visitation, or a quick resolution to ease the pain. That he should be left as the beautiful enigma he was; ours to discover, mythologize, and internalize. To use as a continuing voice of guidance and support to suit our individual needs.

Rather than make a family statement I will make a family request. That as we have gathered to commit his remains to eternity, let us take this opportunity to make a commitment to dedicate more of our own lives to the work he began. However, be aware that to do so you must become involved. As my grandfather repeatedly demonstrated, no social issue can be addressed by financial endorsement alone. It requires presence, persistence, and the propensity to endure the slow process of real change. The results of your dedication will be a far better world for us to pass onto our children, just as the world he left us is better than the one to which he was born. For this family a continued commitment to engage these issues would be a palatable amends for our collective sacrifice.

My grandfather's final message was his last words, entrusted to me to deliver to you. Appropriate and gracious, they are a fitting closure to the life of a man who felt privileged to participate in the lives of so many. Those words were "Thank you." As for how they were intended for individual interpretation, I am confident that each of us will find our own resolution in due course.

29,742 days, the Reverend Glenn Stuart Allison, a life of dedication, leadership, service, triumph, and sacrifice. Looking into the void left by his passing I can only say "Papa . . . I am proud beyond words . . . thank you for the lineage, I will protect the heritage."