



Bernardo Villanueva

MAY 15, 1948 - JAN 18, 2014



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Elisa Ginter posted:

Celebration of Life My husband, Bernardo, always joked that he wanted to have his funeral before he died so that he could enjoy what everyone was saying about him and visit with those that he deeply cared about but often didn't get the opportunity to see. He felt that a funeral should be a celebration of a life, rather than a mourning of one's death. From the moment I met my husband Bernardo, I was mesmerized by his charm and unique disposition. His smile was infectious and his playful humor was a welcomed change from the mundane. Education was an important concept for Bernardo- both personally and professionally. When I met him, He was in the process of writing his PhD dissertation while working full time for the state of Michigan as a Bilingual consultant for all the school systems in Michigan. Born and raised in Chile, Spanish was his first language and French was his second. English came in at third and then there was some Italian, Portuguese, German, Latin, and a little Hebrew. He knew a lot about art history and often when we went to an art museum he would end up teaching the docents about the meaning of the artwork rather than the other way around. He was well versed in literature and poetry- he had read and studied Shakespeare and all the classics and was himself a superb writer of poetry and short story. He told me that Pablo Neruda, a Chilean Poet and 1971 Nobel Prize winner in literature, had read some of his work and encouraged him to continue to write, telling him that he had "great potential". Unfortunately, the politics in Chile did not lend themselves well to Bernardo's ideas of equality for all people and after going to the US to complete a master's degree, he found that it was not safe for him to return home. As his Visa was running out, he took the first PhD program that would not create a gap in his education and jeopardize his stay in the US and so he ended up in Lansing, Michigan where I eventually met him while attending a Hillel fundraiser. As my first cousin, Wendy, remembers it, "When Judy, (my mom), gushed about Elisa's new boyfriend Bernardo, her joy was effusive and seemed a bit over the top. Frankly we doubted that anyone could be that great and thought that our hardworking and smart cousin Elisa was being swept off her feet by some older Latin Don Juan, and we worried that the relationship might interfere with her goal of becoming a doctor. However, upon meeting Bernardo, he was every bit as handsome and charming as described. He really listened and made everyone feel special. His optimism was contagious; he always had time for others and was a supportive and loving husband to Elisa. Bernardo taught me how to dress professionally and bought me my first women's suit as well as helped me pick out blouses to match. He wrote poems to me and my favorite thing was when he would translate Spanish songs on the radio into English for me to understand their meaning. Although he could not get the hang of the disco fever moves or the "swing" he was a hot Latin dancer. I remember when we were first married (in 1984) that we were at a dance club and after we danced the night away he got an offer to try out for the "foxy Frenchmen" which was a prototype all male strip revue! We had what would become our last dance on December 16th, 2013 when Bernardo proudly let go of his walker to sway to a romantic Latin song with me in his arms. It wasn't of the caliber that we were used to dancing in years gone by, but I remember I had tears in my eyes because I realized how hard it was for him to try to dance but how very happy it made him. That night he told Daniel and I, "how could I not have a wonderful time- I saw the sunset, had a beautiful view of the city and danced with my wife".

February 7 at 6:11 PM



Elisa Ginter posted:

(continued) Bernardo left the State of Michigan job to take on more "challenging" jobs and ended up in owning a Foreign Adoption Company where he found and placed orphaned or unwanted children with suitable American parents. He made some beautiful matches. As our years of marriage continued, Bernardo found himself transitioning back to his roots as a professor and teacher and having to take on many of the motherly roles as I was making more money and working more hours. He cooked, took the kids to their carpools and sports and was always there to talk to them with love and patience and to teach them right from wrong. This was his gift. He not only did this at home, but after reading numerous facebook entries, I realize that he practiced what he preached and was the "father or mentor" to many of his students at school as well. Lastly, I want to comment on his humor. He knew how to put people in their place but in such a way that they didn't even know that he was making fun of them. We all loved when the phone rang and it was a solicitor. I always felt bad for the solicitor and cringed as Bernardo took to the phone as we all listened while he gave that person the ride of their life. He would play roles like the old, deaf, Jewish man or the gay male who was afraid that his partner would be jealous of the caller- and he wouldn't let the solicitor hang up. he would make them suffer. All the kids and I would be smirking. It was the best and I will surely miss his antics. My aunt Elaine from Calif recalls speaking to him and wishing him a happy birthday and he replied "every day is a happy birthday". Bernardo used to say that everything is done on balance. For example, a Cat Scan helps discover and follow some illnesses which is good, but it also is radiation and too many scans many not be good. Bernardo was not dealt a fair deck when it came to good medical outcomes. All his doctors over the past 20 months marveled at his perseverance and will to live life in spite of this. A few weeks into his final plight of poor medical outcomes, I came across his final facebook entry. It was dated Dec 30, 2013- placed only a few hours before the detrimental stroke that finally took him from us. It was a writing by George Carlin called "Something to Ponder". I will end my celebration of Bernardo's life with a few of the lines from this piece as they so well fit his situation. It was as if was letting us know that he knew what lay ahead but that he was at peace. Here goes, "The paradox of our time in history is that we have more degrees but less sense, more knowledge, but less judgment, more experts yet more problems, more medicine, but less wellness. We've learned how to make a living, but not a life. We've added years to life, not life to years. We've learned to rush, but not to wait...we live in a time when technology can bring this letter to you, and a time when you can choose either to share this insight or to just hit delete. Remember to spend some time with your loved ones, because they are not going to be around forever, remember, say a kind word to someone who looks up to you in awe, because that little person soon will grow up and leave your side, remember, to give a warm hug to the one next to you, because that is the only treasure you can give with your heart and it doesn't cost a cent.. Remember to hold hands and cherish the moment for someday that person will not be there again, give time to love, give time to speak and give time to share precious thoughts in your mind and always remember, life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by those moments that take our breath away. Still teaching all of us- I love you Bernardo and you will be missed.

February 7 at 5:52 PM



Tribute Wall

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Elisa Ginter posted:

Lit a candle in memory of Bernardo Villanueva

February 7 at 6:07 PM



Elisa Ginter posted:

continuation:Bernardo left the State of Michigan job to take on more "challenging" jobs and ended up in owning a Foreign Adoption Company where he found and placed orphaned or unwanted children with suitable American parents. He made some beautiful matches. As our years of marriage continued, Bernardo found himself transitioning back to his roots as a professor and teacher and having to take on many of the motherly roles as I was making more money and working more hours. He cooked, took the kids to their carpools and sports and was always there to talk to them with love and patience and to teach them right from wrong. This was his gift. He not only did this at home, but after reading numerous facebook entries, I realize that he practiced what he preached "and was the "father or mentor" to many of his students at school as well.Lastly, I want to comment on his humor. He knew how to put people in their place "but in such a way that they didn't even know that he was making fun of them. We all loved when the phone rang and it was a solicitor. I always felt bad for the solicitor and cringed as Bernardo took to the phone as we all listened while he gave that person the ride of their life. He would play roles like the old, deaf, Jewish man or the gay male who was afraid that his partner would be jealous of the caller- and he wouldn't let the solicitor hang up!.he would make them suffer. All the kids and I would be smirking. It was the best and I will surely miss his antics.My aunt Elaine from Calif recalls speaking to him and wishing him a happy birthday and he replied "every day is a happy birthday". Bernardo used to say that everything is done on balance. For example, a Cat Scan helps discover and follow some illnesses which is good, but it also is radiation and too many scans many not be good. Bernardo was not dealt a fair deck when it came to good medical outcomes. All his doctors over the past 20 months marveled at his perseverance and will to live life in spite of this. A few weeks into his final plight of poor medical outcomes, I came across his final facebook entry. It was dated Dec 30, 2013- placed only a few hours before the detrimental stroke that finally took him from us. It was a writing by George Carlin called "Something to Ponder". I will end my celebration of Bernardo's life with a few of the lines from this piece as they so well fit his situation. It was as if he was letting us know that he knew what lay ahead and that he was at peace. Here goes, " The paradox of our time in history".is that we have more degrees but less sense, more knowledge, but less judgment, more experts yet more problems, more medicine, but less wellness!We've learned how to make a living, but not a life. We've added years to life, not life to years!We've learned to rush, but not to wait,..we live in a time when technology can bring this letter to you, and a time when you can choose either to share this insight or to just hit delete! Remember to spend some time with your loved ones, because they are not going to be around forever, remember, say a kind word to someone who looks up to you in awe, because that little person soon will grow up and leave your side, remember, to give a warm hug to the one next to you, because that is the only treasure you can give with your heart and it doesn't cost a cent.. Remember to hold hands and cherish the moment for someday that person will not be there again, give time to love, give time to speak and give time to share precious thoughts in your mind and always remember, life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by those moments that take our breath away. Still teaching all of us- I love you Bernardo and you will be missed.

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Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Bernardo by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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