

## Greg's Memorial, February 11, 2014

Beth Battle Anderson

I stand here this evening as one of the many “Dees’ Mentees” out there in the world. Some have even said I might as well have been the Founding President of the club, though certainly I was not the first, and no doubt there are many, many “co-founders” and “co-presidents” out there. Like Ed described, Greg’s death has left a real void in my life, and I am pretty certain nobody else will ever fill it. Nor should they.

As I contemplated this particular moment yesterday, I struggled with what would be left to say about Greg’s life and legacy after so much has been shared by so many here today, and also on the memorial website. And the consistent thought that kept rising to the top of my mind was that I was just like so many of you, and so very many others who could not be here with us today - someone who loved, and was loved by, Greg.

I certainly don’t mean this in any romantic way; nor was this love effusive or overly emotive or expressive. That, of course, would not be the humble, gracious, kind, self-effacing Greg we have heard so much about. No, for me, Greg’s love was simply the expression of his humanity, and of his love of and for people and the human spirit. He showed it through the time and kindness he gave to almost anyone who sought it. He showed it through the gifts he gave to mark special occasions – truly I have never known anyone to take more pride and pleasure in giving unique and thoughtful gifts, and I am fortunate to have a home and office scattered with them, each holding a unique story and message from Greg. He showed it through his love of teaching and of sharing ideas with others. And he showed it through not only his humorous email exchanges and signatures with close friends like Ed, but also through the many, many emails he signed off to those he knew well, and sometimes not quite so, simply but powerfully with the words Yours, Greg. He gave himself to all of us.

Given all that, almost ironically, as both Ed and David touched upon earlier, Greg had a visceral negative reaction to the common conception of charity. Yet to me, he actually embodied the TRUE meaning of the Latin root of charity - “caritas” – love for humankind, love for all. And I believe it was this love that underpinned what he felt was a moral imperative to help make the world a more just, inclusive society.

In a website post very early this morning, Greg's Harvard and Bridgespan colleague Jeff Bradach eloquently articulated something I have been reflecting on myself in recent weeks - that Greg was "an astonishing example of the "one man theory" of scaling impact, where a single, special person radiates ideas and impact that literally span the globe and change the sector's thinking and action." I would simply add that perhaps at the crux of that theory is a special person who radiates not only groundbreaking ideas, but also authentic love.

So while it might be tempting to think of Greg as being lonely and alone, as being burdened with pain and suffering, or even as being all about pragmatism and problem-solving, that is not how I will remember Greg. For Greg loved. And he was loved. And just like his words, and his wisdom, and his pioneering work, his love will endure. And I for one find solace in the hope that he knew and knows how deeply loved he was. We love you Greg Dees, and just as you are an indelible part of who we are, a part of each of us will always be...forever Yours.

PAUSE

Now we will share in Greg's love of music, and in particular of the heart and sounds of Harry Pickens – a Louisville musician, educator, and social entrepreneur who also loved, and was loved by, Greg. Harry was very sad he was unable to be here today to perform in person, but he sent the following recording to play in Greg's honor and memory.