Robert Krency

ENG 101 – Spedaliere

Assignment 2 – Draft

The greatest man I’ve had the pleasure of knowing would be my grandfather. Every summer, I would vacation with my grandparents to their condo in Siesta Key, Florida for a week or two. I would spend the time by the pool, playing cards, reading a book, or fishing with my grandfather. This was all possible because of his hard work and success, and my admiration for him has only grown over the years. I learned his work ethic, his compassion for others, and his outlook on life that lead to him being successful and respected.

The son of immigrants from then Czechoslovakia, Robert ‘Mickey’ Krency would grow up poor in Greene County, Pennsylvania during the Great Depression. He never finished high school, but would leave home to join the Army after the conclusion of World War II. He would meet his wife, Mary Joan, and they would marry in 1949. The couple would soon welcome their first of three sons. Shortly after, Mickey would be deployed to Korea as part of the United States’s efforts in aiding South Korea. After his return, he would find work in a small bakery, starting as a dishwasher and working his way up.

Taking the knowledge he learned there, he would go on to open Krency’s Bakery in Washington, PA in November of 1959. This turned into a very successful bakery over the years, culminating at its peak with several locations in both Washington and Greene counties. His legacy continues to this day, with my last name being instantly recognizable to those familiar with the delicious goodies that he made so popular.

Growing up, I would watch him at the bakery working hard, expecting as much from his employees as he did of himself. I have often heard tales from him and my family of his late nights, early mornings, and long holiday hours. His hard work was always the moral of the story.

The bakery was not the only place I saw Mickey work hard; our vacations were filled with fishing on his twenty-eight-foot fishing boat that he kept immaculate. He would be up early, sometimes before dawn, preparing for a fishing trip. His to-do list for these trips, before I even made it out of bed, often included cleaning the boat, getting fuel and bait, and grocery shopping for our lunches. Before I was old enough to fend for myself with a fishing pole, he would spend more time tending to my rod and catches than he would his own. Our legal catches would be brought back home, fileted on the dock, and fried for dinner. After he cleaned the boat again, of course.

He always his hands out to help his family in whatever way he could. All his grandchildren, including myself, had access to a college fund. Even outside of his immediate family, he made time for everyone. I still recall a funny story of him buying my uncle’s farm so that uncle could buy an ugly, pink house for his wife. He left me with the lesson that helping others when you have room on your shoulders is a virtue.

Much of the time I learned these stories at the weekly poker game, where Mickey would often let me play his hands for him. He always hosted dinner and this poker game every Sunday, as a time to bring the extended family together to have fun and share. Beforehand, he would be up early cleaning the house; we always joked he liked bleach more than water. Much like his house, he would always be put together and dressed for the occasion.

His bakery whites were always clean, his evening clothes were always proper, and he only ever used the finest things. Mickey always made sure he wasn’t the only one that way. The entire family followed his suit, and showed up looking the part.

As I’ve watched him grow old, I’ve seen the respect given to him by all of his friends and family. Even into his late eighties, I would see him cleaning dishes at the bakery; the same place he started nearly seventy years prior. His love for him family has always been evident, and he was with his wife until she passed a week before their seventieth anniversary. It’s these reasons why I admire him still today, as I watch him at 92 grow weaker and slower every year. I know that even as he loses track of time, he worked hard so that he could give everyone else around him a good life. We’ve all lived a blessed life by him.