

Anyone in marketing can tell you the importance of a name. It is the first thing you know about a business and often helps to define it. Everything from meaning to ease of pronunciation has to be considered.

At the first property I owned the name was inherited, and since it fit so well, I kept it. The Butternut Tree was a yellow Victorian B&B with, you guessed it, a butternut tree in the backyard. It looked like a little doll house. Pretty but modest, it was exactly the image of the house the name conjured up.

Touchstone Manor was a natural choice for my second property. The house is a Georgian Revival, definitely worthy of "Manor". There are three reasons behind Touchstone; it is clad in stone, there is the Shakespearean connection (Touchstone is a character in As You Like It), and I liked that a touchstone is another word for a benchmark.

It took me months to find the perfect name for the hotel even though it was right in front of me all along.

For those that don't know me, The Bruce will probably bring to mind the Ontario wilderness of the Bruce Peninsula. Cedar trees and limestone. Black bears and white-tailed deer.

While I like those associations, The Bruce Hotel is actually named after my dad. He died in the summer of 2010 when a liver transplant came too late. He was there for the first two properties and at the beginning of the epic journey to the third. He won't be physically there for the opening, and yet he will be everywhere.

For a little insight into who he was, here is my eulogy (July 2010).

This is not what he wanted. He didn't want a fuss. He didn't want lots of people to fawn all over him. But that is the essence of who he was. Humble. He always underestimated the impact that he had on people.... on this world.

He had to take pills for his colitis before each meal. He hid them away like a squirrel storing nuts. They are turning up in pockets and drawers and the centre consoles of the cars. For weeks, months, years we will continue to find them, and they will remind us of him. I think his work, his generosity is very similar. Over the weeks, months, years we will meet people and see things that will remind us of his legacy.

There is Bruce the businessman, philanthropist, mentor. But there was so much more to the man...

He liked to draw happy faces on birthday cards and they always had ears. Sometimes glasses, and sometimes hair... but always ears.

He was a voracious reader but hated library books. He often yelled at the TV during sporting events. A curse word which I won't repeat here but rhymes with sit.

He never ever fell asleep on the sofa but often “rested his eyes”.

He was obsessed with gas prices. Even if we were travelling and without a car to fill up, he would point out the good deals.

At Christmas he would hide one of his presents and when everyone else was done he would taunt us “I’ve still got a present.” Preferring order to chaos he would make sure the paper was thrown out as each present was unwrapped and often got the vacuum out part way through. His favorite word was "outrageous," especially in reference to government and taxes. (The HST came into effect the day before he died - it is a good thing he didn't see the HST on the funeral expenses... outrageous.)

He thought taxi charges were outrageous and gave my mom and I a lecture for taking a \$7 cab ride to the hospital on the morning of his surgery. You know, on the afternoon he died in my rush to get to the hospital I threw a \$20 at the driver for that same \$7 fare and didn't wait for the change. I am actually surprised he didn't wake up just to tell me off.

He could cook two things... so if you went to have dinner at my parents you probably either had the salmon baked on a bed of potatoes or the dijon roasted beef tenderloin.

He loved a gourmet meal but was equally happy with a quarter white with fries. Or chocolate Turtles that had been kept in the fridge. Or an apple fritter.

Over the course of his career, he had met presidents and heads of state - they didn't faze him... but he would get giddy if he met a sports star or an actor.

For the last eight years he was my date for Stratford Festival opening week where he would complain constantly about having to wear a tuxedo. This year he was too sick to go. It was tough to be there without him. Every show had a line that hit me, but two in particular stand out.

In ‘As You Like it’ Rosalind is told “Thou art thy father’s daughter.” I am. I am my father’s daughter. And nothing could make me prouder.

On the Friday night, Jaques Brel opened. And there is a song...

Ne me quitte pas.

Ne me quitte pas.

Ne me quitte pas.

I love you.

I miss you.