

Stephen Probyn

Remarks by Mike Crawley, April 7 2008

I first met Stephen about five years ago. We both shared a business interest in wind power and a fascination with politics. Both of us could be intoxicated by the bare glimmer of an opportunity and were full of unbridled optimism that any impediments could be overcome.

Stephen's intellect and warmth were immediately evident. As business meetings often drifted into story telling tangents, the breadth of his experiences and accomplishments were clear. However, it took much longer for me to see what was, for me at least, the real essence of Stephen.

Certain moments stand out – not the most earth shattering necessarily but the memorable nonetheless.

At one of our first meetings, there was a broad discussion, with many around the table, about structuring a particular deal. Stephen got going on a wonderful riff which was at first about saving the deal but as he got more excited, it became about creating an even better deal...perhaps the best deal ever! His enthusiasm was drawing us all in until a single and determined voice began repeating "No Stephen" in increasing volume until all our attention was taken from Stephen's enticing narrative. It was Mike Kosiancic, who had worked with Stephen for years. Like nothing I'd seen before, Mike and Stephen had it out. Now after that, the deal was saved, was better than before, although perhaps no longer the best deal ever. Mike and Stephen were one of the best, most productive and most symbiotic relationships I have seen between a boss and their report. Stephen had no issue with some who worked for him pushing back. And Mike was always the most loyal and supportive employee.

Another memory takes me back to a wind energy conference, where after a long afternoon of meetings that I had done with Stephen and various turbine vendors, we decided to get a bite to eat at a fairly average restaurant. The place was full of convention goers, most of whom were swilling beer or maybe the house red. As soon as we sat down, Stephen suggested we order a bucket of mussels and then grabbed the wine list. At that moment, I thought, "Oh god I am going to have to drink some lousy white wine (not being a big fan of white wine)", cause you're not about to order a full bodied 'cab' with mussels. Next thing I see, Steve has pulled out his TREO (blackberry like device) and I thought "oh great, now he's going to check his emails through dinner". But no, downloaded on his TREO he had a full wine guide and in this mediocre restaurant he managed to find and order the most exquisite chardonnay I've ever had and gave me the full history of that wine.

On the Erie Shores Wind Farm, which my company developed and Stephen provided the financing, there was a seemingly intractable impediment to closing the financing a week before an absolute deadline. The County was being very clear they would not move on key permit. Stephen offered to come down and help with the County politicians and staff. Honestly, I couldn't say no but I was full of dread anticipating the meeting as my two worlds were about to collide....the sophisticated Toronto financier was about to meet with the, no-nonsense rural politicians and planners. At the meeting, Stephen immediately struck up a friendly conversation

with the County officials, he was absolutely engaging, but then was tough as nails in articulating our bottom line. In the end, we got everything we needed.

I also remember another meeting around the big boardroom table at the Probyn & Co. offices. The light bulb had burnt out and instead of getting a building maintenance staffer into fix it, Stephen tried to do it himself. It was apparent he had probably never fixed a light bulb before. Now that boardroom table that always looked so solid, might as well have been supported by toothpicks. Stephen stood on top and weaved back and forth precariously as the table moved violently and we all shot our chairs far back from danger. The light bulb did eventually get changed.

Finally, I remember going to London with him as part of another deal. As we took the cab ride in from the Heathrow, eventually through Central London, Stephen began playing tour guide. However, he wasn't talking about Buckingham Palace or Big Ben, rather he went into the wonderful history of the park where he used to have lunch when he worked in London and the fascinating history of an otherwise obscure building that he had worked in.

The point of all these random, and not particularly consequential stories, is that whatever Stephen did he was always completely engaged with the task in front of him, whatever moment he was in.

From the formative to the banal to the indulgent to the critical moment – he was always completely engaged and applying all his intellect, passion and energy. Taking out of that moment all the joy, pleasure, satisfaction or learning there was.

Now, none of us know if we're going to have 12,000, 20,000, or 30,000 days on earth. But what is clear, is that as every day goes by none of us are counting off one more day out of 25,000, for example – our minds don't account for time that way. What is inescapable, however, if you're honest, is whether or not you engaged yourself in every moment that day offered or were you but a passive observer.

It's the difference between reading your child's bedtime story but being so distracted by what you were going to do next that you couldn't even recall the words you just read OR sharing your child's joy as the story unfolds and watching his or her eyes glimmer with excitement.

It's being stuck on a four hour flight with the overly chatty seatmate. You could avoid eyecontact, put on your headset...anything to squelch their attempts at conversation OR you decide to engage in a conversation and find the one thing, at least, that two people can always learn from one another.

It's when you find yourself in a rut at your job. You can go to work and dread every moment, procrastinate on tackling the challenges and seek solace in an extra drink every night OR you can seize the moment and find the best way out of your rut.

The one thing that stands out for me with Stephen is that in every moment of life he was completely engaged – applying all that he had and gaining all that he could. And that's why

Stephen had a life of such accomplishment and, more importantly, one blessed with relationships of such depth and meaning.