By Wendy Forman

Thank you everyone for coming to Davidpalooza. Thanks, Anthony. Some of you know him as the star on Broadway in Freestyle Love Supreme but David and I knew him when he was 5 cracking us up doing schtick in our living room. Not sure why he decided back then to call David "Doc" but it stuck. So, Anth, thanks again for assisting us in sending "Doc" off in the style which most befits him.

I want to begin with honoring someone who had a very important impact on David and that is the late Dr. Mary Allen Engle, a pediatric cardiologist who was David's doctor when he was a child. As many of you know David was born with a congenital heart defect. This was in 1947; open heart surgery did not yet exist. David's parents were told that the expectation was that he might live till he was twenty .When he was five he spent 6 weeks in the hospital where he had a Taussig-Blaylock shunt which was done to keep him going till then. Those weeks proved to be possibly the hardest time in his life ;he had to endure it mostly alone since parents were not permitted to visit every day and never overnight. Luckily for David and for us all open heart surgery was perfected in time and when he was 15 he had the surgery that helped him live to 79! But back in the day when David and I had just gotten engaged I had the privilege of meeting Dr. Mary Allen Engle and when David introduced me to her she had tears in her eyes. She told us with great warmth that she couldn't believe she was meeting David's fiancee because when she was his doctor she believed that he would never grow up and get married. She was the first in a series of exceptional cardiologists who have helped to keep David alive. And so he survived.

I also want to thank my late mother-in-law Ruth Greenwald who despite this dire diagnosis was able to keep herself from over-protecting David. He couldn't run too fast and he couldn't run too far but she always let him run to his imperfect heart's content.And he survived.

I want to thank David's brother Robert.Being the well sibling is not a position anyone applies for; nevertheless, Robert handled it. And he had the perspicacity to make a pact with his younger brother that

after their parents died and despite the 3000 miles between us they could keep the familial bond going between visits and trips by having a phone call every weekend. And that pact remained unbroken even up to the very end of David's life. And the sibling bond survived.

I of course want to thank Abraham and Anna for being the children any parent could wish for. From the beginning David supported my firm decision to give birth at home. He was a great coach and not only got to cut the cords but held each one right away so they could immediately feel the beat of his funky quirky loving heart. And I want to thank our children, now such magnificent adults, for supporting and stepping in to be at their father's side with me so that he could die peacefully and without pain,also at home. And just the three of us survived.

And certainly I want to thank Sage and Harold Heller for making their Granddude so proud and happy and for being such a wonderful legacy as they both continue to thrive and of course survive.

I want to eulogize David well by cataloging his accomplishments and telling stories about the many adventures in his long life; however, it is not hyperbole to say that we truly do not have the time that it would take to even mention them all. David was a (mostly) beloved shrink. He was the first host of Family Matters on our local NPR station. He was for a time a psychologist for the Philadelphia Eagles (Go Birds) He did professional workshops all over the country. He taught at Community College. He co-authored a book. But it's the earlier items on his resume that you may not know about. In his younger years David worked stocking shelves at a toy store on Fire Island, sold sandwiches in the dorms at Brandeis, and had a brief stint as a truck dispatcher . Right after college with absolutely zero experience with children he was a manny for three American kids whose parents took him to London to home school them. Luckily they all survived.

When we first got together, he worked as an aide at the Hudson Guild shepherding children from school to the center. Luckily they all survived.

He worked very briefly as a receptionist for a real estate agent for high end apartments on the upper east side; it turned out to be a scam enterprise. One day David was ambushed in the office while several extremely disgruntled clients were waiting for his boss to

return but that sociopath had taken off and cleverly checked himself into a psychiatric hospital.One of the clients called “The Snake” wore some serpentine rings that doubled as brass knuckles. David asked if any of them wanted coffee or a sandwich and then blithely waved goodbye, never to return. Luckily he survived.

Right before graduate school David got a part-time job at the venerable high end publisher Basic Books. He was supposed to type up letters to customers about their orders. (this was before computers of course) The job wasn’t nearly creative enough for David so he took to writing fanciful humorous replies to some of them and signed them “Sincerely, Lawrence B. Books” as if he were a nepo hire from a family called Basic Books. He finally got flagged; the customer was actually the U.S. Army. David had replied with” For Your Eyes Only” in the heading and then reamed them out for the war in Vietnam and refused to process their order. When he was called on the carpet his boss said to David “Lawrence B. I presume?” and held up a handful of the fictionalized letters. “I have to fire you.” David’s colleagues rallied for his reinstatement.. he had achieved a bit of a local hero status- but David was thrilled since he was relieved to be released. Luckily everyone survived.

During this time of David’s colorful “job” history I was gainfully but uncomfortably employed as a teacher in the NYC public school system, supporting us both with a real salary and health insurance benefits. And now I quote more or less from Jane Eyre “Reader, I married him (anyway)”
Luckily we both survived.

Lest this eulogy morph into a hagiography, it should be said that David has been described by a good friend as a lovable pain in the ass. He did not suffer fools gladly. He always spoke up for himself, at times a trifle too loudly. But invariably his ire was leavened by his humor. The core value of his life and our family life was fun. Yes there was chaos, there was crankiness, there were some dark days but we sure knew how to have fun. David and I believed that activism is the price you pay for living on this planet, but we figured out how to make activism fun. (In addition to Physicians for Social Responsibility and Psychologists for Social Responsibility there was also our unofficial Hedonists for Social Responsibility!)

There was the time at the Bucks County Commissioners meeting during the anti-nuke Dump the Pump era ;David raised his hand to speak. He leaned down and donned a Nixon mask and in his best tricky Dick imitation said “You can fool some of the people all of the time and all of the people some of the time but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time”. And one of the commissioners David was addressing, Andy Warren ,later converted from Republican to Democrat. Just sayin…And the Resistance survived.

And I’m remembering our adventures in the USSR when we were in talks with Soviet television about doing a Spacebridge but in the off hours we snuck away from our minder and met with peace dissidents and Refuseniks. David’s extraordinary innate sense of direction and love of subways the world over (and my learning the Cyrillic alphabet btw) got the two of us secretly to our destinations. And yes we all survived.

David and I have always been Marxists— as in Groucho. We could never be a member of a group that would have us as a member. Nevertheless we did join up for a bit with the P.G. Wodehouse Society and had meetings where we all threw dinner rolls at each other a la Bertie Wooster. And speaking of Wodehouse ,over the years David very lovingly read aloud to me every evening— Wodehouse, the complete works of Sherlock Holmes, and every amazing word penned by Robert Caro. At one point, when Abe and Anna were young, our television broke and we purposely didn’t have it fixed. There was, instead, a lot of reading aloud to the kids .I seem to remember that they may have accused us of child abuse,but we all survived.

Despite his significant health scares and challenges David always soldiered on. He was a lifelong learner and was devoted to his patients and to the craft of psychotherapy. His body slowed down— no more wild dancing and singing with our band- but his mind did not. And so until just a month ago he did indeed amazingly survive.

I would like to end this eulogy by speaking (and lucky for youse not singing)this song by John Prine. On recent evenings after dinner David and I danced and sang along as we played this song -David singing the Prine part and me chiming in as Iris DeMenthe. It is as if they wrote this verse just for us. So now I dedicate this to you, my dearest David, wherever you may be:

IN SPITE OF OURSELVES WE'LL END UP SITTIN ON A RAINBOW

AGAINST ALL ODDS, HONEY,WE'RE THE BIG DOORPRIZE

WE'RE GONNA SPITE THE NOSES RIGHT OFF OF OUR FACES

THERE WON'T BE NOTHIN' BUT A BIG OLD.. (wait for this please ) NOTHIN' BUT A BIG OLD cranky, irritable, reconfigured, reconstructed, bionic,idiosyncratic, wacky,hugely generous, warm, loving and totally unique… now and forever.. BIG OLD HEART DANCIN'IN MY EYES.