

Thank you, Laura.

Also, I want to thank Jude for organizing Frank's Celebration of Life...and being there for Frank and his New York family. It has made these past months bearable.

I was selected to speak today because I've known Frank – except for his sisters – the longest...as well as having a business relationship with him.

Frank would be pleased to see everyone. He did love having an audience.

When Frank became ill, I started thinking about a relationship that spanned over four decades. Rather than describing Frank as my best friend, I'd say he was my oldest New York friend. In addition:

Frank was my landlord.

Frank worked for me.

Frank was my Emergency Contact.

We treated each other more as siblings than as friends.

The picture beside me is The Embrace. For me, this represents not only my relationship with Frank – but many of Frank's relationships – his family; his friends; his babies. Frank's embrace could be loving as well as acerbic.

Many memories of Frank occurred at inflection points. The first one was when we met. The City had hit rock bottom; New Yorkers were leaving in droves. This created a vacuum in which gays could be themselves. We compartmentalized our lives as we moved in and out of the straight world. This was natural. We'd been doing it since realizing we were gay.

There's a rainbow of difference between being gay then and today. We held our biological families at arm's length. The same with people at work. We even changed pronouns when talking about friends and lovers.

I was surprised that Frank wanted to be my friend. While he was only a few years older, I thought Frank was worldly – taking a steamer to England and making London his home where he didn't know anyone.

After striking up a friendship, Frank moved back to London. A month later, he called to tell me about meeting Malcolm.

Our lives seemed to be on parallel tracks. Soon thereafter, I met my significant other, who in short order was temporarily transferred to London. For months, I was commuting to London – seeing Frank on visits.

After Malcolm's passing, Frank and I started to have a Martini on Fridays. Frank was heartbroken about Malcolm and needed to talk. These Friday cocktails continued for twenty-five years.

This photo – circa 1997 – was taken a few years into our Friday ritual. During these years, both of our older sisters passed away as did our mothers. We talked about these and other life changing events.

But Fridays were also times of joy and laughter. A typical night would start with Frank ranting, oops I meant talking, about one of his babies. Then we would move on to the arts – Broadway, the Beatles – anything of interest that happened during the week. Our conversations would proceed to the stock market and end with politics. Often we were on the same side of the political aisle; other times, we would have “spirited” debates. The livelier the conversation, the stronger the hug when saying goodnight.

Another inflection point was changing careers. Without Malcolm, Frank's heart wasn't into continuing Interlink. He started painting and providing investment advice. I started a business and developed an app. Throughout, we supported and helped each other's endeavors.

My business was taking off when the Third Floor became available. Frank asked what I could afford, which was less than market rate. Because of Frank's generosity, I was able to take the leap to having an office. It wasn't long before Frank was working for The Jackson Group.

Can I be *Frank* with you? Frank could be somewhat temperamental. One day, out of the clear blue sky, Frank began hollering. He left suddenly, slamming the door behind him. I was dumbfounded. Frank called an hour or so later, happy as a lark, saying that he certainly felt better and did I? Frank even embraced his emotions. Over time, Frank's demons mellowed and these occasional outbursts became milder.

Frank was a wonderful person to have in your life. He was fun and smart. Thoughtful and loyal. And, did I mention he could be prickly? I especially admired Frank's compassion and generous nature.

Among many of Frank's great gifts, the one I treasure the most was giving permission to be comfortable with my mother. Frank embraced my mom, which allowed me to do the same. Was Frank helping me to do what he was unable to do?

Frank and I didn't say that we loved each other, except on birthday cards. After his health declined, Frank said he loved me. I feel blessed that I had the chance to tell Frank that I loved him.

One Friday over drinks, Frank mentioned he wanted three things out of life: To live in New York, to own a loft, and to have his paintings on the walls and floor. A couple of years later, Frank started painting.

When Jude called from the hospital to tell us she was bringing Frank home for the last time, she asked that we arrange Frank's paintings around his bed. At the end, Frank was surrounded by his Art and those he loved.

Thank you for allowing me to share with you the Frank I knew and loved.