

ODE to Mathieu

Oh how can I create a proper tribute to Mathieu? Will I or the computer have enough memory? Although we know the sad ending, where should I start, at what age, or at what altitude? In which country? In what language? With Mathieu, whatever you can write or say would be inadequate and marginalize his talents, abilities, activities and achievements. Well I know Matt would just advise to just get going, work hard, and do your best. I'll try.

Let's start by mentioning his friendly leadership of his big boisterous gang of friends: all fine fellows looking up to Mathieu: a talented, rowdy, hard-working, and hard-partying bunch of great guys and teammates. To a man, they and their partners would have followed Mathieu anyway, and with reason. Among these friends, money had no meaning; I'll help you for a few days or weeks and of course you will reciprocate. Very simple, no paperwork. And as a group, they were so talented and capable, together they could do and did anything, to the benefit of everyone involved. LEADERSHIP

Of course, everyone knew or had heard about Matt's extensive athletic abilities. He was the point guard of the Raynaud Brothers, a famous entity in the SE of France. Pity the poor ballhandlers for the competition or the defenders against the three-ball. They were doomed to disappointment and maybe ridicule at the hands of Matt. Equally in Skiing, Mountain Climbing, Road Racing, Petagne, and even Balote and Scrable, Matt could not help but compete and win. And he was such a compassionate and understanding winner.

In his life's profession, that of a carpenter, roofer, and home builder, his variety of skills, his fairness, and the quality of workmanship was unmatched. And the work was done on schedule for a reasonable price, so that especially family friends competed for his services. Of

course, the reconstruction of his own three-story house from a centuries-old ruins to a modern, beautiful, efficient home was the highlight of his career.

And finally, and probably most importantly, Matt (to my great surprise) became the first of the Raynaud kids to settle down in such a wonderful partnership with a talented and wholesome lady Stephanie, a relationship which has brought forth two exceptional children Gaston and Agathe. Such a fine father and great example to follow. God bless you Matt; you have earned it.

If one considers the honest and decent fraction of mankind, one may find men with big personalities, others with great character, or some with impressive achievements. This first one you invite to parties, the second you should choose for your partner in life, and the third you are proud to call your friend. But seldom are these three important traits all displayed in any given "superman". I'm talking about Mathieu Raynaud, and we may seldom if ever have the pleasure of meeting another one. We miss you Matt. We loved you.

A heartbroken Papi