

Toronto, November 9, 1972

The time has come for me to write to our relatives overseas, in acknowledgement and appreciation of the warm messages of sympathetic understanding which have been received over the past two weeks. In so doing, I am acting on behalf of Eve [D. Lou Harris's wife], and her daughters Molly and Charlotte, and indeed on behalf of the entire Canadian branch of the family.

In addition to extending appreciation of your sympathy, we should extend sympathy to you, and to all Lou's relatives and legion of friends, because we all share in the loss of this great man.

While he was in Israel, and later in England this past summer, Lou had complained of frequent chest pains, and this continued for the few months he spent in Toronto after his return from overseas. He had been seeing doctors regularly; no one could really determine whether the pains were caused by angina or by a hiatus hernia, both of which had developed during the past year. The symptoms, sharp chest pains, are evidently very similar. In any case, in recent weeks Lou had suffered some pains, but this slowed him down not one iota.

Lou had planned to take Eve to Chicago to visit Eve's sister for the week-end of October 21st. On Thursday, October 19th, I was talking to Lou in the office, and he said that he certainly didn't feel like going to Chicago that coming week-end, and that his doctors had advised that he go to bed, or better still into hospital for a few days. I said that I felt that was an excellent suggestion, and he replied that he couldn't possibly do that because he had to go to Chicago that week-end, and more important, had to go to Winnipeg the following week-end to chair the very important annual ORT convention.

One of our business connections had invited us to a social dinner at a country club in Chicago on Saturday, October 21st, and I had advised that I'd be unable to attend, but Lou had signified that he would be there. I told Lou that Thursday, that since he was not feeling too well, he should not attend the relatively unimportant dinner and he was noncommittal in his reply. Of course, as I knew he would, he did attend, and enjoyed the evening, returning to Eve's sister's home at a reasonable hour.

The following day, Sunday, Lou arose in the morning, and complained of more chest pain than usual. His brother-in-law had a friend, a heart specialist, whom he called on Lou's behalf. This doctor friend suggested that Lou be brought to his office in the hospital, where he would be given a thorough examination. This was done, and the doctor discovered almost immediately that Lou was undergoing a coronary attack. He told Lou that he'd be staying in hospital for quite some time. Lou demurred, and

said that he wasn't really sick, he just had hiatus hernia pains, but the doctor told him he'd have to remain in hospital, and stay there, probably for a few weeks. Lou quickly became reconciled to this, and as a matter of fact was joking and chatting with the nurses and attendants, with his normal good humour. The doctor advised Lou's brother-in-law to return home, because there was nothing for him to do in hospital. A half hour later Lou had a massive coronary attack, and expired.

As I need not explain to you, the shock, the trauma, was great to all of us, but most of all to Eve and the girls. I must say they bore up most bravely, Eve because of her great inner strength, the girls probably because of their concern for their mother.

We have received almost one thousand cards, telegrams, cables and letters, all extolling Lou's unique personality, all saying much the same things in hundreds of different ways. I use the word "unique" advisedly and purposely, because neither I nor anyone I know have ever seen his like, nor expect to again. His intelligence, wisdom, and abilities were outstanding, but more important to my mind was his "menschlichkeit". He was as solicitous, as kind, to people of lowest estate, as he was to so-called important people. I wonder how many men in this world's history had so many people say of them, as was said of Lou, he was my friend. His love of family is well known to all of us. His love for Israel was unbounded; he had a great love for all mankind.

The world is much the poorer for Lou's leaving it, but it is much the richer for his having been with us. All who knew him, no matter how closely, no matter how distantly, share in this loss. For my part, I have lost a brother who was as much a father as brother to me — one whom I admired and who had justly earned my admiration, as he had the admiration and adulation of all who knew him. Yet my grief and I'm sure that of Eve and the girls, and the rest of the family, is greatly assuaged by the tremendous pride we feel in the fact that this giant among men was our close relative. Of course we are proud that Golda Meir, Abba Eban, Pinchas Sapir, and countless other dignitaries saw fit to express their sorrow to Eve and the family. But we are also deeply proud that literally hundreds of people of high and low estate, many of whom we do not know, felt the compulsion to write to us to tell us how they in particular regretted this loss, and shared our sorrow.

Rabbi Plaut, of Holy Blossom Temple, our spiritual adviser, in his eulogy, spoke as if he were addressing an admired and cherished friend, as indeed he was. His words were so well chosen, so appropriate, that we asked him later if he would try to reconstruct them for us. He promised to do so, and when he does, I will make sure to send you a copy.

I personally derive much consolation in my sorrow from this: what we could most wish for ourselves, or our

closest friends, is that first of all, we reach the age of three score and fifteen; that in our lifetime we accomplish a fraction of what Lou accomplished; that when we depart we will have earned a small measure of the love, respect, and admiration, which he had justly earned; that we live a life devoid of any serious illness; and then, on our last day, depart suddenly, protesting that we are not really ill.

As you can imagine, it was a difficult task for me to get down to writing this, but once I started, the words kept flowing. There are many, many things that could have been added. Each of us could add many paragraphs, I am sure.

Let me conclude by expressing the hope and prayer that we will all be spared sad occasions such as this one, for a long time to come.

Fred Harris