

Mimi's Eulogy

Dear Mimi,

I walked outside the morning after you left us,
and the world was carrying on as if nothing had happened.
The light drifted across the yard the same way it always had,
the wind brushed through the trees with its familiar whisper,
and the day unfolded quietly, almost indifferently –
as though it didn't realize a piece of my world had gone missing.

It stunned me –
the way everything looked the same
when everything inside us had changed.
There was an absence in the air,
a silence where your laughter used to live,
a sense that the world had lost something
it hadn't even paused to acknowledge.

In these days without you,
I keep circling back to one simple truth:
we talk a lot about how people die,
but we don't talk enough about how they lived –
how they stitched themselves
into the fabric of our lives
in ways we never truly see
until the thread is gone.

You were our sister,
you were a mother,
you were a wife and partner,
you were our friend.
A constant presence.
A grounding truth.
A piece of our beginning
that now echoes
through every person gathered here.

And even as I speak to you now, Mimi,
I know I'm speaking to everyone who loved you –
because your story isn't just yours.
It belongs to all of us.
It shaped all of us.

For those who don't know me,
I'm Brian Kelly – Mimi's brother –
and it means the world that you're all here,
carrying your memories, your grief, your love.
Thank you for standing with us
as we honor her life.

In the quiet of these past days,
I found myself drifting back
to where everything began.

No one tells you
when the season of a shared childhood ends.
One moment, you're laughing in the kitchen,
fighting over the last cookie,
believing childhood is endless —
and then life begins scattering you
into different towns and different patterns,
pulling you into your own stories
before you even realize the chapter has changed.

We grew up in a place called the Palisades —
a neighborhood on the edge of DC
that might have looked ordinary to anyone else,
but to us it was a whole world:
cicadas humming in thick summer air,
the smell of cut grass and Sunday dinners,
streetlights blinking on like soft reminders
that another childhood day was closing.

But the center of that world
was always the dinner table
at 5138 Sherier Place —
seven kids squeezed together,
talking over each other,
laughing, arguing, interrupting,
passing plates and opinions
like they mattered equally.
It was messy, loud, imperfect,
and somehow the truest form of love I've ever known.

Mimi thrived there.
Her wit sharp, her humor effortless,
her presence loud even in her silence.
She had a way of commanding attention
without asking for it,
a way of making you feel seen
because she looked long enough
to really know you.

And when the noise of that big family
became too much,
we found refuge just a block away
in our grandparents' house –
a doorway of steady warmth,
a place where the air felt softer,
where the world didn't demand so much.

That house shaped us.
It shaped her.
It taught her loyalty,
fierceness,
and the kind of strength
that doesn't ask permission to exist.

As life carried us forward,
we drifted – as people do.
Different schools, new friends, separate paths.

But with Mimi,
nothing essential ever changed.
We could go months without talking,
and the moment we reconnected,
the thread between us was right there –
intact, familiar, unbreakable.

She had a gift:
she made people proud to be themselves.
She believed in us out loud –
lifted us, defended us,
celebrated our victories
as if they were her own.
That kind of love
doesn't disappear.
It becomes part of who you are.

And she lived with courage.
Real courage.
Not the loud kind,
but the kind that chooses to rise
over and over again.

One of the clearest examples
was the day she enrolled in law school –
not in her twenties,
not when life was simple,
but when it would have been easier
to step back.
To say it was too late,
too hard,

the wrong season.
And yet she pressed forward.
Studying, writing, learning,
pushing toward a dream
she refused to surrender.

She worked on her Master of Jurisprudence
until the very last stretch of her strength.
And on October 6, 2025,
she earned that degree –
a testament to her grit,
her determination,
her unshakable will.

And now I want to speak directly to Michael –
Mimi's Michael.

My brother...
you gave her something rare.
Your love steadied her,
softened her,
strengthened her.
You saw her in ways
she deserved to be seen.
You knew her – all of her –
and loved her without hesitation.

And in those final months,
you were by her side every moment.
Sleeping beside her,
holding her hand,
feeding her,
caring for her
with a devotion
that revealed the depth
of your love.

What you two shared
was the kind of bond
people write songs about –
real, honest, enduring –
the kind of love
that wraps itself around two lives
and makes each one better.

Thank you
for loving her the way you did,
for walking with her through the hardest moments,
for being her partner,
her companion,
her safe place.

Your time together was too short,
far too short –
but it was a gift.

To her.

And to all of us
who loved her.

Mimi lived with courage.
She loved without pretense.
Her voice – steady, honest, unwavering –
was both a comfort and a challenge.
She made people stand taller
simply by standing beside them.

She will always be here –
in summer nights buzzing with cicadas,
in the rhythm of stories we tell,
in the fierce, loyal, unapologetic love
she planted in every one of us.

My sisters and I
are grateful beyond measure
for the years we were given with her –
for the life we were blessed
to share beside her.

May we carry her forward
in the way we choose to live –
with courage,
with honesty,
and with the same fierce love
she offered so freely.

Grief is not a thing to be conquered.
It is not a storm to outlast,
nor a wound that ever truly closes.

It is love –
continuing in the absence of touch.

In the quiet after loss,
we learn that time doesn't heal – it reshapes.
It folds our memories into softer corners,
teaches us to carry their laughter in gentler ways,
to see their reflection in morning light
and in the faces of those who remain.

We do not move on.
We move with –
carrying their voice inside our silence,
their warmth inside our coldest days.

The ones we love do not disappear;
they change forms.
They live now
in our gestures,
our choices,
our kindness toward the world.

And when the ache feels sharp again,
when the emptiness returns without warning –
that, too, is love
reminding us
that we were blessed to feel so deeply,
to have belonged so completely.

Grief is the echo of love
that refuses to fade.
And though it hurts,
it is proof
that we have lived
a life that mattered.