

FAMILY SECRETS

In preparing for this party, it was difficult to decide what should be said. A toast to my grandfather's great accomplishments is difficult because there are so many to remember. Furthermore, the audience probably knows more about his professional life than his grandchild, Bobby. As you know, family is the last to know the truth about themselves.

I have decided it was about time that someone told family secrets. I will not talk about Dr. Weber....Bobby will talk about Ernst.

Perhaps my earliest memory of Ernst was at 6 or 7 years old. Apparently my mother was at the end of her rope picking up after me. She collected her frustration, dirty socks in hand, and tried to reason....to no avail. Finally, in desperation, she held up Ernst as an example. Now, that caught my attention!

Just imagine, she declared, Ernst a great scientist who stops in the middle of the floor to pick up a speck of dust. In contrast you couldn't even see my floor. Suddenly I understood what my Mother meant. I had images of Ernst stopping in the middle of a lecture to go over and pick up some dust. For a long time the anticipation of being in the room with Ernst...the expectation that he would suddenly stop to pick up some dust...really was too much for a 6 year old. There was no such thing as a casual stroll across the room anymore.

Ernst has probably never been aware of my burden. The fact remains, however, that to this day, I have never actually seen him stop to pick up dust.

I'm sure that everyone is aware that Ernst won World War Two by inventing the radar. This was a family secret that I have used to win childhood disputes with friends about whose family was more famous. Fortunately, as I got older, I became more modest about my background and kept this to myself. Finally, as a teenager, I had a rare moment with Ernst when he talked about himself. He explained his role in the development of the radar...as one would explain the building of a better mouse trap. I was really appalled, not by disillusionment, but with the knowledge that my childhood had been based on a misinterpretation of history....and of course science.

Clearly this was my first lesson in humility. It wasn't until years later that I realized Ernst's modest interpretation was equally distorted.

You know, I sometimes fantasize about Ernst with 4 or 5 fellow scientists clustered around the newly invented radar. There is a terrible dispute about what to call this contraptionwhich is followed with a far more serious problem....what sound should the radar make? Bleep...bloop...zap...all these men are going crazy trying to agree on this sound. Ernst in the meanwhile, calmly waits until the crowd turns to him for advise. He quietly looks at his hands, clears his throat and out comes another family secret...(sound)...the family call. (I hope I did that right.)

To say the least, that is a fantasy ...and they didn't listen anyway.

There are a series of pleasant memories...images I have of Ernst. It is very hard to think of Ernst without mentioning his other half....Sony. In many ways their relationship serves as a role model for my generation. For instance, how many people here have witnessed Sony and Ernst eating breakfast together? Their ritual of carefully

dividing a role, one taking the crust, the other the insidesand finally the birds getting the crumbs....this is the definition of "complementary".

Ernst is the only person I know who actually "works" with nature. I can't count the number of times that I have seen Ernst move a smothering twig or leaf for a small wild flower. Occassionally the unsuspecting flower gets a new home in his rock garden. I suspect that is a good analogy for his effect on his students. His rock garden is not such a bad place to be.

Rather than give a litany of virtues that which we all know, I thought you might be interested in how Ernst has shaped my life.

Bobby has learned to be curious about life...interested in how things workand how they relate.

He has learned to care about the world. Whether it is nuclear dissarmament, world hunger and poverty or political strife...we are all affected.

He has learned that we are in a continuoum of historythat issues do not stand alone, but relate to each other.

He has learned that quiet and compasionate diplomacy is more effective than aggressive dogma

Lastly, grandson Bobby has learned to cross the room to pick up dust.....occassionally.

For these reasons my family and I want to thank you for being part of us.