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A Death Thousands of Miles Away

Thursday, September 10, 2015

My cousin died suddenly. I learned about it yesterday morning.

I met him for the first time in 2008 when my research succeeded in finding the descendants of my grandfather's children who did not leave the "old country" for America.

Pavel was the "head of the family," a large family. He and the others warmly welcomed this stranger from America – grandchild #15 who arrived seeking her roots.

DH & I traveled to Slovakia many times since then and even brought our children and grandchildren to meet their long lost relatives, most recently in June.

My generation does not speak English. I speak Slovak on the level of a 6 year old. However, the younger generations are connected on Facebook. I was notified of his passing through a FB message from his grandson.

We toured the countryside with Pavel many times. The mountains look a lot like those of PA where many immigrants to America settled. He described living though WWII and the Battle of Dukla Pass as the Red Army fought to dislodge the Nazis. His village was destroyed.

Bullet holes still remain in the tombstones of this churchyard.

There are also 3 memorials with inscriptions in Russian, Slovak and Hebrew.

They say: "God does not care how you worship, only how you live your life"



That's how I choose to remember Pavel - a life well-lived. He was 82.

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NUMD97



So sorry to read about the loss of a recently reunited family member. My friend's sister actually found a long-lost first cousin of her grandmother's while similarly researching family roots. Sadly, the grandmother had just moved into a nursing home and could not entertain the new-found relatives in her own home. The relatives came to the US, with the sole intent of meeting up with the long-lost close relative. And it was a trip surely to be remembered by many for years to come.

I am certain that you feel the same.
2095 days ago

Comment edited on: 9/17/2015 6:52:07 PM



KRISSEY82



I'm sorry for your loss. It's wonderful that you were able to meet Pavel and visit with him after learning that you were family! I love how you are choosing to remember him.
2099 days ago



MARYJEANSL



How very neat to reconnect with family members in the old country! One of my uncles did a great deal of research on our family tree, and, as a result, found some distant relatives in Switzerland. A number of my family members have visited them (they own a winery) and brought back some of their wine. My life doesn't allow such visits, but I am so happy our families are reconnected. May Pavel rest in peace. As you say, a life well lived.
2099 days ago



ALICIA363



To Pavel, and life well lived!
2100 days ago



ONEKIDSMOM



Sorry for your loss, but also grateful you were able to connect in person while he was alive! May those memories comfort your family on both sides of the ocean!
2101 days ago



PHEBESS



May his memory always be a blessing for you!
2102 days ago



DOVESEYES



Sorry for your loss but happy for you to have those memories.
2102 days ago



SUBMOM2



I'm sorry for your loss. What a beautiful inscription.



2102 days ago



WALLAHALLA




so sorry for your loss
2102 days ago



PHOENIX1949



 for your loss.



that you got to share time with him.



memorial inscription in three languages.



2102 days ago



LIVEDAILY

I am sorry to hear about the passing of your cousin. He, indeed, had a life well lived! You were very lucky to have the chance to meet him and get to know him!



2102 days ago



LEXIPEDIA79

A beautiful post. Celebrate the life well lived, even while you miss the loved ones.

2102 days ago



SYLPHINPROGRESS

Your tribute to this lovely man is delightful. How wonderful that you and he had the opportunity to build a relationship in recent years.

2102 days ago



IFDEEVARUNS2

What joy to have reconnected! I'm so sorry for your loss, though. I always marvel at the power of FB to forge bonds. I've seen it with my nieces and nephews.



2103 days ago



GINIEMIE

Sorry for your loss, it's hard when family is stretched across the world. I'm thanking God that you met him and he met you, your DH and daughters with their families. The memories and pictures will bring you much solace. May Pavel rest in peace.

Love and Prayers.
Ginie



2103 days ago



SPINNINGJW

May his memory be for blessing.



2103 days ago



FORZACHANDMATT

Beautiful- sorry for your loss

2103 days ago



DYANNE4293

How wonderful that you experienced such a great relationship.

2103 days ago



GARDENCHRIS

I am so sorry. It s hard when you have relatives that you are near to so far away.

I have the same situation with my German relatives.

2103 days ago



NELLJONES

I am sorry for your loss.

2103 days ago



RIDLEYRIDER

So sad. Hugs to you and your family.

2103 days ago





PREMAM

My deepest condolences to you. God Bless
2103 days ago



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