

John Paul “Jack” Reardon, Jr.

11 AM, St. Anthony’s Church, Cohasset, MA

July 1, 2026

Father Hehir, Reverend Clergy----- ,

For the legion of Jack’s friends in this church and beyond, I extend our heartfelt condolences to you Jane, and to Tom - Jack’s brother and loyal sounding board, and to Tom’s children and grandchildren whose love for Jack is beyond measure.

Despite our shared sense of *personal* emptiness, we’re here—more in gratitude than grief -- to celebrate Jack’s love for each of you, and for the joy, pride and love you gave him in return and, not least, -- to celebrate with Father Hehir -- God’s reward to Jack for his remarkable life as an extraordinary human being.

And thank you, Jane, for this privilege to convey to all here - as well as to those unable to attend – Jack’s message of love and gratitude to each of you for your valued friendship to him through the years.

70 years ago, in the fall of 1956, Jack managed our freshman football team and so began our lifelong friendship.

If you’ll recall the expression “One never gets a second chance to make a first impression”? You’ll appreciate it when I tell you:

Jack Reardon never needed one!

The Reardon family’s values, Jack’s Catholic faith and his Milton Academy and Harvard College educations guided him toward a choice that defined him until his final breath: ---*to live a life of love, of service and of moral purpose.*

To fulfill that goal Jack chose to serve the college and university he loved. He could use his God-given gifts of mind and heart to make positive contributions to its mission and to the countless lives that entered and departed its gates.

***“Dare to be True”* is Milton Academy’s motto;**

***“Veritas”* is Harvard’s.**

And “Truth” was Jack’s “True North”!

—a single word that could define his character.

He was always true to himself though he seldom talked about himself. He was as modest as he was honest---no airs; no pretenses.

He treated whomever he met with equal dignity and respect -- no matter their age or station in life.

He would voice his informed opinion on the issues to be sure, but he was never cynical or judgmental about people.

Jack was uncommonly kind, considerate and always good company.

Through the years he hosted wonderful traditions:

An annual post-game dinner at the Somerset Club;

Summer golf outings here in Cohasset;

Christmas Season dinners at 78 Elm St. featuring peppermint stick ice cream with Roz's hot fudge sauce which Jack, in turn, made a permanent favorite of the next generation of Reardons.

And 8 years ago last week, Jack and Jane, Gail and I celebrated the Reardon's 31st wedding anniversary and the guys' 80th birthdays with an unforgettable Seine River Cruise from Paris to Normandy.

On the cruise, Jack told a story I'd never heard. He said: *"I haven't enjoyed Europe so much since 1988 on a trip as Athletic Director with Fred Jewett, then Director of Admissions. We went at the invitation of Hockey Coach Bill Cleary to attend a holiday exhibition tournament with Sweden and Finland. The 1st game was against Sweden, and when we arrived at the arena, Billy said he wanted us to coach the 1st period, and he'd watch from the grandstand. Well, we did and at the end of the 1st period-Harvard led Sweden 1-0. We waved Billy down to the bench and said "OK, Coach we've done OUR thing. The rest is up to you! "And believe it or not—"The Rest" -- the Final Score was Sweden 4-Harvard 1.*

Jack remarked that "Billy had granted us permanent bragging rights but neither Fred nor I have said a word about it for the past 20 years!... And, understandably, Billy hasn't said much either!"

But, as Billy's brother-in-law, I can tell you today—38 years later—that no one enjoys Jack's true story more than Billy Cleary!!

Treasured memories all!!

The inevitable character trait that flows from consistent truthfulness is TRUST. When Jack spoke or offered advice-you could always trust his word; his keen instincts; and his sound judgment.

Institutional reputations are earned by the character and qualities of the individuals they *produce* --and of those who *govern* them. Jack Reardon was both, and he enhanced Harvard's reputation in both rolesjust by being himself.

I dare say that after 60 years of devoted duty, Jack understood Harvard better than any individual who's ever served it.

And over the course of those 6 decades, from his various positions of leadership, he became Harvard's most significant donor – perhaps not in dollars - but in “giving back” his endless contributions of *human* value.

With uncommon wisdom and boundless optimism, Jack understood that the most important gifts Harvard offers to its many constituencies are –HOPE and OPPORTUNITY—2 essential elements of the human spirit!

Think about it! We can only speculate as to how many thousands of lives were transformed for the better throughout his career because they heard that message from someone as trustworthy and wise as Jack Reardon.

He also had a unique talent for spotting human potential others might not -- and for encouraging a defined career path for students unsure of their future security.

A few months ago, Jack shared a story with me about a brilliant student advisee who struggled with anxiety issues that distracted him from achieving his full potential.

Jack urged him to leave school, get professional treatment and return. He followed Jack's advice, returned... and excelled.

When he told Jack he wasn't going to mention his issues in his application to Med. School, Jack responded: “Oh, YES, you ARE! It's who you are, and it's to your credit that you've overcome them.”

Last year that former student, now an eminent physician, came to visit Jack and Jane when Jack was resisting using a feeding tube. After some discussion, he looked Jack in the eye and said: “I'm just giving you advice to try to save your life. After all, Jack, I took your advice 50 years ago, and YOU SAVED MINE.!”

Just one powerful example of the indelible mark Jack left on so many who were blessed to receive and follow his wise guidance.

We're also in Jack's debt for his gift to *us* of Jane Kinneally whom he chose as his life partner. Now as Jack's pals can attest..., it took him a while !!!! But what a gift she's been!!!

Jane, we're forever grateful for your warm and selfless hospitality to so many of us but, more importantly, take comfort in the certainty that for the past 37 years-- you've been Jack's earthly blessing as surely as he was yours.

And KNOW that your love, companionship, and constant care that kept Jack alive for these 4 difficult years--- were heroic and inspirational.

Lastly, may we be grateful for God's Heavenly embrace of Jack for successfully achieving the very purpose of life— and for leaving a noble example for us to follow until our reunion with him when our own time arrives.

I close this final salute of gratitude to my treasured friend and classmate, John Paul Reardon, Jr., with this slightly edited but fitting verse:

“A good and honest man now lies at rest.

To a life of moral purpose, he gave his best.

A friend of mankind, a friend of truth,

A friend of aged, and a guide to youth.

Few hearts like his - with virtue warmed,

Few minds-- with knowledge so informed;

Jack's life with us, a noble race,

Now knows reward in God's embrace.”

Thank you, my good friend.

God Bless.

U.S. Senator Paul G. Kirk, Jr. (Ret.)