

Eulogy Given by Asima Silva, EnjoinGood.org.

Hi, my name is Asima Silva. I had the privilege of knowing Rich the only last couple of years, but his impact was tremendous. I am a Muslim woman of Asian ethnicity and my story, I believe highlights Rich's personality and beliefs. About 2 years ago, I started a radio show -- trying to give a voice to the minorities, talking about issues and topics that are considered taboo, controversial and unpopular. Within the first couple of months, Rich started listening to the radio show. he wrote me an email asking to meet. From my point of view, this was odd.... in this climate, why would a middle aged American White man want to meet with me, especially regarding my show. He offered to meet at a breakfast place with Susan-- a public place... but I was still confused and nervous.

When I met him that morning, he had a big smile on his face, very excited to meet us. My first impression of meeting him -- a very well-informed guy who had a lot of firm beliefs and convictions. He was very interested to find out about the show and the direction it would take...and to my surprise, wanted to support it. I found that to be absolutely amazing. A white man, who has not experienced the struggles of minorities based on race, religion or gender -- wanted to support a voice that in mainstream culture was absolutely unpopular. But that didn't stop Rich, his belief in human rights, civil rights and our US Constitutional rights were the cornerstone of his beliefs... he walked the walk and he was willing to put his money where his mouth is.

There were times I did a topic on my show that made me nervous -- I was warned that I will be making enemies, attracting negative attention, endangering my safety -- And at those times, without even knowing, Rich became my support. As soon as the radio show with the really controversial topic would air, Rich immediately would send a very Loud (many exclamation points) email in complete support of me. He didn't know it, but that was one of my motivations for not backing or shying away.

A couple of months ago I met with Rich and Susan to give him the great news that because of their, the radio show turned into a local cable TV show. I wanted to tell him as soon as I had finalized the details. I was so tempted to tell him in an email because I was so excited, but I refrained because I wanted to honor them by telling them in person. But it took a few weeks to arrange meeting in person... And I'm glad I waited. I still remember the big, big smile, when I gave him the great news. I find satisfaction in knowing that he was pleased with my work and I lived up to his investment of time, energy, motivational and monetary support.

As a Muslim, I believe that a person can continue to do good after his death, called sadaqa jariya -- if a person leaves someone behind that he has enabled/taught/motivated, the work they enabled will continue to be blessed on their behalf -- I hope to continue to make him proud and I will continue to do the work he gave wings to.

Rest in Peace. I am grateful for having known you.