

Rabbi, family and friends; However you knew him, be it as Tapper, Chief, Tap, Doc Hollywood, Cheese, or Dr. Richard Tapper, he was clearly unique to everyone he touched. His zest for life, his generosity and his commitment to others, were just a few of the qualities that we witnessed with regularity.

Over the years, Richard made an incredible number of friendships. Whether he was playing floor hockey at the old Y, attending Camp Massad or BBYO, competing in NBA Jam Tournaments at the University of Winnipeg, playing softball for the House of Ashkenazi or through his life as a chiropractor, Richard was a great guy to be around. His smile was infectious and his “I will laugh at absolutely anything attitude” always lit up the room. You knew when Richard was around – you simply felt happier.

Richard loved to compete. One of his happiest athletic achievements was hitting the buzzer beating, game winning shot to win the Varsity Provincial Basketball Championships for Joseph Wolinsky.

While Richard was always a good sport, this didn’t detract from his desire to win, so much so, that he continued to play in the Jewish Students Association floor hockey league until the tender age of 29...about 7 years past his eligibility. He finally retired when he realized his floor hockey dream and won the championship.

Not only did Richard like to play sports, he loved to watch sports. Richard would spend countless hours watching sports highlights of anything. Years ago, while in university, we thought Richard had found his dream job when he was hired to watch multiple live sporting events and report the scores online. He used to call us and say, “I can’t believe somebody is actually paying me to do this!”

The only thing that made watching sports more exciting for Richard was when he had money on the line. Whether it was playing Sports Select with Bernie or placing bets in the sports book in Vegas, Richard always enjoyed a smart bet. Richard’s smartest bet however, was often when he would sit down with his buddies and play poker. His go big or go home attitude often made him the big winner.

Although Richard was only 35 years old, he experienced as much in those thirty-five years as many could only hope to do in a lifetime. Whether he was at an ice-hotel in New Zealand, hiking Machupichu,

or attending the Gold Medal Hockey game between Canada and the US in Vancouver for the 2010 Olympics, Richard lived life to the fullest.

A couple of years ago, I received a call from a mutual friend saying that while watching the Grey Cup, that they had just seen Richard Tapper on TV. The BC Lions had just won the Grey Cup and not only was Richard somehow on the podium at the trophy presentation but he ended up in the dressing room with the team drinking champagne out of the Grey Cup with the players.

When I called him the next day to ask about it, I said, "Richard, how did you possibly manage to go from being just a regular fan in the crowd to drinking champagne with the BC Lions? His simple response, "I'm Tapper"

Richard loved his friends and his friends loved him. He made each of us feel like we were his best friend. The impact he had is clearly evidenced by the number of people in attendance here today.

For the last twelve years, our group of guys have met faithfully every Wednesday night at Earls Main. We are known to the staff as the Wing Wednesday regulars. This weekly event is our opportunity to both catch up with each other but more importantly ensure that we maintain our friendships outside of everything else that is going on in our individual lives. Even when Richard first told us about his cancer a few months ago, we continued to spend Wednesday nights at Earls. If he wasn't up to going, we would come to him. Richard somehow always did his best to put on a happy face regardless as to how he was feeling. He joined us at Earls as recently as two weeks ago and he was animated, hilarious, dominated the conversation and back to his old Tapper form. Regardless of the situation, Richard always tried to keep things light and fun. Every summer our group of friends spend a weekend together in Lake of the Woods at the Selter cabin. Because this group consists of 8-10 guys there are certain rules that have been instituted over the years. Perhaps the most stringent rule is a no tanning oil policy because it apparently stained the dock. A couple of years ago Richard and I decided to ignore this rule and brought out a bottle of tanning oil. We covered ourselves in oil and walked out onto the dock. Within seconds Dov noticed our glistening bodies and immediately threw us both in the lake and confiscated the tanning oil. Not one to be discouraged, Richard went back into the cabin only to reappear

shortly thereafter glistening once again. Dov took one look at him, saw the guilty Tapper smile and knew something was up. Upon interrogation Tapper revealed that he had gone into the fridge and had covered himself head to toe in butter.

Professionally, Richard was both incredibly accomplished and passionate about the field of chiropractics. He preached health and wellness and genuinely cared about the well-being of each and every one of his patients. The feeling was obviously mutual as over the past few months, a number of his patients would regularly call his office to see how he was doing. It does seem like just yesterday that we attended the grand opening of Tapper Chiropractic. As friends, we are so honored that we could be a part of his professional success.

Richard has always been the definition of an entrepreneur. Some of his ideas were big like setting up satellite chiropractic offices in Gimli and Niverville or opening Yoga, Pilates and More a couple of years ago, while others were much more simple such as organizing boxing pay per view events in his parents basement during high school. Richard was always willing to try something new such as his radio show, The Doc & the Jock with his good friend from the Winnipeg Blue Bombers Obby Khan, which aired on TSN Radio 1290. Of course not all of his ideas came to fruition – he had shared with us on numerous occasions his desire to purchase his favorite restaurant, Saltys in Winnipeg Beach. One can only wonder what was coming next with Tapper.

Richard always made giving back to the community a top priority. Whether he was volunteering for Siloam Mission or becoming the youngest signer for the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba's endowment Book of Life, Richard redefined the word "mensch". In a couple of days, he is being honored by the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg with the Harry Silverberg Leadership Development Award. This award is presented to an individual who has demonstrated outstanding service in support of the activities of the Jewish community. Richard led by example and as a group; we will do our best to continue on with his legacy.

As much as Richard cared about the community, his number one priority was always his family. Over the years, it was quite clear to all of us how proud his parents were of his achievements. Whether it was professional accomplishments or his philanthropic work,

Bernie and Leya were his number one fans. As proud as they were of him, Richard was equally proud of them. Richard loved talking about his parents and his devotion, admiration and love to them was always apparent.

The past few months have been difficult on all of us, but nobody has been stronger than Lauren. The way she has handled herself through all of this has been an inspiration. When we first met Lauren, we immediately told Richard that she was a keeper. She has proven this over and over again in her dedication to her husband, son and extended family through these trying times. Lauren – the last time we saw Richard he shared with us how much he loved you and how much it meant to him to share his life with you. You are like family to us and on behalf of all of Richard's friends, we will be there for you and Gabe.

Richard, like most of us, was ecstatic when they announced the return of the Winnipeg Jets not only because he had been predicting it for years, but it justified filling his son's closet full of Jets gear. Although Gabe was only able to spend a brief period time with his dad, Richard cherished every moment they spent together. At his core Richard was a gitana shuma (or in English a good soul). We are all confident that as Gabe grows up he will exhibit this same quality. One day, Gabe is going to want to know more about his dad and when that day comes I'm confident that everyone in attendance today whose lives he touched will be eager to share stories about his dad. With time, Gabe will come to realize the scale of his dad's legacy and he will be honored that he gets to carry on the Tapper name.

Richard, on behalf of all of your friends, we love you, we miss you and we will never forget you