

Welcoming Remarks by **George Barany** for Dedication of the **Drs. Michael and Kate Bárány May House Courtyard** of the Episcopal Church Home
Sunday July 22, 2012, noon

Episcopal Homes President and CEO Plakut, Rabbi Spilker, Chaplain Provine, Dr. MacDonald, Family, Friends, and Episcopal Church Homes Staff and Residents,

Good afternoon (or shall I say, good noon). My name is George Barany, and I am a chemistry professor at the University of Minnesota. I would like to welcome all of you to today's program, some of which will be secular, the majority of which will be a non-denominational service led by Rabbi Adam Spilker of Mt. Zion Temple a couple of miles from here and Chaplain Kay Provine of the Episcopal Church Homes, and the culmination of which will be the naming and dedication of this courtyard – after that, we can all get some lunch and start schmoozing! I also want to alert you to a few more things, we'll be playing some of the favorite music of the couple we are honoring, projecting a slide show of pictures taken throughout their lives, and finally, you'll be able to try a couple of crossword puzzles that I've constructed just for this special occasion. (For those of you who don't know this, writing puzzles is a hobby of mine.)

My parents, **Kate** and **Michael Bárány**, led remarkable lives, which ended six weeks apart right here at the Episcopal Church Home. My father arrived at the Transitional Care Unit on June 1, 2011, where the plan was to continue his rehabilitation from surgery for a broken hip. Five days later, back in Chicago, my mother suffered a stroke from which it was clear she could never recover. The family decided that it was most important for my parents to be together at her end, after almost 62 years of marriage, so we arranged to bring her here on June 8. I was very touched by the kindness of Director of Community Relations **Deb Veit** and her staff to allow this to happen, so when my mother passed away on June 13, we decided to make an open-ended donation in her memory to express our appreciation. Meanwhile, my father continued to make progress, and I remember the delight he took just sitting in the sun, watching the waterfalls and butterflies. At the time of his death on July 24, we made a second donation, and then brainstormed with Deb and others on how our monies could best help the Home.

The space in which we are assembled today had been an open area that was covered with rocks, visible from the hallway just outside my father's room (POINT TO IT), and it seemed like such a perfect idea to remember both my parents by converting this area into a courtyard named in their honor. I take credit for nothing more than green-lighting the project, and am delighted with how it turned out. In preparing an article about today's event for the Episcopal Homes newsletter, Communications Director Paul Hagen asked "What role did y'all play

in the courtyard's design?" I answered with rule number one of philanthropy: find out the top priorities of the donee, decide whether it meshes with our goals, provide the funds, and then get out of the way while the professionals do their thing. I remember the happy (and peaceful) moments just sitting with my father in one of the other courtyards, and it is our wish that current and future residents, with their families, should derive their own joys and lasting memories when they visit and relax in the Michael & Kate Bárány May House Courtyard. To which my wife **Barbara** adds "To me what made this idea perfect was recalling Michael's and Kate's daily outdoor (city) walks, usually hand-in-hand."

Just yesterday afternoon my brother Francis (who you'll be introduced to shortly) and I had the privilege of meeting **Ned Souder**, the designer, along with his wife **Connie**, who were putting the finishing touches on the courtyard -- later in the program, you will hear a bit more about Ned's unique vision for this space. (Ad lib a rephrase if they are physically present -- in the actual event, they were there but arrived only after my remarks had ended)

Finally, it was important to our family that we meet today to honor and thank the dedicated individuals who took care of our parents in their final weeks and days, so allow me to acknowledge all those who are here -- would you please raise your hand when I state your name but let's hold the applause until the end:

Dr. **Mark MacDonald**, Medical Director here and my father's final physician, is here with his wife **Diane Hunstad**. I don't know how many of you are aware, but Mark played professional football a number of years for the local Vikings, and my father looked up to him in more ways than one.

Carol Houghtby of Bright Star Care is here, along with **Kathryn Leet**, Director of Nursing, and **Kelly Christopherson** and **Nor Xiong**, two of the caregivers who provided, in 8 hour shifts, 24/7 attention to both of my parents -- Kelly was with us when my mother drew her final breath, and Nor took care of my father the entire night before he passed. During the 7 weeks that Bright Star worked with us, my father became fond of all of his caregivers and knew them all on a first-name basis, while they in turn called him "Professor", which he liked very much and which we the family greatly appreciated.

I've already told you how wonderful **Deb Veit** was to us, but it never hurts to ask her to take another bow. You can also thank her for taking over, on rather short notice, all of the details of making sure today's event goes smoothly. In keeping with the "family values" of this organization, she recruited her husband Paul as a volunteer to help out with the construction and landscaping. Also, be sure to ask Deb and Paul about their brilliant son, Michael, who was one of the top students in a general chemistry course I taught a few years ago at the U. And a quick shout-

out to **Paul Hagen**, who wrote a couple of wonderful articles about my parents that are reproduced in today's printed program, which he also took charge of within the past couple of days.

Please join me in giving all of these devoted individuals a nice hand in appreciation for all they've done for us, and continue to do for others they are entrusted to. And let me add that I've stayed in touch with numerous other physicians, nurses, caregivers, grief counselors, social workers, and administrators both in Chicago and in the Twin Cities who I came to know and trust as they did their best for my parents.

You should also know that some two dozen Barany family members and friends are with us here today, many of whom have traveled a long way in order to share this occasion with us. I'll let most of them introduce themselves to you after the formal program ends. Numerous others could not be here in person, but are with us in spirit. I do now want to call out my indefatigable brother Francis Barany, who also went into the family business and is a professor of microbiology at the Weill College of Medicine of Cornell University in New York City. In a moment, Francis will begin our service with a reading, but before he does, could Marvin Plakut, CEO of the Episcopal Church Homes and Deb Veit, Director of Community Relations, please step forward to join us. We would each like to present you with further funding to cover the remaining expenses of building this beautiful courtyard, and in appreciation of all you are continuing to do in remembrance of our parents.

GIVE THE CHECK. Marvin and Deb, I just want to tell you how much our family appreciates the integrity and compassionate professionalism of your organization – you all treated my father with warmth and respect so that he could keep his dignity, and enabled my parents to leave this life together just as they had lived it. Thank you!