

Shona Kelly Wray Memorial  
August 4<sup>th</sup> 2012  
Berkeley City Club

Brian Thomas

Thank you for coming. I am Brian Thomas, Maggi's husband and I'm here to guide us through today's memorial for Shona. Nicholas was planning to act in this role, but unfortunately his mother passed away Friday morning and decided he would rather not - our thoughts go out to him and all of the Holt family. These have been difficult times for their family, as you can imagine. It has been a difficult time for the Kellys and the Wrays as well. Our hopes are that this memorial today, the upcoming speakers you're about to hear from, and the socializing afterwards will help us, and you, to heal the pain we all feel over our tragic loss.

Before we begin, I'd like to take just a few minutes and give you a bit of a background from Maggi and I on the events surrounding Shona's death - Her death was a shock - I'm sure you'll hear this word many times today as it is about the only word that adequately describes what happened.

3 months ago almost to the day, Maggi and I woke up on a Sunday morning in Berkeley. Over breakfast we received an alarming phone call from Jim and Celia. That phone call was about an alarming phone call THEY, in turn, had received from Randy in the middle of the night.

Shona had been in, or had an accident of some type. She was in intensive care in an Italian hospital. The situation was dire. We were incredulous at first - who wouldn't be? But as the details accumulated, it was clear that something terrible had indeed occurred.

Eventually, about mid-day, we received a brief email from Roisin, a friend and colleague of Shona. In this email, Roisin simultaneously introduced herself to us but also expressed her condolences for our loss!!! Imagine that for a moment?! Roisin had no idea how little we actually knew at that moment. Roisin immediately became a dear friend to Maggi and the family. With the details we received from Roisin, it was clear, this event was going to change us all... forever.

But Shona was in Italy dying, and we were all here in the USA, it became clear we needed to be there. Once that decision was made, that was it - Maggi was on a plane at 9pm that evening - everything else in her life was put on hold so she could get to Italy... 14 hours later, she arrived in Florence. At exactly the same time, Randy and Shane arrived from New York (Alina was already in Florence with her mother). Through the extensive lobbying that Shona's friends did on behalf of the family, all of them - Randy, Shane, Alina and Maggi were able to be there for the last moments of Shona's life. From the time they landed in Italy until the time they departed, Shona's friends at the Villa I tatti, Roisin especially, were incredibly helpful. We owe everyone there a great deal of thanks for everything they did to help the family during this difficult time.

A day passed, a few days, then a week. Maggi was back and we were all trying to make sense of this senseless loss we shared. Maggi and her family decided it was important to have a memorial in Berkeley to celebrate Shona, and here we are.

The last several weeks have been spent planning this event. This venue was chosen with Shona in mind, as was the music, the presentation... all selected to celebrate Shona and her many accomplishments and the memories we have of her.

It is indeed a sad event that brings us together. Loss of this magnitude and suddenness is difficult to recover from. But all things heal with time. Our hope is this memorial will help in that process.

Finally, some of you may have heard that Shona had chosen to be an organ donor. This is especially important to me since my father was the recipient of a donated organ many years ago. He received a kidney... from a young girl who had died in a car accident. This gift saved my father's life and meant a great deal to my family. With Shona's death, let us remember that she also gave life that day. And I think it's a wonderful image -- the gifts Shona gave to Italy, a country and a people she loved so much.