

# It's the drive of a lifetime in honor of Joey's Angels

Grateful for cruise control and the fact that the speed limit on Highway 12 in southern Wisconsin is 65 mph, I raced from funeral to golf outing, changing clothes as deftly as I changed lanes.

It was a day celebrating the lives of a man and a boy, separated in years on earth by nearly a century.

Grandpa Val was 100 and would have turned 101 next month. I suspect he ascended to heaven, where he was greeted with a standing ovation.

Joey Mix was 3½ when he lost his battle with leukemia, just six months after being diagnosed. I suspect he ascended to heaven, was greeted warmly and immediately resumed inspiring those who knew him.

A year after Joey passed, Larry and Patty Mix founded the Joey's Angels chapter of the Leukemia Research Foundation to honor their son and help fight the cancer that claimed him. Last Friday, the Grand Geneva Resort in Lake Geneva, Wis., played host to the 12th annual Angels in the Fairway golf event.



Joe Aguilar

The wheels in Larry Mix's head are always spinning. When he isn't thinking of new things to slap the haloed "JA" logo on, he's thinking of new themes

for his golf outing.

This year, he was stymied.

"All I could come up with was, how appreciate we really are," he told a dinner crowd of 600-plus people, wearing black flip flops, a blue polo shirt and white cap, all sporting the "JA" logo.

I always joked with my wife's grandfather that he was 1 the last time the Cubs won the World Series. Not that he cared, since he was a Cardinals fan and, as fitting, we placed a Cardinals cap on his casket.

Joey Mix was a Cubs fan and got to attend a game at Wrigley Field that same summer of 1996 that he passed. As he says with a smile while looking into the camera in the

home video — which always puts tears in your eyes when it's played at the dinner — he enjoyed a hot dog and a pop that day.

Appreciate life. Enjoy every day. Whether you live until you're 100, or die way too young.

I know Grandpa Val did.

"There was never a bad day when you were with him," my brother-in-law said.

I know everyone who knew Joey Mix appreciated every day they were with him.

"Our memories of you and your smile will always be cherished in our hearts," the program reads, "Love, Mommy, Daddy, Alyssa, Drew and all who knew you."

Joey's Angels has raised in excess of \$1.5 million. This year's outing attracted more than 400 golfers, despite the sluggish economy. Once again, there were more volunteers than you could count.

"I don't even call them anymore," Patty said. "They just show up and know what to do."

It's the one outing that no one, including me, wants to miss.