**Peter’s Eulogy Text:**

Hello. For those who don’t know me, I'm Peter Embi, and I’m Carol’s nephew. It’s my honor to represent our family here today, as we remember our beloved Carol. There’s so much I could say about Carol, and there’s no way I could cover it all or even do her justice today, but I’ll attempt to give you a flavor of what made her such an amazing person to me and so many of us.

It’s often said about people, but I’m here to tell you that in Carol’s case, it’s completely true. She was a great woman, a great daughter to our nana and papa, sister to my mother and uncle joe, aunt to me my brother, my sister and my cousins Danny and Mike, mother to Michelle and Stephen, and grandmother to her Piper – the jewel of her eye.

She also happened to be an accomplished businesswoman, community leader, and philanthropist. Moments like this make you think, and I’ve been thinking that you can measure the worth of a life in many ways. But, if one of those is by the impact you have on others, and I personally like that metric a lot, then I can't imagine a better example than my aunt Carol.

Jim said a bit about this earlier but I think it bears repeating and some mod attention so, let me just say a bit about what Carol meant to so many beyond our immediate family – because it’s truly remarkable.

Of course, some of you know better than me aspects of what she accomplished here in Miami, where she grew up and moved back later in life, but you may not know so well what she accomplished over the past 20+ years in her adopted home of New Orleans. So, I’ll share a bit of that.

The truth is that Carol made an impact everywhere she lived, and that was an even more amazing achievement when you consider that her live wasn’t always easy. In fact, at times she had to deal with significant adversity. After her divorce, she had to work hard not only to raise Michelle as a young, single mother – back in a day when that was even harder than it is now. She only had an undergraduate degree, and she was a newly divorced, single mother, but that didn’t stop her. She needed to raise Michelle and keep going. And she wasn’t going to just make due – Carol didn’t do anything unless she did it as well as she (and anyone) could. So she worked her way up through the business world, eventually moving back to Miami from the Daytona Beach area, to take a position at CAC, accomplishing a lot, and further developing her skills as a leader in healthcare administration – skills that would lay the foundation for the rest of her career.

When she moved to New Orleans for an opportunity in 1993, some would say a risky one, she was undaunted and did what no one else had been able to do to that point. In her role as CEO of Peoples Health, she took risks and was incredibly innovative in order to grow that company from just 60 employees and 1,500 members to more than 55,000 members and nearly 1,000 employees today. National and local organizations have recognized her innovative approaches to healthcare delivery and commitment to creating a healthier community. As someone who’s worked academic healthcare leadership and who had the privilege of seeing up close a bit of what she and her incredible team were doing, I can tell you that the things she was leading years ago at People’s Health were as innovative and forward thinking as any I’ve seen at leading healthcare organizations – academic or private, big or small.

It’s no surprise then that in 2014, she received the Community Leadership Award from Modern Healthcare. She was also recognized as a Driving Force by New Orleans CityBusiness in 2010 and 2015 and as a Healthcare Hero in 2008. She was recognized in 2004 and 2006 as a New Orleans CityBusiness Women of the Year honoree and received the top honor in 2008 as a Woman of the Year, where she was inducted into their Hall of Fame.

But, her business accomplishments only tell part of the story. For Carol, it was always about much more than business. I can assure you from our many conversations, when she was being as candid as she always was, that she recognized first and foremost the “health” part of the healthcare business as being the driver. Of course, she knew she needed to make a profit. After all, you can’t do much if you don’t have a healthy bottom line. But, she never focused on that per se. Instead, she focused on what one can and should do with those profits – to improve not only the company, but the community and the people – all of the people. So she did just that. Carol embraced and truly become a part of her community. She had a passion and love for all the people and culture of New Orleans. From Mardi Gras parades on St. Charles Avenue, to amazing food and her New Orleans Saints. She was also a lover of jazz and music in general. She new the power it had, and so she was an avid supporter of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and Foundation. In fact, she used the resources and influence at her disposal to help others whenever she could, and that was more often than probably any of us will ever knew. Because, while she was very appropriately hailed as a philanthropist, committed to improving the health of her region, she never did it for the accolades. Nevertheless, she got them, because those she touched recognized that she deserved them.

Beyond healthcare, she was also an active supporter of many local organizations, serving on many boards. She was a founding member of the United Way of Southeast Louisiana Women's Leadership Initiative and a board member of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation and the Louisiana Association of Health Plans. She also served as president of WWOZ's board of directors and on the boards of the Louisiana Public Health Institute, Jefferson Business Council, New Orleans Opera Association and United Way board of trustees. I could go on, but I think you get the point…

You see, feeding people, making sure they get to see their doctors, or sending someone to their homes so maybe they don’t have to come to the hospital at all, and making sure they have a great community in which to thrive, that’s all part of caring for people’s health too – trust me, I’m a doctor.  Carol wasn’t of course, but honestly, she has had a greater impact on the health of more people than most physicians can hope to have in a lifetime of practice.

As I said to my children when I told them about her passing, any one of the many things that she accomplished in her life would be something to celebrate for an individual. Articles would be written and permanent memorials established. But she didn't just do one thing or two great things, she did many, and that is something she should be celebrated for and for which we who loved her should be proud.

Now, moving to the more personal, one of the reasons I’m so honored and humbled to be up here today, is that that I always felt a special bond with Carol. We had so much in common. We didn’t speak often – we were both busy and not in the same town – but that’s not it. We just didn’t have to speak often to know how much we meant to each other. And yet, when we got together, we could speak for hours. That’s one of the things that I loved and will miss most - the times I got to talk during my visits with Carol, sometimes late into the night. And, every time we spoke, we saw eye to eye, and I always learned something. I loved the way her mind worked and how she approached the world and situations. And so her advice and support of me – whether while I was growing up, in medical training, while I was starting my family, while I was going through my divorce, or while I was advancing in my own career – and preparing now to take on a CEO role myself – was invaluable. I'm really going to miss that.

(JOKE) Okay, i said we had a lot in common and I have a confession to make to all of you right now. A secret we shared that I don't’ think Carol will mind me telling you now. Carol and I, both, were perhaps the only Cubans on earth who despise beans. Just can’t stomach them. It’s embarrassing but I’m glad I got it off my chest.

Seriously though, the truth is that as I’ve spoken with people who knew, I realize that this ability to find something in common with others and make people feel heard and listened to, to genuinely care, was something so many of us felt. And, that wasn’t an act. On the contrary, it’s what made Carol so special. You knew where you stood with her - for better or occasionally for worse. She was genuine. That may sound  like a small word, and an almost too insignificant one, but I mean it as a high compliment. It’s very hard to be genuine. And Carol was.

So, it’s no surprise that in talking with people, the same words kept coming up – words that I knew were perfectly applicable to those of us in her family – but I didn’t fully realize were equally as apropos to those who knew her in her professional life and in the community:

Generous

Compassionate

Kind

Strong

Focused

Passionate

So, clearly, Carol was an amazing business woman, and amazing community leader, and an amazing philanthropist.

While Carol clearly had a great passion for what she did professionally, One of the things that I have a long recognized, and look to Carol for as a role model for, is the way she was able to balance great success at work with great success in her personal life. Family was always the most important thing to her. This is what was instilled in her and all of us by her parents, my grandparents. Family, including adopted family, is the most important thing. Carol worked hard and she did it to improve in the world. But she was always clear that her work necessarily took her away from family, and that had to be balanced.  I can remember vividly our last conversation where she was talking about her plan for approaching retirement and how she was likely to continue working here and there, consulting because, she of course wanted to continue to give back and she got great joy and a sense of satisfaction out of that, knowing that she could continue to do good in the world. But she also was very practical and understood that people would pay her to do that and that would enable the most important thing to her which was an ability to get all of us together more than anything she wanted her family around her and she wanted her family to interact with each other. She knew that many of us live far away from each other, so what better way to spend her money then by arranging for all of us to get together as often as possible. And I can tell you firsthand that the impact that had on me on my children on all of us were more profound and important and meaningful than anything that she could've done otherwise.

As my sister Laura said when I asked her to recount something special that Carol meant to her – she orchestrated some of the most meaningful experiences of many of our lives. Whether it was the most unique and special locales for Thanksgiving that she organized for us at the Inn at Blackberry farm, surprising us with a trip to Disney World on Christmas morning, or starting a tradition that we intend to continue – gathering each summer in the keys in what can only be described as our own family compound – where children and adults alike developed memories that will last a lifetime, Carol focused on bringing family together. She truly was the matriarch of our family, certainly after the death of our Nana her mother, and while it wasn’t effortless, she made it look effortless. And I know why. It's because she did it with love and from a place of joy. This is something we will continue, Carol. You can count on that.

Now, after we lost Carol and I flew home to sit down with my children and explain to them that their aunt Who had just gathered us for another wonderful Thanksgiving had passed away, after consoling them and after crying together for sometime I asked them if there was anything that they wanted me to say since unfortunately werent able to join us today. My boys told me some things that I've incorporated into this but my daughter, Grace, asked if she could write something and would I read it. Of course I told her I would. And I'd like to close by reading it to you now, as an example I think of how we all feel but really an amazing one as it comes from the youngest generation of our family and I'm sure it reflects what they're thinking as well.

**Grace’s eulogy remarks:**

I never knew much about Aunt Carol’s business, and her role as CEO. I just knew her as my kind, loving Aunt who always had time to talk with me and set up things for all of the family to do while in New Orleans. Even when she physically wasn’t her healthiest, she always acted as alive as ever, her body never slowing down her caring, bright mind. While spending Thanksgiving weekend with her, I was able to have a long conversation with her about my life, her personal and business life, and the atmosphere of America. It was a very nice and informative talk, one that I feel lucky to have had before I left. I feel honored to know Aunt Carol, both as a role model and a very fun, good humored relative. It is a terrible thing for both us and the community that she is gone, but I take comfort that she and her actions will be remembered for years to come, and that she is now in a better place. I love Aunt Carol, and she will continue to be an amazing person in my life.

I don't think I could end it better. God bless You aunt Carol. I love you.