

Hi, Fred Nelson for Community Comment,

As each of us travel on the path of life, we come in contact with many, many people. They include the good and the bad. Some appear very briefly like the person sitting next to you in the theatre, and then you have others who are with you most of your lifetime such as family members. Some persons will have an impact on your life experience and you will remember them vividly. There is no formula for how long you have to be acquainted with a person to consider that he or she is a friend. One of those 'special people' that touched my life was Melvin Mattila. Mel passed away on Thanksgiving Day. He was a twenty five year veteran of the United States Postal Service. Later, he attended Humboldt State University and then began a second career as a school teacher. It was during Mel's Postal career when I first met him. He became a delivery foreman in the Eureka Post Office while I was an assistant operations manager. Being a former letter carrier himself, Mel had great respect for the people that he worked with. This respect, coupled with his friendly personality and a good sense of humor, made for a smooth operation. His friendly and caring attitude was also of immense importance with his frequent dealings with the public both on the telephone and in person. Mel made my life as a manager much easier through his ability to recognize and resolve problems on a daily basis. Mel did not work 'for me' but rather worked 'with me'. I am sorry that I did not let him know how I felt about him while he was still alive rather than now. My success as a manager in the Postal Service was due to people such as Mel. After retirement we lost contact with each other for a number of years as our daily lives took us in different directions. One day, I received a telephone call from Mel. He wanted to tell me how much he enjoyed my Community Comment and wanted to pay me a visit, which he did. From then on, he would drop by the house for a visit or give me a call periodically. Our mutual respect for one another made for enjoyable and memorable visits. Mel was a busy person what with his love for family, baseball, golfing and world travel. I don't think there was anything that Mel was not interested in. It was always so enjoyable to hear him relate his experiences which he did with much fervor. I felt privileged to be a part of his life. If you have a special person in your life, I strongly suggest that you let them know that they are special, and the reasons why, while they are still on this earth rather than write about it later.

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