

From the time I was quite little I was always very aware of and very proud of the work that our dad did out in the world. I always knew that he had his own lab and that he sometimes traveled around the country and the world to share what he knew with other people.

When I was five, it was very exciting when he was summoned off to Moscow to get to the bottom of some sort of medical mystery that was happening at the embassy there. And just a couple years later, it was exciting to get to go see him off in a military plane at Logan Airport because he was being sent to try to save the life of the king of Algeria. (In retrospect I can't think *why* he would have been doing that... but it was exciting, and we were very proud).



And through the years, he would get honorary degrees, and that kind of thing. But our experience of him was as an affectionate, very unself-serious dad.

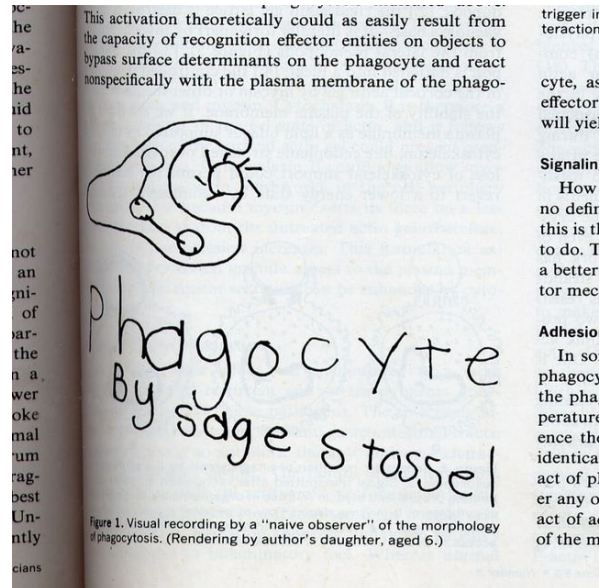
I remember even complaining when I was little: “Why can't you be serious like the other dads?” Because he was always being silly and making goofy jokes and funny noises — which we got a kick out of, but which didn't fit with the vision I had of other dads as somehow more remote and sedate. He was always chasing after us to administer these things he called “face-faces,” “nosy-nosies,” and “woogies.” And on Saturday mornings he would play Sleestack Monster with us, and we would roughhouse and play Climb on Daddy. He was a fan of Monty Python, and through the years he would sometimes wander around the house saying, “I'm in the *silly* party!”

On nights and weekends, he was often in charge of us — especially during the time when our mom was in law school — and it must be said that he tended not to let that responsibility get in the way of whatever he was deeply thinking and writing about.

Probably the most famous incident is the time our mom and aunt left Scott and me and our two younger cousins in his care and went out for the afternoon. When they returned sometime later, they were dismayed to find our littlest cousin Micah sitting on the very peak of the roof of the house, our other younger cousin Jeremy at the top of an enormously tall tree, me stuck halfway up and halfway down the same tree, Scott down in the yard, trying to coax me down ... and our dad *inside* the house, completely oblivious to the goings on outside, diligently working on a paper.

So he wasn't someone who could ever have been accused of being a helicopter parent — if the term had even existed back then. But he always took us seriously and talked to us like grownups about whatever was on our minds, and encouraged us in our interests.

It was my dad who commissioned my very first published drawing. He had taught me when I was quite young how to draw a picture of a phagocyte eating a germ. And I started drawing it all the time everywhere, as if it were my graffiti tag or something. So when he had a paper coming out, he commissioned me to do one to go with it, and it ran in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* when I was six, and I was so proud.



I have a lot of memories like that. One thing that sticks with me is how he would sometimes read us our bedtime stories, and he was quite taken with some of the children's books, and would file away lines from some of them and come out with them at other moments.

We had this one book about Noah's Ark, and sometimes when he was all done talking about something, or if something had just ended, he would pop out with the book's last line: "And that's all about Mr. and Mrs. Noah!"

But the one I remember most was from *Make Way for Ducklings*. Whenever there was a parting — whether it was routine or ambiguous or anxious or fraught — he would say reassuringly, like Mr. Mallard, "I'll see you in a week in the public garden."

So we grew up and moved on into our own lives, and in some sense he did as well. He went on to connect with Kerry, who made him really happy and expanded his horizons even further. And he started doing public health work all over the world and his sickle cell project, and Tammy came into our lives. So it was an expansion that enriched everyone.

But precisely because his life *was* so expansive and engaged, none of us had any inkling that it was anywhere near over. As a lot of people have pointed out, that's exactly what he wanted: he never wanted to get old, or to slow down or become diminished. And nobody ever *will* remember him as anything but in the middle of a million projects and somehow impossibly dynamic.

But it's not so easy for the people who had anticipated a lot more years with him — or at the very least an opportunity to say goodbye.

He was completely unsentimental about these things himself. He outlined his wishes in the event anything should ever happen to him in a document he titled his “Croak Manual.” And as a result, his ashes will be scattered in Wellfleet Bay, which feels right and appropriate. But still, that doesn’t really make for a focal point where people can go to commune with him or pay their respects. (I’ve even thought half-seriously about bringing flowers to the leg extender machine at Willy’s World gym in Eastham where he met his end. Though of course that would probably utterly freak out anyone attempting to work out on it....)

In a sense, though, it feels like it frees people up to say their goodbyes in the places and in the ways that are most meaningful for them. And I know just from Facebook that there are people thinking of him and saying goodbye everywhere from Muchila village in Zambia to research labs in Geneva and Japan, and probably also other places that I don’t even know about.

As for myself, I would just say—

I love you ... I miss you ... I have always been so proud to be Tom Stossel's daughter ... and I'll see you in a week in the Public Garden.