

This year being the 30-year anniversary of John "Brother" Bielen's transition, I was compelled to write a tribute in his honor. My inspiration for writing this work was to capture Brother's essence and how much he valued and invested in each one of our lives. With the cumulative conversations I've had with many of you, and from my own observations, I know he loved and believed in EACH one of us immensely. That is why I'm sharing this tribute with all of you, so you'll never forget how special and precious you are to him and how ... how beyond fortunate WE ALL are to have had the privilege and blessing of experiencing this man's greatness in our lives. Though your name may not be mentioned in this tribute, you are nonetheless there in some capacity. If you look deep enough, you'll find a word, a line, a phrase, or a sentiment that will resonate in your soul. Blessings and Goodness to you all.

- Maurice Weaver

THE HERO OF CHAMPIONS / A LEGACY
of
John "Brother" Bielen PhD

In nineteen sixty seven, in the haze of a new dawn
There came a man with a grand plan; change lives teach-guide transform
New York was the fertile ground John Bielen would plant his vision
With a servant's heart and wisdom to impart he put his gifts into fruition

In the forties lore of Yankee Stadium, a young John dreamt mitt in hand
When an illness nearly stole his life, he sensed a calling, a brave new plan
Sister Barbara, John's kindred spirit, also born with a soul Devine
Saw the mission in his decision and she too served "the least" of kind

Power Memorial was the melting pot in bustling midtown Manhattan
Irish African Italian and Latin were molds for an American dream caption
From borough streets the mean to meek would travel far and wide
Young men came, bus train walk lanes to find their stride ... to fly

Brother's first year was a bear; he was Counselor Coach and Teacher
But soon his boys embraced his mission and turned the aimless into dreamers
From teamwork in the Sheep Meadow dusk, sweat and tears crystallized into guts
The outcast soul had found a home to rise like a Phoenix from the dust

So the seeds of a winning culture grew into a Brotherhood of Champions to perennially bloom
Top national rankings, XC, Penn Champions, became *our* DNA for life's endeavors, pursuits
And *WE* achieved all that on an asphalt track, dodging frank carts pot holes and carousel brats
Guiding at-risk kids from the abyss into bliss, he made skeptics believers, defying statistics

We seedlings of Brother, he'd carefully tend; to expand *our* horizons for a means to an end
"Get an education to the destiny you pen", for the eye of his prize was to see *US* ascend
You always saw the potential in *US*, even when life's circumstances got the best of *us*
And still when the world gave up on *us*, your Love like a dove came and mentored *US*

Barbarys Lovetts Walshs Marsh among other young men, lit the torch for the legacy of Brother John Bielen
Fiorentinos Raffertys and many like Benny followed; Kokomo Ray Brian Daryl and Art Captained in
Masedas Sully Gil, and *you* to add your name to fill ____, anchored with tributes to Brother in their life stories
First Responders Coaches Lawyers Teachers, a collage of professions each with its own destined glories

Tony Matt and then Maurice, chased the four minute mile gods golden wreath
With audacity tenacity and their mastery they crushed adversities by their feet
Two Olympians an All-American, they soared high, flew fast and far
Still, the headlines they and Brother's boys aspire, is to emulate him, their north star

John's now beaming down with Julio-Pete-Paul, other protégé's and Al
They ran life's race from "be good" to great, sporting purple robes in victor's crowns
John's legacy is now firmly planted; **WE'RE** the fruit of his harvest, his golden standard
For Barbara, his heart, Karen-Family his spark, he's claimed the chalice that Love has granted.