For those of you who do not know me, I am Jim Beaupre. I am honored to be here today to share some thoughts about Nick Passino--my friend, who was also a loving husband, devoted father, good neighbor and colleague.

More than 50 years ago, in September of 1958, outside of Jaeger hall at St. Procopius College, I first laid eyes on Nick. Several of us freshman were hanging around the door to the dorm, shooting the bull and wondering what was next? In that initial meeting, Nick showed an aspect of his character, which continued to be a hallmark: People bonded to him, and even then you could see he was a leader. Well, what was next was four years of studying math and physics under the inspiring teachers: William Shonka and Rose Carney …and some pretty good pranks, that Nick had a lot to do with. I remember a lot of sneaking in and out of Father Ron’s dorm for submarine races at the slough and after-hours excursions to Naperville and the rightly infamous Squirrel Cage where we tested our fake IDs, …frequently. And Nick was in the middle of the fun. There were close bonds between Nick and nearly
everyone in our class. Look around you, several classmates are here today, 50 years later. John McGuinn, Rich Loritz, Mike Meier, John Sockrider, Jim Fox.

Now our social life at Proco wasn’t that much, so it’s all the more remarkable that there, Nick and Marylin, future partners for life, met up. It was at a mixer and guess what? Nothing happened between them for several years, … but after that they were always in the same social group. Well, there was only one social group.

I remember visiting Nick in his home town of Fort Wayne, Indiana over one Easter break and meeting his family, his parents and his siblings: Dick, Stan and Susie who are with us today. I became acquainted with Nick’s local friends, Jim Hohenbrink, John Sockrider and Jim Fox, and his loyalty to them. As we know, the loyalty thing stayed with him.

In 1962, of the 60-plus Proco seniors, 13 graduated with bachelor’s degrees in physics and we nearly all ended up going to grad school and making our living in related areas. Nick ended up at Arizona State in Tempe studying optics with an emphasis on infrared optical technology. After we graduated, we scattered to the four corners of the country, but we managed to stay in touch—we wrote letters! And we had many reunions both large and small, seemingly 3-4 times a year for a while. At the first major reunion, Nick and Marylin’s paths crossed, this time for real, and in a major way.
And it went like this: After the reunion, Nick was running late and needed help packing. Marylin volunteered to help and, well, when Nick got back to Fort Wayne, all his clothes were tied up in knots. He called her and the rest is history, which goes to show that love really does move in mysterious ways and what is meant to be, will be. They were married in 1964 and lived in Tempe until Nick graduated with his PhD in 1968.

Nick’s first job was in Huntsville with Teledyne Brown Engineering. He stayed with Teledyne for his entire pre-retirement career. Nick’s mentor at TBE was Harry Watson, head of the Optics department. Harry and his wife Lois became close friends with Nick and Marylin. When Harry passed on, all too soon, Nick and Marylin helped Lois begin her new life. When she began to need assistance, Nick and Marylin helped her manage with the world outside her home. Loyalty and friendship.

Nick is survived by Marylin, his loving wife, 3 children and 3 grandchildren:

Nicholas Richard, artist and sound engineer in Huntsville;
Uta, mother and accounting manager of the Arby’s Foundation in Atlanta with her husband Robert, and 2 girls, Lindsi and Sara; and
Matt, an insurance adjuster in Birmingham with his wife Sara, and daughter Audrey.

Nick spent his entire pre-retirement career working on the nation's defense against ballistic missiles. At Teledyne Brown, he became head
of the Optics Department; and then Director of Systems; and eventually TBE’s Director over all the local army missile defense programs. By 1996, he was the SETAC Program Manager, Teledyne Brown’s biggest contract. In 2000, Nick became President of Teledyne Solutions and continued his leadership of the SETAC contract. He also headed up a number of special studies for the Army and Missile Defense Agency focused on reducing risk and enhancing success in missile flight tests.

In 2004, after his retirement, Nick was recognized as a Teledyne Brown Engineering Fellow, TBE’s highest award. A quote from his award citation: “In a career spanning 33 years, Dr. Passino has made a lasting impact on America's ballistic missile defense efforts.” He also received the NDIA Defense Management Award.

I spent a good part of my life working for Nick and I especially remember that in 1974, he had enough confidence in me to offer me a job at TBE, when I wasn’t really sure I could do applied work in an area like infra-red technology. I remember that and thank him for his confidence. And we shared space in the TBE H-wing basement when all the inhabitants weren’t always human.

In 2002, after leading a successful recapture of the SETAC work, Nick retired to travel, and especially to visit with his brother in Florida and, by the way, fish. Some of the fish stories were plausible. After retirement, Nick has served as President and Treasurer of the Board of Directors of the National Children’s Advocacy Center and on the Board
of Directors of Radiance Technologies.

These were precious years for Nick and Marylin. They traveled a lot, and built a new house. At Nick’s 70th birthday party, guess what, I saw the some of the same people that I first met in college and when I first came to Huntsville. Most of them are here today. Bill Barnes, Skipper Colin, Frank Vann. With Nick, friendship endured.

Just before Nick and Marylin left for Florida for his last time, he came to my 70th birthday party and I remember how enthusiastic he was about going to Florida and visiting with his brother and some of our classmates who were nearby. I wish I had spent more time with him that night.

Many people’s lives were touched by Nick’s. And the question arises: What can we learn from Nick’s life?

Be loyal to your friends and keep in touch through the years. Love and take pride in your family. Bring people together for good purposes and work to achieve good ends.

Nick, you were taken early from us in the prime of good health. Go with God and God bless us all.