

## Thanks to My Dear Friend Fito,

March 20, 2016

This is a message from your buddy Harry. You're one of my longest and closest friends and I very much wanted to be sitting on the side of your hospital bed Friday telling you this in person. Unfortunately, I have to be this week at the Mayo Clinic on my own medical adventure.

But I've been thinking about you, remembering the life plans we shared on the beach of Pochomil drinking rum and cokes nearly fifty years ago. We laughed at how audaciously ambitious those goals were, yet our lives have turned out so much better than we could have imagined.

We were born into wonderful families, rich in love and values, if not money, and taught work habits that have served us well.

We received as good an education as you could get in our time of history all the way up to doctorates at Harvard, not to mention the privilege of being voracious readers in a period of history where so many great books were being written.

We've had various interesting careers – teaching, in business, in public service, and you in government. We've made more money than we imagined possible back then, much more than we needed so could be generous investing it in social causes.

We've had wonderful children and now grandchildren. Our first wives were admirable women and good mothers. In our second marriages we hit the jackpot and have experienced the most satisfying love marriage can offer.

We've even had the time to write our books and leave behind the stories and ideas that shaped us. Even the medical adventures (and both of us have had more than our fair share) have left changed for the better.

But near the top of the list of blessings for me has been my close friendship with you and I particularly wanted to thank you for so many things beside that special afternoon at Pochomil:

Thank you for the chess games on your porch in the house on la Carretera Sur when I was near burnout and you helped me think through an Academic Director problems.

Thank you for our day long meetings in Miami when you'd fly up from Guate and I down from Boston to update our plans and get advice.

Thank you for your encouragement in the most difficult transition in my life when I was struggling with the divorce decision and a return to Central America. You were right

“The stigma of divorce won’t prevent you from making a contribution!”; The last twenty years have been the best of my life.

Thank you for bringing Arrabella into Sandy and my life – we’ll never forget our joint second honeymoon together in Santa Monica.

But most important, Fito, thanks for your inspiring example. Never have I known anyone more optimistic. When things were tough you always saw the bright side; a path out of darkness into life. After the accident in Europe that nearly killed you and took most of one arm, no self pity, no excuses, you just kept going. Your courage in following your own political vision in a society that didn’t support you was a great example to me of leadership with conviction but without enmity.

I could go on and on but just want you to know, Fito, you’re not just a friend I love but one I admire. You’ve greatly enriched my life.

Both of us are on the final stretch. Neither of us knows what’s on the other side. I hope there is another chapter for both of us and I’d like to think that in that chapter we can continue being great friends. Like you, I’m excited to find out what it will be.

A big big abrazo, Harry