



OUR MOTHER IS WEEPING: A Funeral Oration Honoring Henry "Plook" Lucas Jr.
by Walter T. Tillman Jr.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Brothers and Sisters:

Forgive me today, for thinking I am up to the task of representing the value of a giant to a weeping institution. Forgive me today, for the failings of my few words to share the immeasurable gratitude of scores of weeping men and women touched by the angel we honor today. Forgive me today, for my failure to convey the love of generations of Dillard University students for the couple (Plook and Flo) we all cherished. He has transcended to a world we know not - but long to explore.

Beloved, some came to honor a man today. However, those who knew Henry "Plook" Lucas Jr. come to celebrate a legacy. You see, what remains today is a container that was replete with inexhaustible joy, pride born out of compassion and sacrifice, devotion borne of humility and hope. You see, our honor is due not to what's left of our dear friend, but to the memories he gave each of us. We often talk about giants of men, but it is rare to know them personally.

No man (nor woman) is perfect, but some stand heads and shoulders above the rest for a God-given purpose. Henry "Plook" Lucas, Jr. was such a man. We all know of his deep and abiding love for his wife, Florence. We have witnessed how he lit up when he talked about her. Today, joining many others weeping for her loss is a grateful mother - Dillard University. As many of you know, "alma mater" means - our mother. Fair Dillard was a mother to Plook - nurturing him as a young student into the procession of manhood; gifting him his pride and joy - Florence; renewing him with scores of little brothers and sisters eager to hear his stories and bask in his love.

Our mother weeps today at the loss of a dear and favorite son. Dillard University mourns the loss of a son whose love for his mother remained pure ... unquestioned ... unchallenged and uncompromised till his last day. Our mother weeps today at the loss of a jovial son, who could brighten any room with the twinkle in his eye, his gregarious bear hugs, or his avuncular counsel. Our mother weeps today at the loss of a son who danced on floors across this nation with his angel by his side. Our mother weeps today.

But, mother won't weep long! Our mother rejoices that a son, who served her so faithfully, gets to rest from the day to day labor. Our mother understands that the legacy of Henry "Plook" Lucas will inspire generations of Dillard Men and Dillard Women to serve, lead and love!

You know the ultimate measure of a life is not how much money one makes, but the number of lives touched. Dillard University - a grateful mother mourns the loss of her son Henry "Plook" Lucas, Jr.; but the lives he touched give her comfort. Our mother won't weep long because Plook wouldn't stand for it. He wanted all around him to be happy - especially his mother, Dillard University.

Today, a weeping mother - Dillard University, and scores of brothers and sisters honor Plook, but we take comfort in our belief that he has earned his rest. His memory will comfort us till we are reunited.

God bless the soul of our dear brother, "Plook", and comfort all he touched.