Introduction

Attention Getter:
“I planned each charted course. Each step along the byway. And more, much more than this. I did it my way.” These are lyrics to the song “My Way”, (By Frank Sinatra). This song is about a man reflecting upon his life with fulfillment and dignity. “My Way” is fitting for this presentation because it was both my Grandfathers favorite song, and it also perfectly represents his life.

Preview:
In this presentation I’m going to discuss why my Grandfather Joe Goryeb Sr., should be admired not only as a successful business man, but as an extraordinary person and outstanding citizen.

Thesis:
Joe Goryeb Sr. deserves our admiration because he exemplified the values of courage and generosity more than anyone I’ve ever met, and will probably ever meet in my entire life.

Body

I. Joe Sr. grew up in Brooklyn NY, married his high school sweetheart, was a Syracuse Alumnus, and a Korean War veteran. He had two sons and daughter, and worked a long and successful career at Beneficial Financial. After already accomplishing so much in half a century, it wasn’t until later in life where his courage would be coerced even further, and where he would produce his greatest achievements.

a. (Merriam-Webster) defines courage as, “the mental or moral strength to venture, persevere and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty”.
   - In 1981 my Grandfather was laid from his job at Beneficial Financial. At 51 years old he was left unemployed with only 3 months of severance pay. With the situation he was in, he saw an opportunity that could either resolve or damage the financial conflict put upon him. That year he took a leap of faith and exercised his courage by launching his company Champion Mortgage.

b. Courage is important because without risk, there is no reward.
   - Like the (Wayne Gretzky) quote, “You miss 100% of the shots you never take”

c. Joe Sr. simply starting the company was not the only thing that took courage, but the way he conducted business and the consumers he wanted to target was risky as well.
   - Champion Mortgage became famous from their television and radio advertisements with the slogan “When your bank says no, Champion says yes!”. Joe Sr. took advantage of the country’s current recession by drawing costumers with good credit risks who could not obtain loans from overly cautious banks. This formula earned Champion a spot in a giant industry, and put them in the position for great success.

d. My Grandfather quickly turned Champion Mortgage into a family endeavor with his two sons, Joe Jr. and my father Rick, joining him as partners, as well as his wife, daughter, 2 daughter in-laws, and nephew all working together.
   - With their help, Champion Mortgage was recognized by (INC. Magazine) as one of the “500 fastest growing privately held companies in the U.S.” for 3 consecutive years, and Champion grew to be one of the premier mortgage companies in the country.
My Grandfather’s risk saved him financially and created a successful business of his own. However, once he was diagnosed with lymphoma he used his courage once again to this time save his life. This single battle with cancer in turn helped save the lives of thousands more, and awoke his new overarching legacy.

II. As a cancer survivor as well as the CEO of his own company, he saw an opportunity to advance his generosity even further.
   a. (Dictionary.com) defines generosity as, “liberal in giving or sharing, and unselfish”.
      - My Grandfather did just that when he came up with the idea to donate $10 to the American Cancer Society for every loan that the company closed.
   b. This value is important because everybody needs help sometimes.
      - (Bob Vezza) A former employee of Champion recounted once having to deny a man of a loan because he had no home equity to borrow against. This man needed the money to pay for his son’s heart transplant. Months later Bob discovered that his boss Joe Sr. had personally loaned the man $22,000 for the life-saving operation. When Bob attempted to ask my Grandfather about the loan, he said, “Yeah I don’t expect him to pay me back, but it was the right thing to do”.
   c. Champion Mortgage thrived because Joe Sr. generosity made him someone both customers wanted to business with, and employees wanted to work for.
      - Something my Dad (Richard Goryeb) told me was that at Champion they always valued respect and integrity, therefore as a boss he said he would always treat his employees the same as any customer.
      - Out of all of the awards my Grandfather had received, he took most pride in Champion being named in the “Top 10 companies to work for in New Jersey” by the (Business Journal of NJ).
   d. In the year 1997, the decision was made to sell Champion Mortgage to KeyCorp for $200 million, and Joe Goryeb Sr. stepped down as chairman 3 years later.
      - By that time, he was already an established philanthropist raising more than $1 million in the fight against cancer. Even though my Grandfather was now officially retired, his work was not over. The Goryeb family supported a number of different charities and foundations throughout the following years, but the most significant one was to their local hospital in New Jersey. Where in 1999 they donated $4 million to the Morristown Medical Center, a gift that served as the seed money to a campaign that had raised $29 million to build a place that was later named the Goryeb Children’s Hospital.

To summarize, it took courage for my Grandfather to start his own company and none the less offer risky loans. It took generosity to have his employees love their work, and even more so donate millions of dollars to charity.

Joe Goryeb Sr.’s story embodies what it means to be a successful entrepreneur, what it means to leave a legacy, and what it means to capture the American Dream. He was truly the greatest man I have ever met, and while there are so many amazing things I could say about my Grandfather and his life, the thing that made him the most genuine person was his infectious optimism, and his love for both his family and life itself every single day up until his death in April of 2015. Joe Goryeb Sr. lived a fulfilled life without regrets, and like the Frank Sinatra song, he did it his way.

Thank you for listening and I hope my Grandfather’s story inspires you as much as it does for me.