

Good afternoon, my name is Robert Litton Beech or Bob or Bobby depending upon your age and I am the youngest brother of James Loranza Beech. I want to thank all of you for attending this service of Celebration of Life for my brother Jim. I will do my best not to "ad-lib" or "go off script" for the interpreters that are here today.

As you all know, Jim was an exceptionally nice person and a great friend to all he met in his life. My sister Peggy and I did not get to travel around the world like Jim and my older brother Len. While stationed in Frankfurt, West Germany, my sister and I were born and mom informed dad that she would not be continuing to go all over the world with 4 kids, so the Beech family moved to Falls Church VA and dad continued his Army career, while mom continued her nursing career while raising 4 kids.

Please forgive me for names not mentioned, but I wanted to list a number of people that I know were important in Jim's life while growing up in Falls Church. Tommy Orndorff, Dave Boyer, Dave Werth, Bill Booze, Coach Don McCool, Gary Young, Glen Geiger, Sheree Cirlin, Bonnie Nestor and her family and the local leader of Youth for Christ Ron Jenkins.

Growing up with two older brothers was great for me, but not necessarily for them. On more than one occasion as Jim or Len wanted to use a car to go out, I would beg and plead for them to take me along. It was interesting as I became a teenager and could play basketball and bridge fairly well, it seemed ok to Jim and Len to have me along. I still recall all the times I had to get someone to do my morning paper route due to being up all night playing cards with Tommy, Dave, Jim and Len.

It was also interesting the music I was exposed to growing up in the 60's. For Len, it was Jefferson Airplane, Cream, Vanilla Fudge, etc. For Jim, it was Peter, Paul and Mary, John Denver, the Carpenters, Henry Mancini, Peter Nero, etc. Can you tell that there was a little difference going on with my two older brothers.

I remember the day that Jimmy informed mom and dad that he was going to go to Jamestown College in Jamestown North Dakota. They said what and where? Are you sure? The college had fewer students than Peggy and I had at Pine Spring Elementary School in Falls Church. Yet, whenever Jim returned from college on breaks, he would almost always have 2-4 fellow students make the trip with him so that they could sightsee in Washington DC and go up to Philadelphia and New York City. It was wonderful seeing the Jamestown Choir perform at the Capitol Dome. Jim truly loved his time as a Jamestown Jimmie, that's right ... the school mascot/name is J-I-M-M-I-E-S (similar to M-I-C-K-E-Y M-O-U-S-E, that is still to come).

After college, Jim began a long coaching career in girls softball and girls basketball. Some of those important individuals were Pat and Janet Gleason, Horace "Hi-C" Caffi, Debbie and Pam Briggs (in fact, the entire Briggs clan), Carol Murphy, Theo Bertola, Kathy Hurley, Cindy Latchford, Coach Pat Deen, the "magoo" Janet McGee, Debbie Rohr, Martha "JoJo" Greer, Betsy Luxford, Carmel Keilty, Shelly "Bean" Mansfield and the list could go on and on.

And then comes Pat. Over 30 years ago, Jim was blessed to meet Patricia Elizabeth Gaither. The term "soulmate" is used often, but believe me ... in Webster's there would be a picture of Jim and Pat together next to the definition. I would always smile as my sons Chris and Stephen would ask about Uncle Jim and Aunt Pat. They never asked about just one of them, always the two of them together. And boy did the two of them do some traveling together thru the years and who could forget getting an update on "Disney Claude". We have heard of the game/picture "Where's Waldo" ... I think Jim and Pat may have been the inspiration for that or even "Flat Stanley".

Now family. In case you didn't know it, my mother's maiden name was Witt. For almost 40 years now, the Witt Family has gotten together every other year for a reunion in West Virginia, be it at Pipestem or at Canaan Valley. Jim and Pat developed a website to chronicle thru pictures and writings the Witt Family history (including the Witt Family Cookbook – note Congo Squares available during the reception). It is amazing how much joy they have brought to the entire Witt Family for years. I ask that you keep my cousin Susie Beam in your thoughts and prayers as she battles cancer.

Now before I end, I want to pass along my deep and heartfelt thank you to my brother Len, who is now the head of the Beech Family. Your love and support always, but especially over the past few months, has been greatly appreciated by all of us. I remarked to you early one morning in the ICU that I was both happy and sad that when Jim and Pat sold their home in Springfield, that they decided to not move out of the area but stay close by in order to get all of their medical issues done before enjoying the rest of their retirement. But living just a few blocks away from you, I mean really? No, seriously Len, I can't imagine how any of us would have been able to handle this and how much comfort you and Tanya have provided to Pat. I know for me, April 11<sup>th</sup> will forever bring a smile and tear to my eye ... that is the day my oldest grandson Colin Ryan Cestero was born and the day my dear, beloved brother Jim entered Heaven.

And finally, a letter/card for Pat, my beloved sister-in-law and to all of you in attendance

When someone dies, their spirit lives on in us. We can't hug them or see them with our eyes. But we can still feel them in our hearts. That brings me comfort. I hope it does for you, too ...

When we love someone, they become an indelible force in our lives, even after they're gone. We remember the way they told a joke, wore their hair and walked into a room. The littlest things will trigger memories of the sound of their voice, their signing, their scent, the times we spent with them. We recall how they dealt with hard situations when we are faced with the same things. We think about them for no reason at all: what would they say right now? We will always wonder: are they watching over us? Do they know how much we miss them?

Even though we'll never see loved ones who've passed on walk through the front door again, I hope you can find peace with the knowledge that you'll always have a part of them with you. When we love someone, their spirit lives forever in our hearts.

Pat - I'm so sorry for your loss.