

I'm honored to be here today with all of you to help celebrate the life of Jim Beech.

Jim and I were 1st cousins – his mother and my mother were sisters.

For many years the Beech, Williams and Stuart families grew up together in N. VA and spent time together – so rare these days.

We are all part of the famous/infamous “Witt Clan” that has its roots in West Virginia, a TV mini-series in waiting?

Jim can't be given credit for starting the Witt reunions going back to 1964 and 1976 in its current every other year format.

But – Jim and Pat can't be given enough credit for being the creative force in starting the Witt Family website with each of the eight family's history and so much more.

The website contains photos and videos from the past 19 family reunions and July 2016 will be the 20th and 40 year anniversary!

For every member of the “Witt Clan” here today you understand the commitment made by Jim and were a witness to his dedication and hard work on behalf of the Witt's.

Didn't matter if it was from behind a camera, sleepless nights putting together each day's activities, late night trips to Wal-Mart for color printer cartridges, and early morning deliveries of the Will Chronicle to each cabin (something we all anticipated regardless of age) – Jim was all about helping and family.

We will all dearly miss Jim and how he touched our own lives in individual and special ways that go far beyond what I can recite here today in a few minutes.

It's very hard to condense a life time of stories down to a few sentences and I'm sure to leave out something I should've reminded or told you about **my dear friend Jim**.

At this time I'm going to read a poem composed for Jim by another of our 1st cousins – Sue Witt-Beam of Pennsylvania.

Sue is facing her own health challenge and can't be here today so please say a prayer for Sue.