

I'd like to start with a story about Jim from our childhood. As I remember, we were in our early teens and in the Boy Scouts together. One of those summers, we went to Camp Roosevelt or Camp Thunderbird or some camp that was away from home. At these camps, scouts would sign up for sessions that would help you obtain certain merit badges. Jim and I both signed up for Marksmanship. Jim got in a session earlier in the day than I. I had some free time so, without Jim's knowledge, I went to the shooting range while Jim's session was taking place. From a distance, I saw Jim stand up from his prone shooting position and speak to the counselor. I believe Jim was crying. The counselor had his arm on Jim's shoulder and appeared to be comforting him. I knew what was going on. I didn't need to hear what was being said. Jim was such a gentle and peaceful person, that he could not bring himself to shoot a .22 rifle, even at just a paper target. Here he was at such a young age with the strength of conviction to risk embarrassment in front of his peers in order to stand up for his beliefs. I don't think I was ever that strong at any age. I left without Jim seeing me, and I never spoke to him about it. Later in life, when I grew a little wiser, I should have expressed the deep respect I felt for his actions that day. I never did. I admired Jim and I loved Jim. He was a great big brother.

The older I get, the more I can appreciate the things Jim did for our family. In particular, his care of our mother, Anna Lee. I remember Jim always being there for her. And I mean always, not just to take her grocery shopping once in a while or stopping by to visit once in a while. Those were the type of things I did. Jim, and let's not forget Pat, changed their lives to make Mom's care a top priority. They even had her move in with them. They dealt with her day to day care, and believe me, having recent experience witnessing the care of elderly parents, it is a 24 hour a day job. Jim and Pat also took Mom on trips with them. How difficult that must have been. Does anyone ever remember hearing Jim complain? I never did. To me, that was the amazing aspect of Jim's care. Jim's giving of himself for others was honest and came from a loving heart.

Now I'd like to ask you all to help fulfill one of the last assurances my wife Tanya gave Jim on his death bed . . . that we would take care of his wife, Pat. Maybe it was just a coincidence of timing, but just after she told him that we would take care of Pat, Jim passed. Please join Mike, Bob, Peg and myself, our families and friends with helping Pat thru a life without Jim. She is a strong and very capable woman, but losing Jim will be especially rough for her. Jim was not just her best friend and husband, he was like her door into the hearing world and that door has closed. Text her, email her, have lunch or dinner with her, see a show or just visit. Making her a bigger part of your life may help fill the huge part of her life that she just lost.

Thank you all for sharing in this small celebration of Jim's life.