

Hello everyone,

My name is Matt Gaither and I was one of Jim Beech's nephews. I found myself having difficulty writing this because (honestly) I never really took the time to describe what kind of person my Uncle was, and how much he meant to me. I spent many times going over in my head what I wanted to say and how I wanted to say it, over the course of those multiple rewrites, something remained constant: Uncle Jim was special. I realize how vague that sounds but I believe that everyone can agree with me that when they were with both him and my Aunt that things just seemed easier. Carrying a conversation was easier, discussing trips was easier, talking about future plans was easier, just being yourself was easier. Both of them have such a passion for life and for experiencing new things and meeting new people. I can't tell you of how many times he would say that they would be staying with friends (wherever they traveled). Both of them have such a knack for meeting people and making them feel at ease. I know that if time allowed it there would be so many people here that wouldn't be able to fit them all.

So when I was asked to recall things that reminded me of my time with my Uncle, I really took stock of the things that were special between him and me. One of the things that always comes back to me was when I was younger and we were living in North Carolina, my Aunt and Uncle would come down to visit and every single time, he and I would wrestle. I got so excited whenever I found out that they were coming because I knew that I got one more chance to win against Uncle Jim. For as long as I remember that would always visit us and would always treat my siblings and I like we were their own children. I can honestly say that we are blessed to have had such an amazing Aunt and Uncle.

One of the other things, that always reminds of both of them is Disneyland. I think the two go hand in hand with one another. I can tell you for every birthday and Christmas we (my brother, sister and I) got a new Disneyland T-shirt or jacket. It is funny though, because the best memory I have of Disneyland doesn't really even involve Disneyland, at all. I remember one time, we were staying in the hotel room across from them and one night I got to stay with them in their room. I remember that night so well because that is the first night I never got any sleep because Uncle Jim snored so loudly. The word I used to describe it was chainsaw cutting logs. I remember telling my brother and sister that it was like a race, you have to get to sleep before him or you wouldn't get to sleep.

{Washington DC trip} if possible

Both of them are some of the most important people in my life. They were there for every major event and always kept in touch with our lives. I know that I did really take stock in just how important they were to us, until I was older. I told them after they came down for my graduation that they (besides my immediate family) were some of the most influential people in my life. I honestly wish that I could hope to come close to the kindness that they showed others and experience the things that they have experienced. I know that I hope to be as important to my nieces and nephews as they were to us.

Thank you.