

I wanted to first say how much Papa appreciated the support everyone gave him these past few months. When Papa was quite sick in the hospital last fall, I asked him one time about his busy weekend of visitors. I said, “so, you had nice visit with Tom and Connie and Pete?” He was quite tired at that time, but he perked up for this question. He said “Yes! And then phone calls from Dilla, and Ginny and Nor and Thomas... What a family!” You can be sure that every visit or call meant an awful lot to him. Grandma, and my Mom and Dad, took such good care of him, and he needed this and valued this beyond expression.

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Papa was a quiet man, but he was quietly passionate about many things.

He loved woodworking. He created some excellent carvings of birds, carved a full set of chess pieces, Noah’s Ark animals, and other figures that decorate our houses now. His basement workshop was always busy – especially around Christmas. I spent many industrious hours there. He was a true craftsman and also a very practical handyman at home.

He was a skilled photographer – a chronicler of our family, of his Florida vacations, and of nature. He several times won prizes at photo contests. We were often stunned by his slideshows of birds, wildflowers and nature scenes. And he had a special talent for close-ups of family and friends, and for taking group photos where he would set a timer on his camera and dash into the group at the last instant. (I thought he always looked very composed in those pictures, but I’m sure he was breathing heavily.) His slideshows were events that brought the whole family together Sunday evenings and on vacations with the extended family. It was a unifying experience to enjoy these picture shows together, as a family. — Imagine the feeling you have the instant you see a beautiful, or hilarious, photo. — Now imagine sharing that instant with a roomful of people.

Papa was passionate about nature. He was a local expert on birds and wildflowers; a founder of the bluebird trail, for which he and his friend Charlie Murphy built, installed and maintained bird houses throughout this area to reestablish a habitat for Eastern bluebirds. He loved his trips to Cape May, Brigantine, and other migratory bird hot spots. Any of his vacations – the Poconos, Cape Cod, Newfoundland, and especially Florida trips with Grandma – were occasions to see his favorite birds or add to his life list. And he loved to hike. Along with Harrison Rigg and his other friends from Valley Forge Audubon he led weekly five-mile hikes for many years along the Horseshoe Trail and other local trails. He and Harrison often went out days ahead of time to scope out the hike they would take with the rest of the group. So I imagine he hiked twice as much as the rest of us. He also enjoyed fishing, taught us all to be patient fisherman, took us to catch tadpoles.

Papa was also quietly passionate about politics. Sensitive, I think, not to enter into family disputes over it too much, but dedicated to his causes. Very interested in the environment, in foreign policy. And he was an avid reader – a lover of biographies who seemed to be methodically working his way through the library during his retirement.

He loved to garden, and kept a large vegetable garden in Mt. Joy and gardens that took up most of his back yard in Wayne.

He was of course a dedicated follower of the Red Sox and the Phillies. Always kept tabs on the latest trades to and from his favorite teams. Spent many hours listening to Harry and Richie's Phillies broadcasts. You would sometimes find he had sneaked away from a family gathering to listen to the Phillies on his transistor or the car radio. Loved the annual trip to Fenway with his family during the Cape Cod vacation and always joined us on trips to Vet Stadium. Thank goodness the Phillies came through for him in 1980 even if the Red Sox kept stumbling at the doorstep. I'm sure they'll win this year.

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For some time I was puzzled by how quiet a man he was. To me, it seemed at odds with his devotion to all these interests and to his family. He was not one to talk at great length about himself or his interests. (Those of you who know our family well know there are some of us who speak rather sparingly.) But I grew to realize that his actions spoke very clearly and consistently. His passions were evident in the way he lived and were a strong influence on his family.

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He was certainly quietly passionate about his family. Each of these interests was something he shared with us, either as a group activity like a hike or slideshow, as a one-on-one experience like fishing or woodworking where he could teach you, or as a special gift like his many handcrafts.

As a boy I was blessed with a grandfather who had so many hours of time for me, and so much to pass on. On summer Sundays he was our regular companion for a backyard catch – throwing pop-ups until his shoulder must have been pretty sore. On autumn Sundays he took us on hikes – sometimes rambling through leaves on the Horseshoe Trail, sometimes climbing over cable bridges. As the weather got colder I would spend time in his workshop on Christmas projects that to me seemed very sophisticated. And throughout the year I would join him for birding trips – long periods of time to simply hang out with him and learn.

All his passions he shared with us in his understated way, as we grew up. You can see many of these same passions in his grandchildren today, and in his great grandchildren as well. I'm fascinated (if not as experienced) with woodworking; Pete and Nor take his interest in photography; Pete and I, and all my kids enjoy birds – Jimmy keeps his own record of birds he has seen just as Papa taught me when I was his age; Jim has taken love of fishing to a new level, and Jimmy shares that passion; Richie, Robbie, Lane and Jimmy all love baseball; and all of us hold out hope for the Red Sox; and so on. Papa's passions are part of his legacy to us, and are a part of Lane, of Richie and Robbie, of Jimmy, Katie and Christie, and Jing. And soon they'll be evident in Phoebe, in Peter and Henry, and in Drew. He has, quietly, had quite an impact on us all.