

I went for a run early this morning and I paused for a while on Rosewood Drive. Uncle Jim, I can only imagine what fun it must have been growing up there with my dad as your big brother!

It's been two weeks since my father's passing. I've spent lots of time reflecting on his life. There's been a continuous outpouring of support and funny stories. I can tell you that I've smiled and laughed more than I've cried.

I'd like to share a bit with you about my dad's success in just about anything he touched. Dad was good at everything. Except plumbing. At **every** turn, dad was looking for a way to better himself.

Dad was a successful salesman for as long as folks around here can remember. It started with a Plain Dealer route when he was in Junior High School—he would tell you it was six miles long, uphill both ways!

Just as soon as he got his driver's license, dad purchased a truck and started a landscaping business. In the late 1930's dad mowed the lawn and washed windows at the house I live in today. That job was cut short when nuddie photos were discovered in the owner's bedroom. Much to my dad's dismay, his mother would not have her son working in that environment!

Dad worked his way through college with a Propane Gas Enterprise, servicing five trailer parks in Columbus, selling bottled gas, tanks and fittings.

In the early 1950's my dad went to work for Cutler Hammer. Last Saturday I had the opportunity to meet with Joe Kleinhenz, one of my dad's closest Cutler Hammer work friends. Joe shed light on the "good old days" where companies and employees worked on trust, friendship, respect and fun. They worked a 4 ½ day work week—Friday afternoons were reserved for long lunches, where deals were struck over Canadian Club and a handshake. Some of those meetings took place in fishing boats and at the range, shooting clay pigeons. The camaraderie and spirited enthusiasm closed the deal.

In the day of the yellow memo message pad, I'm told my dad had a certain routine disregarding those messages, stating, if it was important enough, they would call him back. Dad was never very fond of being on the phone. He was always a face to face guy. My sisters and others here can tell you of the phone calls that went unreturned. Dad was busy living, having fun, not sitting waiting by the phone.

Dad had a certain salesmanship about him. If he were talking to someone in authority or importance, he always put on his suit coat before the presentation. When it came to selling, dad

meant business. But, he was so good at selling, no one ever really realized they were being sold!

While with Cutler Hammer, there were trips to London, Spain and a trip along the Rhine River. These trips were incentives for the top salesmen and the accounts they called upon. On one trip along the Rhine, my mom locked him out of their stateroom for over 4 hours. There was a wooden toy my mom wanted to buy for their first grandchild, Jack Everett Pepper. Dad said no way to the wooden toy—he could make it himself for FAR less. Another couple on the trip had to negotiate with my mom to get him back to their stateroom!

When my parents found out they were pregnant with me, dad got his real estate license. After all, there were 3 college educations and future weddings to pay for. Dad was equally successful in real estate, doing more business in a part time status than most full time Realtors.

In 1996, I got my real estate license, much to my parents shock and dismay. Dad showed me the ropes, sharing deals with me, introducing me to his favorite title company and favorite inspector. We were never a real estate team. Far from it. We were competitors. Each year we would compare numbers. He always figured out a way to beat me. In 2002, after I had been in the business for 8 years, I thought I had him beat! Finally I had sold more units than he had! But he changed the

rules! We worked on volume that year. In a single \$2 million dollar transaction, he beat me. All of my deals lumped together, and he beat me with the land sale where St. Mary's of the Woods stands on Detroit Road today.

Later, in 2009, it got ugly. The worst possible scenario evolved. I had a brand new listing on Bellaire in Avon Lake. I represented the seller. And dad had a buyer for MY listing. By this time, I had 13 years under my belt (dad had 44). Both of us held our clients best interest at heart. The negotiations were intense. The inspection negotiations were even worse. We didn't speak to each other for about a week. And we avoided each other in the office like the plague. Neither one of us would back down. I was furious. Somehow, we managed to keep the deal moving forward. (I think my mother intervened) At the end of the transaction, my dad left me a note and a tube of Desitin on my desk, apologizing for being a pain in the butt.

Not many little girls get to grow up and work with their dad. I was so blessed to have done so, even throughout the Bellaire transaction.

I was a late in life baby for my parents, and ended up being the son my father never had. Most kids went to sleep to the sound of a cool mist vaporizer, I went to sleep to the sound of a table saw and the smell of sawdust. Dad showed me how to use that table saw, manage a drill press, operate a lathe, maintain

the shop equipment and the importance of cleaning up. I shot his 12 gauge shotgun and I was convinced I broke my shoulder doing it. I learned how to shoot a bow and arrow, I ate with the crew in the belly of a Great Lakes Freighter, and was in the pits with the cars at the Mid Ohio Race Track. He and my mom tried to teach me of the evils of gambling at the VFW hall on Kelleys Island....and I won repeatedly at bingo that night. I had my own set of junior golf clubs and he tried in vain to teach me how to play tennis. As a teenager, he had me sample his Jack Daniel's telling me it would put hair on my chest.

Boats, the water, and fishing were a huge part of growing up. I learned to water ski, drive a trailer, launch a boat, pull up an anchor, bait my own hook, cast, snag rocks, catch fish,but I never did learn how to take my own fish off a hook. Captain Dad always took care of that for me.

And Captain Dad was most certainly loved by his crew.