

## Remembering Jim Frank

My father was Jim Frank, who was the youngest of the Raphael and Henrietta's children. I knew very little about him as he never spoke about his childhood or the years before he was just "Dad." Perhaps Robert or Linda, my brother and sister, learned more. Stories I've heard from others who knew him make him to be somewhat of a prankster, or at least a fun-loving boy. He comes across as less than serious, and I suppose that I saw some of that for myself.

He was fun-loving, but I think that was healthy for him. I recall that he was the one who wanted to take us fishing, or to go down a mountain road without a map, or to buy a model airplane. Life was to enjoy, even if it meant taking a little chance along the way. He provided for us with a job he loved doing. He was an Air Force pilot. We weren't wealthy, but it seems we had enough.

On the fishing trip just mentioned, I recall camping on Lake Ouachita in Arkansas when I was ten. We decided to return to shore during a violent thunderstorm in a heavily overloaded boat. There was no doubt in my mind that we should not be on the water with such dramatic wave swells, but Dad decided he was up for the adventure.



I also remember a mountain road in Idaho. I was only six or so, but it's still clear to me that Dad wanted to take a dirt road shortcut and Mother didn't. I didn't say anything, but I wanted to go down the road also. Dad prevailed, somehow, and we promptly got lost. It was fun. The road got narrower and more treacherous. At one point it was undeniable it was going to go nowhere, so Dad tried to turn around. I remember so clearly being rushed out of the car by Mother and then looking at the car to see that one of the wheels was completely in the air over a steep cliff.

I remember another adventure with a model airplane. Dad bought a small, blue plastic plane with a tiny gasoline engine. I remember the smell of the engine exhaust and the loud noise it made. I don't remember flying the plane as I never got a chance. Dad wanted to fly it first to make sure it worked. I watched him for a minute, then a few minutes, then so long I knew I wouldn't get a turn to fly the little blue plane. I was sure of it when Dad crashed the plane after a steep dive and the blue plastic pieces filled the air and the sound of the toy engine stopped forever. We never did get another plane.

All of these adventures typify my Dad. There were many others, but they all came back to a fundamental premise: "Time flies whether you are having fun or not." Mother would have us study and prepare for someday, always working for something better, while Dad would have us enjoy the moment. Some would say he was unmotivated. Others would say he learned early what many successful businessmen find out too late. In their final days, they

never wish they had spent more days in the office or more time working or getting advanced degrees; they wish they had spent more time with their family and friends enjoying life.

Dad had it figured out. I miss him, but remember him when I think I should spend a little more time working on a project for school when one of my sons might be coming over to visit. From Mother a voice says “keep working!” but from my Dad I hear “go and visit a bit with your son.” I am glad to have had both voices to help me through to where I am today.