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Tribute from Craig Pearsall - Memorable Moments with Dad

Craig Pearsall

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Tribute from son Craig Pearsall, read by Craig at Duane's memorial Service

MEMORABLE MOMENTS WITH DAD

When I was about 14, I went on a fishing trip to Heart Lake with Dad, my brother Mark, and my younger cousin, Brad. We hiked up and over a mountain that is above timber line, and then followed animal trails down the mountain to the lake. Very beautiful, very desolate. Weather was great. We camped there for the night, and fished two lakes. One of the lakes had been winter-killed, which didn't seem to matter much, because catching fish isn't always the important part of fishing. Its just as important to listen for the little ...*bloop*... that your bobber makes on an especially long cast.

Anyway, the next day we packed up our gear and headed back up the mountain. About half way between timber line and the top of the mountain, with a long way still to climb, the dark clouds rolled in and the rain started. Buckets of rain. And lightening. Lots of it. We were very exposed. Dad led us to a boulder that was smaller than an office desk, for us to hide behind. It was the biggest rock on the mountain. About that time, it began to dawn on us that every other big rock on the mountain had probably been exploded by lightening over the years. Dad made us crouch down so low that it hurt. Well, I kept popping my head up to look around, and every time, Dad's big hand would reach out and push my head back down. I think I learned a couple of new words that day that came in real handy after I joined the Navy. The lightening was striking everywhere, exploding several times within about 50 feet of us. It was so close you could smell it. I was young and dumb though, and It wasn't until I saw Dad's face that I fully realized what a scary place we were in. The storm probably only lasted 10 or 15 minutes, but it seemed like forever. As soon as the lightening stopped, we skeedaddled over the mountain and back to the car. Anyway Dad, that was a pretty special trip. Thanks for taking us.

One Christmas when he still had Pearsall Co., Dad gave each of his office staff a nice gift set of two giant clothespins made of walnut, with gold writing on top. One clothespin read, "Do it now". The other said, "Do it later". I was with Dad a few weeks later when he came in to the office on a weekend. He went from desk to desk and took all papers attached to the "Do it Later" clothespins, shifted them over to the "Do It Now" clothespins, and then he threw everyone's "Do it Later" clothespins in the dumpster. I asked him why he was doing that, and he said, "that's not the image I want to project".

Listening to the radio, to the 1964 World Heavyweight Boxing Championship match between Cassius Clay and Sonny Liston. It's the only time I can recall betting on a sporting event with Dad. We had two bucks riding on it. Dad was rooting for the reigning world champion Sonny Liston, partly because he from

Denver. I was cheering for Cassius Clay, who was younger and better looking, and who had been bragging to the press for weeks that he would “float like a butterfly and sting like a bee”, and that he had a secret new weapon called rope-a-dope. Clay won, but Dad didn't think he deserved it. He paid up, though.

Lake Mead – Dad helped me finish building a canoe from a kit. For the inaugural cruise, we drove down to Lake Mead. We got advice at the local bait shop, and decided to camp on the banks of a narrow secluded channel flanked by steep cliffs. The guy at the bait-shop told us the channel was about 400 feet deep there, and to keep our bait close to the surface because of strong currents below. Before setting up camp, we stripped down to our skivvies and went for a swim. We were hot, and had paddled a long way. The whole “400 feet-deep-fast-current” thing had me a little spooked, and the water was pretty cold. About the time we reached the middle of the channel, we heard voices. Girl voices. They were coming from a houseboat making its way up the channel. We swam back to the bank and tried to get our blue jeans on, but we didn't have anything to dry off with, and our legs were so wet they stuck like glue to our pants when we tried to put them on. I think we both had our pants about halfway up to our knees when the boatload of girls went by.

Weather Forecasting – When I was 9 or 10 we were watching the weather report on tv. I asked dad how they know that there is a 20% chance of snow or 10 % chance of rain. Dad, with a very straight face said, “every news team has 10 people in the studio, and every day they all look out the window and write down what they think the weather will do. If 4 people think its going to snow, then there's a 40% chance of snow.

Dad seemed to be good at whatever he tried. He was a wonderful figure skater and skated whenever he could, even into his mid seventies.

He frequently single-handed his 25 ft trimaran until his early eighties, and even participated in the regattas.

One summer Dad took diving lessons and Dad learned to do some really complicated dives, and he did them well. Years later, he still had a good jack-knife and a beautiful swan dive.