

Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

For those who may not know me, my name is Joshua Quick, and today I have the distinct honor of speaking with all of you for a short while about my grandfather, Harry Van Vliet III. I say that this is a distinct honor, because I believe that gatherings such as these are much more about celebrating our loved ones and how they lived, rather than mourning that they are no longer with us. As I look out today on the faces of family, close friends, and other important guests, it reaffirms to me that we indeed have much to celebrate today.

I of course have known Harry, as many of you have, for my entire life. What you may not be aware of is that I never had the chance to know my grandparents on my father's side of the family. Because of this fact, Janet and Harry, or as I know them Gram and Pa, filled the role of grandparents for me in its entirety. When I hear the terms grandmother, grandfather, or grandparents, it is their faces that immediately pop into my mind. This reality makes this occasion all the more bittersweet for me.

There is no doubt in my mind that were we to all task ourselves with writing down our memories of Harry, we would easily be able to fill volumes upon volumes. Obituaries will talk about birth dates and parents, about careers and survivors. But only when we are speaking with each other about our memories and stories do we really get an appreciation of who a person truly was. Sadly, it is unlikely that I will ever get to know all of your fondest memories of my grandfather. However, if you'll permit me, perhaps I can share some of my fondest memories with you.

As a young boy, I can remember sitting on my grandfather's lap and how he, in a very successful attempt to entertain me, he would pop his lower teeth out of and then back into his mouth, much like the drawer of a cash register. Being no more than 4 or 5 at the time, I had no concept of what dentures were, so this was very much a magic trick for me. I am really not sure why I found this so amusing, but amusing it was, so much so that every time I saw him I would just be waiting for him to perform his little magic trick for me, and would not be satisfied until he had. While this memory may seem a bit unflattering on the surface, it is truly the earliest distinct memory I have of my grandfather, and that makes it one of my most cherished.

As I got older, the hobbies we shared together matured. My grandfather greatly enjoyed hunting, and was happy to share his joy with me. One particular trip stands out in my mind.

He had offered to take me turkey hunting, an offer which I jumped at immediately. I remember going to the store with my mother to buy equipment for the trip. I tried my best to remember the tips he had told me. I could hear him saying, "Wild turkeys can see color and have excellent vision, so you'll need actual camouflage, not the orange kind deer hunters use," as I picked out the appropriate clothing. I could also hear him saying, "don't forget to dress warm. We'll be out very early and it will be chilly." So I picked out a hat, gloves, some hand warmers, and even a thermos to keep hot chocolate in.

A couple of days later he and I spent the night at the house of a friend of his who lived out in a more rural area. We arose early the next day, well before sunrise, to get dressed and assemble all of our gear. We then started out into the woods. Once we had left the house, there was not much in the way of talking, as that would scare off the turkeys. However, that does not mean there was not a great deal that was communicated. I studied him intently, stepping where he stepped, looking where he looked, stopping and freezing in place when he stopped and froze. The kind of shadowing routine all that

children use on those they look up to. We eventually came to the edge of a large open field, and that is where we sat down and began the wait.

After 1, maybe 2 hours, a turkey did indeed come into the field. I would have completely missed it had it not been for my grandfather pointing it out to me behind a clump of bushes in the center of the field. We watched as it would walk towards the edge of the bushes, only to turn around and move further behind them. It performed this little tease at least half a dozen times before launching into the air and flying off into the trees on the far side of the field. We waited a few more hours and decided to call it a day.

You might think I would have been disappointed for not having gotten a turkey that day, but you would be mistaken. The day was never about the bird. It was about sharing an experience with someone important to me. It was about learning things that can't be taught in a classroom or gleaned from a textbook. Things that can only be learned by being there and following someone who already knows. I learned a lot from my grandfather.

During these last few years, our time spent together was a little less adventure and a little more reminiscing. We would sit outside the kitchen of the house down in Sleightsburgh, cigars in hand, and he would regale me with stories of his time at the Ulster County Sheriff's department. He was very proud of his time in the department, and I would hear harrowing tales of fighting crime, of near misses, and even how Ronald Regan liked to get up to go running every morning and loved to go for ice cream in the middle of the night. I think it is these times spent sitting outside and talking that I will miss the most.

I could go on and on. I could tell you about holidays spent with family, how he was the person to teach me how to tie a necktie, how he loved to laugh and how he even would teach me colorful poems when my mother and grandmother were not in earshot (poems, I might add, that may me a little more popular at school). But this day is not about my memories, nor is it even about marking the passing of a loved one. It is about celebrating a great man and affirming to each other how lucky we are to have shared in a few trips around the sun with someone like Harry.

You are already and will continue to be missed.

Thank you.