Dad would be the first to admit he had a lousy sense of direction. In the car, he always turned the wrong way. His life could not have more of a contrast. He etched the points on his compass with principles, and the roads he chose never deviated from the course of an ethical life.

Soon after Dad died, I saw for the first time the poem Randy just read. I was astounded that his life could remain true to the exuberant images he crafted when he was only 19 and before he experienced the horrors of WWII which so greatly affected his life’s compass.

Dad didn’t like to talk about himself, but last year middle sister Jeri persuaded him to make some oral history tapes. Also, a tape survives of a local talk-radio show he hosted, and in one segment, he felt obligated to tell listeners where he was coming from.

I learned it was gratitude for surviving WWII that compelled him to do whatever he could to make the world a better place. And that was what he did - sharing his warmth and exuberance with the individuals he knew and using his community-organization training, skills, and wisdom to work for a better society.

Uncle John will be showing slides of Dad’s life, and I’d like to tell you some of the images of Dad that stream through my mind’s eye that weren’t captured on film.

In Madison, Dad setting up a backyard movie theater, showing kids films to the neighborhood - complete with popcorn (of course). He and I poring over the chemical tray watching an image slowly emerge under the amber light in the darkroom. Watching a sound/slide presentation Dad put together for United Way.
Film and projectors were important areas of Dad’s focus (pun intended in honor of Dad). Dad was very proud of his membership in the elite projection club when he was in high school.

Projectors were relatively new, and the teachers didn’t know how to use the different variety of machines. So Dad was among the few students who went from class to class operating the projectors - a techie, in today’s terms. Watching the films he projected in a wide variety of classes nurtured his intellectual curiosity, a lifelong trait.

Dad’s poem captures his engagement with life, and my memories of childhood reflect that ebullience and connection. On weekends, he took us to the zoo to ride the camels, or to feed the ducks at a nearby pond, or to watch the cows being milked at the ag school. He often took me to work on Saturdays, and I helped turn the crank of the mimeograph machine.

I remember walking with him, hand in hand through the capitol building sensing Dad did important work there. Something to do with the migrant workers I met when Dad took me with him to their camps.

Dad wasn’t perfect, though. I learned that the first of several summers when he took me with him to a conference camp. The time was very special because only I was old enough to go. Mom had to stay home with my sisters.

If I hadn’t had long hair, I might have kept my illusions - but during the first summer there, I came to discover that Dad simply could not make a ponytail.

As all of you know, Dad was an extremely considerate person - always thinking of someone else - always doing something thoughtful.

He was also a very courageous person, standing up for what he
believed, regardless of the personal consequences.
Dad kept up his courage during paratrooper training by reminding himself over and over that he could serve as inspiration to the others.
By far the smallest trainee in physical stature, he figured the others would see that if he could do it, they could too.
Serving also as a medic, he earned a bronze medal, which if Gen. Bradley had had his way would have been a silver star.

When it came to his own safety, though Dad never quite considered how his family might worry.
Sometimes courage or foolhardiness trumped thoughtfulness.
He always volunteered to shoot off fireworks for the 4th of July programs.
With his propensity to pyromania, we all worried about whether he’d end up in the hospital or worse.
He’d go off alone on patrols through Shannondale when there were reports of vandalism or suspicious activity.
Not long after his heart attack, he wanted to take out the kayak on his beloved Shenandoah.
Chess was barely able to grab it away as he set off to try to carry it alone down a steep bank to the river.
He could be stubborn.

More pictures: pulling the grandkids behind a cart he made for his tractor.
Stef, our daughter, his favorite granddaughter he always told her, delighting in the geese and goats she saw when he took her to the Jefferson Co fair.

Their meals on wheels time together.
He enjoyed sharing his favorite clients with her just as much as he enjoyed sharing her with all of them.

In musing on Dad’s poem, I was surprised there was no mention of planes and flight.
I think of the stanza relating to dancing as embodying his passion for flight.
One of my fondest memories: recently we took the train to DC and
visited the Air & Space museum.
I wish I had had a tape recorder with me.
He related anecdotes about so many of the photos, articles, and other displays, about his delight and anticipation for the air races that came through Cleveland when he was a kid.
He knew details about so many different types of planes.
And he recounted the first time he flew - when he and commercial aviation were young.
To make up for a last-minute cancellation of their family vacation, his father hired a driver to take them from their home in Cleveland to the Toledo airport.
From there they boarded a plane for the first time and flew back to Cleveland, where the driver picked them up.
Dad’s eyes sparkled when he related the adventure and thrill.
Dad always found any excuse to go to the airport to watch the planes land and take off, and he loved being up in the air, and piloting the plane himself.

The practice of wisdom - I’m stealing a phrase from an essay on humanism that was important to Dad.
He read avidly, synthesized various points of view, and then formulated his own.
He lived a principled life, and he was not overwhelmed or overtaken by cynicism and the tragedies of life - rather he faced all with courage, warmth and wit.

Although Dad didn’t have a much use for organized religion, I think he would be pleased we are gathered here in this church.

First, when Dad was in military training, he honored a buddy’s request and accompanied the fellow to church - a Presbyterian one.
Dad was drawn to sense of ethics and social justice preached by the young minister. and they quickly became friends. The minister recognized Dad’s gifts and asked him to teach a high school Sunday class. When Dad explained that he didn’t have much background in theology, the minister let him know it was Dad’s focus on ethics that he sought. Dad taught that Sunday School class and many more throughout our childhood.

Second, Dad had a very high regard for Randy - Pastor Tremba -
whom Dad credited with convincing our Sen. Byrd to oppose the flag desecration amendment during a lobby session that Dad organized. That victory meant a lot to Dad.
And I think Dad would also have been grateful for all the help and support Randy gave us in thinking about today’s service.

So it’s not a contradiction that we are in this church today and that the last demonstration Dad participated in was what he called the godless march - for maintaining the separation of church and state - an issue that was close to his heart.

In listening to the tapes he made, his stories about the people who influenced him - I felt connected to even those I’d never met. I’d like to track down some people, like the children of Rev. Young, the Presbyterian minister, to let them know how their loved one influenced Dad and lived on in his memory. And that is why it means so much to me that all of you are here today and that you and so many others are carrying his memory. He lives on in so many of us.

What give me solace is seeing that delight you have when speaking of Dad, of your gratitude for having known him. To me it’s not a cliché that he lives on in our hearts. My hope is that our words, the photos, and the music today will nurture the collective memory of his life.

Dad was my inspiration from the time I was little, and he will always be.