

I am Jim Becker and I want to share a few words about Jay, a great guy who was a friend of mine.

Our friendship was molded by mutual respect, common interest and religious affiliation and many, many conversations.

The first time I met Jay was right here in this church where both of our families attend. The first things I noticed about Jay were his intelligence, sense of fairness and his tremendous insight into complex issues. I am sure he was a very good student.

He was a very serious man who never had anything bad to say about anyone. The only reaction you would get out of Jay regarding some particular person or a negative situation was a weak laugh or small smile, but never a harsh word. Remember the job he had!

One incident came to mind as I was reflecting back while putting together these brief remarks. Jay and I attended a Sunday School class, a group of adults discussing our religious beliefs. The question was asked to each member to describe their individual "picture of God." My answer was short and sweet. Jay's answer was a scholarly response about mankind's need for a religious belief and how his beliefs guided his personal life. He had considerable personal insight.

I saw in Jay a man who was comfortable in his own skin, who knew who he was and who was devoted to his wife and children.

I am sure Jay's job was a very stressful one, especially the last few years. Those of you who are fishermen with the IFQ program that the federal government implemented a few years ago know about Jay's job. He wrote the regulations and I can only imagine the pressure he must have been under. I am a commercial fisherman and subject to the IFQ program. This is where I really got to know Jay. Jay knew all the arguments for and against the program and knew all the players with strong opinions. Even when allocation issues between various fishing groups became explosive, Jay never tipped his hand about his personal feelings.

Many Sundays after church I sought Jay out to find out about the latest North Pacific Management Council actions. Jay and I never had a quick conversation regardless of the subject. It seemed like we always ended up just visiting. I enjoyed talking to him. More often than not either my wife or Jay's wife had to break up the conversation because church was over, the coffee time was over and everybody else had left but us.

He never dwelled on his illness except he said one time that he couldn't shake hands because his immune system wasn't working. I knew he was sick and it was serious. His condition was up and down and it seemed like he bounced back from the brink several times. I always felt and prayed that if anyone could beat this thing it would be Jay. But it was not to be.

As a spiritual person, I have often pondered the age old question: after we leave this world, what next? I don't know for sure, but I do know wherever, whatever, it will be a better place with Jay there.

Thank you.