

Hugh Enos Crow



I looked up to my Dad, I always wanted to be like him. Like many people, I am sure, some of my earliest memories involve my Dad. I recall following him around in my very early years as he worked on various projects with his tools. Before joining the Navy, he had apprenticed as a carpenter and I recall being fascinated by his creativity and skills as he worked on various projects around the house. The way he was able to take his Framing-Square and a pencil to quickly strike a few quick lines on pieces of wood – I can still hear the very unique sound the pencil made on the wood – and then to make the cuts with his hand saw – the smell of the saw dust. Then, as if by magic each piece matching up

perfectly with others to form the exact angles he needed.

Some of these treasured tools, like the Framing-Square, are now kept safely displayed high on my peg board in the garage, to remind me of my Dad every time I come into my house. My Dad took on projects big and small. For example, when my Cub Scout troop needed a ramp and track for the Pine Wood Derby, my Dad stepped up. He created and built one from scratch, in our garage on West Drive in Gales Ferry, Connecticut. He did it without directions, or a You-Tube DIY tutorial to guide him, and mostly with materials on hand from other projects. When it was done I was so excited to try out my own Pine Wood Derby car, which he had also helped me build. To my dismay, he didn't let me test my car on the track. "No", he said. "Why Dad?" I replied. "Because," he told me, "it would not be fair to the other scouts for you to be the only one able to test your car out, before the race." I was so mad at him, at the time. It was only years later that the words he said made sense to me. His actions were always informed by a sense of integrity and fairness. This sort of moral integrity is also an important trait that I have aspired to emulate – more on that later.

I looked up to my Dad, I always wanted to be like him. My Dad was a voracious reader of novels, so I wanted to read them too. I learned to love the stories he enjoyed. At first, I was daunted by the size of the books...the small type. The first epic novel I recall reading was "Shogun," by James Clavell, a story about Japanese Samurai. We were living in Korea at the time, it was 1979. The book was enormous, as I recall. I looked it up just now, 1152 pages in paperback. What a great story! I could not wait for the next ones my Dad would hand-me-down... "Tai Pan," "King Rat," and "Noble House," also by James Clavell. There were many authors and genres.

My Dad particularly liked Western's, especially those written by Louis L'Amour. By the time I was in High School I had read dozens written by just this author, that my Dad had passed on to me, all kept in a row on my book shelf. Often, I would read these books at night, in my room listening to the babbling brook outside the window of our house on Inchcliff Drive – a house my Dad had picked out for us before he retired from the Navy.

I remain, like my Dad, always on the lookout for a new author of compelling stories.

I looked up to my Dad, I always wanted to be like him. My Dad was in the Navy, so I wanted to be in the Navy. Probably by the time I was in 6th grade that decision was a done deal. My Dad was a great mentor, guiding me on the things I needed to do to be competitive for selection as an Officer in the Navy, like him. He'd tell me "the Navy isn't looking for just good grades or top athletes, the Navy wants 'well-rounded' candidates." That meant a part time job, some athletics, good grades, extracurricular activities that demonstrate leadership potential, and so forth. So, I got my first part time job, bagging groceries at the commissary in Chinhae Korea. It was 1976, I was 12. I had a part time job after that through high school. I had already started trying my hand at a variety of athletics, thanks to Mom for that. Baseball, football, and soccer. I added Tae-Kwon-Do, alongside my entire family, that year in Chinhae. My Dad, ever subtly, encouraged me also to seek opportunities for leadership experiences like as a Patrol Leader in Boy Scouts and as a Summer Camp Counselor.

By the time I was in high school I had narrowed down what I wanted to do in the Navy, I decided I wanted to be an Aviator. "Fine," Dad said, "get a technical degree." So, I went and got a degree in Engineering. Everything worked just as my Dad said from the start. I got a commission in the Navy, I got to go to flight school.

I feel blessed to have been able to follow in my Dad's footsteps, to serve as a Career Naval Officer.

I looked up to my Dad, I always wanted to be like him. My Dad had uncommon integrity. Each and every day, I continue to aspire to emulate his example.

Though I got my commission in the Navy via NROTC and not via the Naval Academy, as my Dad did – something I regret, but that's a story for another time – I recall, by heart, the Naval Academy's Honor Code, from his time there. Not because he drilled this code into my head, that was not my Dad's way. Instead because he shared it with me in a much subtler fashion that required me to draw it out from him. It came out as a result of my interest in hearing his life stories. He was not the sort to talk about these things of his own volition, but if you were able to catch him in the right state of mind, he would. For example, he would relate his stories to me in the car on road trips. In any case, the reason this honor code was cemented in my memory was because of the example he set for me, that was so very consistent with the code. He lived his day to day life by that code. I saw him make difficult choices in this spirit many times. He used to tell me the true nature of integrity is when you make the right choice when nobody but you or God will know one way or the other. That is, regardless of whether you might ever get "caught" you do the right thing anyway. I am 54 years old now and to this day when I come up against a question of integrity, it is still helpful for me to think of how my Dad would handle it.

My Dad's name was Hugh Crow. I am very proud to be his son. I can only hope that the way I try to live my life is a small testament to my Dad's legacy.

Thanks Dad, I love you.

Reflections by His Son