



THE EARLY YEARS

“Once you have tasted flight, you will forever walk the earth with your eyes turned skyward, for there you have been, and there you will always long to return.”

– Leonardo da Vinci

“You know, Teri, my birthday is now a national holiday,” says Dad with a chuckle.

Dad was born in 1921 on January 15, the same day as Martin Luther King. And just as Dr. King’s life was fueled with a passion for human rights, my dad is a living testament to a life focused on loving every human being no matter what nationality, race, creed, or color. I thank him for passing this life lesson on to me.



Same smile, little four-years-old Jim.

He was eight-years-old when he developed a love for baseball and flying. He was younger still when he picked up a harmonica and taught himself to play; it has been his musical instrument of choice for the past eight decades.

Dad grew up in a small community, West View, about seven miles north of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He had dreams beyond the town’s horizons, and he found himself on the pathway toward those dreams through reading books.