Thank you all for coming here today. I know I speak for everyone here when I say that it means the world to all of us to meet in this place for this purpose.

About three years ago I had the pleasure of presenting an award to my undergraduate synoptic professor for his many years of preparing students to be meteorologists. It was a singular honor, and a true joy. After all, he made me want to be a meteorology professor.

Today, I have the honor to stand before you and speak about the man who showed me how to be a meteorology professor. The sad difference is that today, unlike three years ago, the guest of honor is not here in the audience.

My first encounter with Jim was in 1990, and took place in an unlikely setting, a bus between Calgary and a resort in the Canadian Rockies. I was attending a conference (and flying under the radar, as it were). I did not realize that the lodge was so isolated that there were no supermarkets within about 300 miles so I could eat on the cheap. Jim offered me, a person he’d never met, his breakfast tickets. As you can see, I never did starve, and that was just the first of many meals that he’d provide for me.

I came to SLU somewhat blindly, having seen brochures and catalog listings of the program (this was pre-Internet)–I didn’t set foot on campus until about five days before classes started. I recognized Jim’s name in the listings, but unlike Dr. Market was completely unaware of his stature. Talk about being lucky…I was newly married, 1100 miles from home, and from the first day that I walked into Macelwane I was made to feel like family, and it was largely due to Jim. I think Chuck Graves can attest to that sense of belonging, because we both came to campus at the same time.

I won’t mislead you and say that the experience was easy: I never worked so hard in my life, but it was also one of the best professional (and personal) experiences of my life. Not everyone who attends graduate school (especially for meteorology) can say that, and I count myself fortunate as one of Doc’s gradual/graduate students. To this day I recommend this program to my students, one of whom is in this room right now.

I was a member of the heavy precipitation group (the precursor to CIPS)...we used to joke about that name, paraphrasing the tagline of an old Flintstones vitamin commercial: 600 pounds, and growing. The work that we did together back then is still used by forecasters; to think that I had the chance to work and contribute with Jim is still a great source of pride for me.
Speaking of food, the lunches were legendary...you had to check your sensibilities and any political correctness at the door of the Gold Room. Nothing and nobody were spared; everything was fair game. I don’t remember laughing so much, before or since. After I graduated I would often eat lunch by myself, and it was probably necessary...nothing could come even close to those experiences.

Doc taught me that you could inject humor (well, puns anyway) into the driest and most complex of lecture material and whether you groaned or smiled (heaven forbid if you actually laughed, it encouraged him), it made the learning easier. I still have notes from his classes with pun counts.

He used to ask me what I wanted to be when I grew up, and I’d say I wanna be just like you, Dad. He’d laugh and say ‘nice,’ but I was absolutely serious. I could not have asked for a better professional role model. He showed me that a professor can be fruitful by carefully choosing research avenues that interest you, because that’s the true key to success: do what you love, and everything else will follow. I still follow that philosophy, and I teach it to my students. He always used to say that he wasn’t grown up enough to be a father. He was wrong: he took his students under his wing and treated us as his own. He nurtured us until we were ready to fly. Of course, some of us had to take more time studying for the flying exam than others... When I called Dr. Market with the sad news, I’d told him that we’d lost our academic dad.

My good fortune continued recently...I got to speak with Jim just a few days before he died. I thanked him for all that he’d done to help me be successful as a meteorologist and a professor (having just been awarded tenure). True to form, he said that he had little to do with it. Once again, I beg to differ: without Jim and his guidance I would not be where I am today.

Jim Moore was a giant, and I got to stand on his shoulders. He was nothing short of a brilliant teacher and researcher, and he chose to share his amazing gifts with others. About the only area where he fell short was self-promotion. It was hard to deny the fact that you were in the presence of greatness, except for the fact that he never let you know it.

One of the things that still pains me (and probably will for a very long time) is the fact that I’m not going to pick up the phone and hear him on the other end, spending five minutes talking about real work and another half hour (at least) joking around. Nevertheless, I’m comforted by the fact that Jim lives on in all of us, whether we forecast the weather, teach meteorology courses, or just tell really bad puns.

As a result of our knowing the good Doctor, some are better forecasters, I’m a better scientist and professor, but to paraphrase something Doc was so fond of saying, ‘We’re all better people.’ Thank you.