I think that maybe one of the reasons that we became friends is that I don't want to be too presumptive I consider him a friend. We talked often from the time I came into the astronaut office. The big thing about being in the astronaut office was it you came into this incredible fraternity. John Glenn was among the first people that I met because he would come back like all the astronauts for their annual physicals each year and as a Marine he.
would kind of seek us out and in do a little mentoring and a little coaching and a little pepping up and everything and wishes the best and so that was sort of the beginning of what developed into a multi-decade friendship for me when I heard that John was going to have an opportunity to fly first of all I was jealous because I had left the Marines had left the astronaut office and return to the operating forces of the Marine Corps and at the time that he flew I was actually in Japan in Tokyo Japan at Yokota Air Base.
I was the deputy commander of US forces in Japan and you may say well what the heck does that mean John Glenn's airplane that he had flown when he was on an exchange tour with 50 air force at Yokota Air Base stood on a pedestal.

right there and so I got to see it every day when I came in and out and he happened to have flown with shock him. So not only was there this connection of John Glenn to Japan and the people of Japan and specifically to your code airbase but the shiitake who was on another very close friend and I.
remember when Steve Lindsey shockey John

00:01:50,200 --> 00:01:56,049
the crew came over to Tokyo to do their

00:01:54,009 --> 00:01:58,420
you know their visit their post-flight

00:01:56,049 --> 00:02:00,220
visits they were swamped they were

00:01:58,420 --> 00:02:03,129
mobbed by people

00:02:00,219 --> 00:02:06,189
ee because not only did they have their

00:02:03,129 --> 00:02:09,580
their own Japanese Hiro when but they

00:02:06,189 --> 00:02:13,150
had this icon of spaceflight in in

00:02:09,580 --> 00:02:14,640
senator john glenn he was 77 I think you

00:02:13,150 --> 00:02:17,680
may remember the time and that began

00:02:14,639 --> 00:02:20,229
this contest between Jonathan and me

00:02:17,680 --> 00:02:22,390
when I told him how jealous I was and he

00:02:20,229 --> 00:02:25,750
said ok you can fly again but not until

00:02:22,389 --> 00:02:28,329
you turn 77 so I'm 70 years old today

00:02:25,750 --> 00:02:30,939
not today but I'm I'm 70 years old at
this time and and his he knows he's
still got me because I gotta wait seven
more years but before I can fly again
his friendship 7 flight put America back
into the space not to minimize anything
that had been done you know bye bye bye
Alan Shepard her or any of the the two
flights before him but when when John
flew we were going to orbit the Earth we
were going to granted it was we were
second but that wasn't important for the
United States we were going to
demonstrate that we were just as good if
not better than our our adversary at the
time the whole world watched and the whole world hero held their collective
breath and it was just it was very special for the nation to have to have
John Glenn become the first American who  elevated our planet and and was then able to talk about it no question he became a national hero never flew again because the president wouldn't let him fly
he was so valuable to the nation as this iconic figure that we just did not want to risk putting him back in space again which did not please him but but John
you know is a typical marine he says ok

saluted and went on

I didn't talk to the senator Graham before the flight but afterwards I had quite a few opportunities particularly

in japan as we kind of reminiscent and we talked about what it was like then when he lived in Japan you know during the Korean War and now while I was living there some decades later and anyhoo I had not known before this but John was so typical he didn't talk at all about himself he didn't talk about the flight he talked about he always
talked about the importance of we've
gotta get kids interested in this stuff
again we've got to get them interested
in science and and math and technology
and I think some of the statements that
you see that people remember most from
John Glenn the senator and and post
senator when he went back and founded
the you know the the space the policy
institute on the campus of the ohio
state university he was focused on
educating America's youth to keep us the
the greatest nation in the world
the thing I don't want anybody to miss
about senator Glenn Johnson and
Colonel Glen astronaut glad it doesn't make any difference what you say the love of his life with anything in there was no mistaking that no just to see the two of them together the way they looked at each other I mean for for anybody who's contemplating marriage Europe got to go to school on the glens because they they can teach us a lot about what one ending love what undying respect and admiration for each other means mutual respect because that there was never a question that any was the love of his life in in
fact you know I when I talk to tool in
his daughter a couple weeks ago because
you know we've been kind of knowing that
he was not doing well and that this day
was approaching I would always ask about
her mom and and as I asked about the
senator she said you know is as sick as
he was he wanted to know how I any was
you know he was checking on her and and
saying you know she got to take care of
her
he that that's John that's the John
again that I remember and shall always
cherish the person that in my mind never
thought about himself

there's a great movie that's coming out in January called hidden figures and the movie focuses on a group of African-American women mainly Katherine Johnson. A not marginal figure or character in that movie is John Glenn.

the Mercury astronaut and what struck me so having been through life as an astronaut was when they first arrived at Langley Air Force Base back then the

Langley Research Center and they got out of their cars and they went to greet this these throngs of NASA employees and
everybody else and there was this small group of African-American women off on the side who were the human computers that you'll see about in the movie. Only John Glenn I mean everybody else is going through the crowd shaking hands and then they were hustled off to go to their meetings. John straight off because it was this group of women that he recognized it must have been there for some reason he went over and introduced himself and he shook hands with each of them and let them know how important he felt they were and he became a
central figure in the story of
Katherine Johnson who received the presidential medal of freedom last year
that you know just to be able to connect
the two of them as we were able to do
last week who cared so much for each
other and realized the importance of each other in their lives John Glenn
would have never flown had it not been for Katherine Johnson saying it's okay
and Katherine Johnson would not be this national hero today had it not been for this incredible marine this incredible astronaut john glenn who took
the time to go shake her hand get to

meet her and and and learn how to trust

her and make her feel like she was a

part of the team

John and bodies look like people always

ask a lot of times what what what single

thing would you advise me and I and I

always tell them take care of your

people and they will take care of you

you know it is a it is a dictum that we

learn in the Marine Corps we always talk

about mission first people second but

take care of number two and they'll take

care of number one
anybody who looks at John Gibbons life will recognize it you know John knew that he embodied taking care of your people whether it was as a pilot we're at times he had Ted Williams the great baseball player on his wing and Korea or whether he was leading marines or ultimately in the US Senate where he fought for people many of whom he never knew but he he thought you know their lives were important also and then what he did when he went back home to Columbus in the Ohio State University where he adopted as his focus
for life bringing young people into have

00:09:25,860 --> 00:09:30,000
opportunities to to get do and see some

00:09:28,679 --> 00:09:31,649
of the things that he had seen if they

00:09:30,000 --> 00:09:32,970
realize that science and math were

00:09:31,649 --> 00:09:34,649
critically important

00:09:32,970 --> 00:09:37,200
that's the john glenn that I hope people

00:09:34,649 --> 00:09:39,809
will remember forever and you know John

00:09:37,200 --> 00:09:42,540
Glenn the astronaut that the heat get

00:09:39,809 --> 00:09:44,189
great John Glenn the humanitarian John

00:09:42,539 --> 00:09:46,319
Glenn the human being john when the

00:09:44,190 --> 00:09:48,120
husband you know the love because what

00:09:46,320 --> 00:09:50,390
that's what that's what I remember

00:09:48,120 --> 00:09:50,389
forever

00:09:51,509 --> 00:09:55,788
I will tell

00:09:52,818 --> 00:09:57,858
and kids that this weekend a lot you
know we'll sit down and and and I'll talk to them a lot about my friend John Glenn and how you exemplified everything that we've tried to teach them in about not caring for other people and you know about putting yourself knowing that if you take care of other people then they'll take care of you that was John Glenn that leaves a nanny behind who wants to go to the grocery store today you know so it
should be ready for people to come over

to the house

that's those are the glands