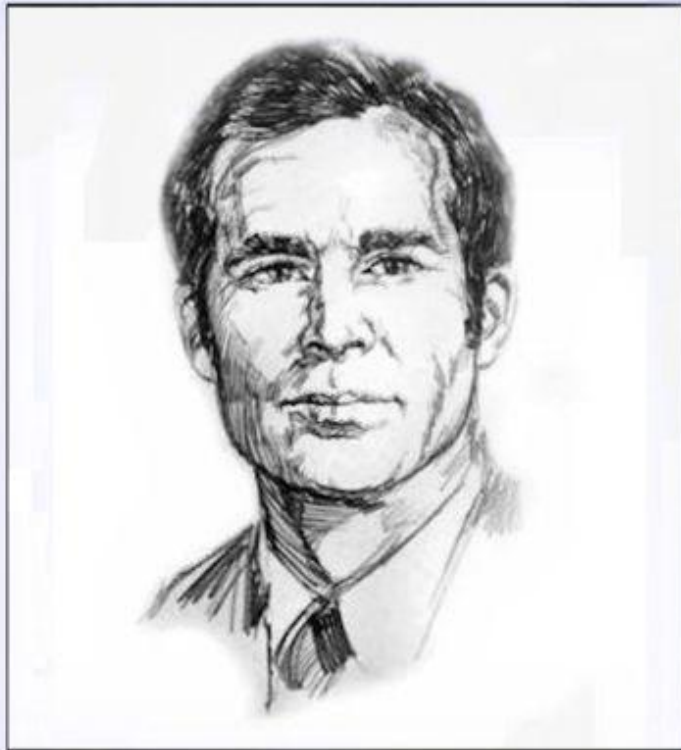


*Gerald Crawford's*  
**INCREDIBLE  
JOURNEY**











# INCRECIBLE JOURNEY



“I don't care about whose DNA has recombined with whose. When everything goes to hell, the people who stand by you without flinching -- they are your family.”

(From Jim Butcher, *Proven Guilty*)

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## Preface to “Incredible Journey”

Although I have been thinking about this project for several years, this is my day to begin. This is January 1, 2008, and I am getting older, and my life is starting to wind down. Already, it seems as if my mind is not quite as fast, and my thoughts do not come together as they once did as a younger college professor. My words need to go on paper without delay.

*“If you are reading this, I’m already home,”* was the title to Tim McGraw’s 2007 hit country single. That song was so very touching to many people. The lyrics to the song were the words contained in a “goodbye” letter from a soldier to his family. It was mailed to and read by his loved ones after he was killed in the war. That is, apparently, a very common practice employed by wartime leaders when young soldiers go into combat. A letter such as this would have powerful memories and personal impact on those family members that are left behind.

This project entitled “Incredible Journey” is similar in that I would like for my wife and sons to have a collection of my thoughts after I am laid to rest. I would certainly have treasured any written memories that my parents might have left for us. About all I have is a few words written in a bible and a few short scribbled notes from my dad's farm ledger. And I also have a few of his old tools that I occasionally use. When I do, it always brings back warm and loving memories of him.

Why would I want to write this memoir? The idea came to me after my dad passed away on April 19, 2005. He was 92 years old. His mind grew cloudy with Alzheimer’s about five years earlier. He was not the richest, smartest, or best educated man on earth. But he *was* the finest man that I ever met. He was an honest, God fearing person, and I know that he always tried to do the right thing. He was also a very kind man. I miss my dad so much, and I ache to talk with him again. As I now go through his things, his notes and possessions that I have kept, tears often fill my eyes as I remember our times together. He taught me so much. There are so many questions that I wish I could have asked if he were only alive today. Oh how I wish that he had written a journal that I could have read after he passed away.

There are additional reasons to write my “memoirs.” First, there are things that I really need to tell family members, in case my exit is earlier than expected. I want each one to know how very much I loved them. And, I want each one to know how much I have treasured our times together. They have been such an inspiration to me over many years. Thank you for all that you did for me and for your support over the years.

Another reason for providing this document is to help family members look into my lingering memory to better see and hopefully understand what I tried to do with my time on earth. There are some things that I am proud of and other areas where I failed. All of us have done things that family members may not understand, and this can create a burden for others to

carry. I have made mistakes and hope that you will now accept my deep regret and be freed of any encumbrances that I have unintentionally created.

A final reason to write about my journey is to think through events and revisit past experiences so that I can better understand those situations that were never resolved in my own mind. I have been rather busy and may not have taken the time to properly understand where I have been and what it all meant.

What topics need to be covered? I must tell you all about my wonderful years with Cindy, our fantastic sons and their families, my mom and dad, and extended families, the Agents and the Crawfords. Other relevant topics include my tumultuous adolescent days, those dangerous teen years, the growing-up-alive days, my early work days, my real career days, and finally, retirement and the challenge of trying to gracefully live as an old man.

There are other worthwhile topics that will be covered. These include some great friends along the way, some fine dogs that we owned, our extensive travels, and our homes where we felt safe and happy. I also want to write about some great and lucky decisions that were made along with some big mistakes that followed me until the end. There should also be a section about things that have been lost in my generation—things that were a part of our lives but things that our children will no longer see. Some examples include: organized religion, hunting, living in a homogeneous culture, being a Democrat, visiting friends and family on Sunday after church, taking a ride with family in the car, eating home cooked meals every day, and simply spending time together as a family. Further, this essay would be incomplete if I did not to discuss new ideas and accepted behaviors that I have struggled to understand and deal with in one way or another. Examples here would include: technology, computers and the Internet, political correctness, liberal racial guilt, rude and impolite people, sexual freedom, the widespread use of alcohol and dope, large numbers of overweight and lazy people, creeping socialism and Muslim extremism.

Family members will be written about in each and every chapter. Some of these stories may cause readers to smile and some might make them sad. I will not intentionally write about things that will hurt anyone, but there are a few things along the way that might be unpleasant. Life is not all sweet and flowery, and this essay will not be that way either. For the most part, all of you, members of my family, have been the one factor in my life that was the most unwavering. I always knew that I could count on you when things went well—or badly. I have enjoyed, admired, and appreciated each of you for a very long time. So, sit back and enjoy what I have to say, and—smile. Do not be sad. We had some wonderful times together. I will always be with you.

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## Chapter 1 – In the Beginning

On Thursday night, August 31, 1939, a small group of German operatives, dressed in Polish uniforms seized a German radio station and broadcast a short anti-German message in Polish. Their goal was to make the attack and the broadcast look like the work of anti-German Polish saboteurs. The reason for carefully noting this date (and the start of WWII) was that my mother was in the process of giving birth. This event was unfolding at the old 40-acre family farm located between Burnside and Stallo, Mississippi. She was in the process of giving birth to her first child. It was a son and that child was named Gerald Lamar Crawford. That was me, and that was my humble beginning in life.

The birth came approximately nine months after John Berryman Crawford III and Scyble Norvell Agent were married in Philadelphia, Mississippi. My sister Joan came along about three years later in 1942, and another sister, Snooky, was born about 17 years after that. I was the first child, a son, and always felt as though I was my mother's favorite. Although no one ever told me so, I just knew it was true. Throughout my life, she always seemed to favor me, and she would do almost anything to make me happy. The fact that my mother "spoiled" me was not a good thing because it probably had a negative influence on me for the rest of my life. I wish that both of my parents had expected more from me. And I wish that they had known how to better point me in the right direction. I know that they would have done so, but they just did not know how to do that. They were poor and uneducated country people, but they meant well, and they loved their children.

No one seems to know for sure where my middle name, Lamar, came from, but my mother picked out my first name, Gerald. She told me that it came from a handsome young man in the Philadelphia, Mississippi area with that same name. I remember my mother telling me that she had a crush on him at one time. I always wished that they had named me after my father John Berryman Crawford. No one ever bothered to tell me that his proper name was John Berryman Crawford III. I did not know about this until his death in 2005. Another thing, I always wished that I had a brother, but that never happened.

My sister Joan clearly seemed to be my father's favorite child. The third child, Snooky, was born in 1955 and brought up in our home after Joan and I had gone away to college. It was during Snooky's developing years that my mother's mental problems progressed to the point that she needed psychiatric help. In my opinion, Snooky never really had a chance in life, as you will later see. Her proper name was Mary Katherine Crawford, and she passed away on September 11, 2005 at the age of 49.

My parents were an odd couple in that they had very different personalities. I have no idea what they ever saw in each other or how they ever lived together for 67 years. I know that their relationship was difficult and often painful for my dad and for his children and seriously debilitating for my mother. My dad was a quiet man who worked hard and seemed to get

along with everyone. He was an honest man and always took the family to church every week. My mother was good to me, and she loved the whole family very much, but she could be hell-on-wheels and everyone seemed to walk softly around her. In her later years I quietly said to myself so many times that “she would never be happy until she was laid to rest.” For reasons that I cannot fully explain, I know that she was always somewhat unstable. And I believe that her problems became more acute as she grew older.

I was actually born in the old Sally Gilbert Crawford home place which was located on the west side of present day County Road 838 about 250 yards before it runs into County Road 832 in Neshoba County, Mississippi. Technically, the property is located at the approximate point where the power lines cross CR 838 (Latitude/Longitude 32.903103 -89.153327). It is about two miles from Stallo, Mississippi and about four miles from Burnside, Mississippi. No one ever told me the size of the property, but it appears to be about 40 acres when viewed using modern day Google Maps. I drove by the old home place in 2012 with my Aunt Nora Dell, and I am sad to say that there is no visible trace of the family house or barns. That original property is now covered by a grove of pine trees, and the closest residence is about one quarter mile south and up a small hill where our little family later lived. There is a photograph of the house that we lived in from 1941 to 1944 at the end of this chapter. It was taken in 1985, but there is now a house trailer on that higher piece of ground.

My Grandmother, Sally Gilbert Crawford, lived on the old home place with my grandfather, John Berryman Crawford, Jr. I do not remember him because he died on July 19, 1940 when I was almost eleven months old. His age was 67 years and three months when he died. I asked my mother about him before she passed away in 2007, and she told me that he had been sick for quite some time before his death. She said that he had some health problems, but it was not his heart. Thinking back over the years, I wish that I had asked family members more about this important relative. After much thought, I do not remember my dad ever mentioning his father to me, and he never took me to visit his grave that I can recall. That is a strange thing to me. In 2012, I visited my grandfather’s gravesite at the Salem Church cemetery which is on County Road 571 about 2 miles north of Burnside, Mississippi. The gravesite is about 15 yards from the road and carefully marked with a nice tombstone.

I wish that I had known more about my grandfather. I was able to locate a picture of him and my much younger grandmother from Ancestry, a computer family tracing website. It is interesting to note that he was about 23 years older than she was when they married. Those photos are located at the end of this chapter. It was shocking for me to see that he looked exactly like my Uncle Henry and a lot like my Uncle Frank and also like my own dad.

There were stories that we heard about my grandfather over the years but that was a long time ago. I seem to remember that he was a local judge at one time. Someone told me about a man who finished his time in jail and later rode his horse past our old farmhouse in the middle of the night. He emptied his pistol into the front of our house. I know that my



grandfather must have been a good, honest, hardworking man because he certainly brought up four sons that were that way. Unfortunately, that is about all I know about him. I truly wish that I knew more about this man. But all of those sons and daughters who could provide the information are gone. My dad was the last one to pass away in 2005.

The first recollection of my parents came when I was about three years old. As mentioned earlier, we lived 300 yards up the road from my grandmother's place where I was born. There were actually two houses up there at one time. One of them was our old farmhouse, and it burned in a fire on a cold winter night in 1942. My father had tried to keep some baby chicks warm on the back porch by burning a candle in a chicken brooder. That was a fairly common practice in those days since there was no electricity or gas out in the country where we lived. There was no fire department out there either, and neighbors were more than a quarter mile away. That fire was a traumatic event for our young family, and I remember it well. I stood huddled with my mother, father, and baby sister as we watched everything the family owned go up in smoke. My mother was sobbing uncontrollably, and my dad held all of us close in the cold wind as the old unpainted wooden structure quickly disappeared in the roaring flames.

Shortly after the fire, we moved into a smaller unoccupied house about 50 yards away from the larger one that had burned. This smaller house was what was then called a "shotgun house" and was constructed of unpainted wooden boards. It had a tin roof and a small front stoop. I clearly remember waking up one morning at this small house and hearing my mother in a wild rage. She was shouting and cursing my father. I do not know what it was all about, but I do remember very graphically that my mother was in the kitchen, throwing stove wood at my father who was ducking and dodging as the wood hit the wall behind him before it bounced back into the kitchen. And I remember another similar situation in that same house when my mother threw all of the dishes at the wall as I watched them shatter. She was mad at my father about something. Although my father never raised his voice, did not drink liquor, talk negatively about others, or mistreat anyone, he was the continued target of her deep frustration. His lifelong pastime was coon hunting and, later, bird hunting. The time he spent in the woods caused countless difficulties in their long and sometimes volatile marriage.

Thinking back to the time when I was about three years old, there are some events that I still remember about living on that hill and in that house. One day, I was playing in the red, sandy, chert road in front of our house. There was virtually no automobile traffic back in those days so the road was a reasonably safe place to play. I needed to use the restroom, so I squatted down under a large tree and took care of business. When I was about half finished, a large snake fell out of the tree above me and landed on the roadway about three feet away. It was not something that changed my life—I just remember that it frightened me.

On another occasion, one of our old coon dogs had puppies, and my dad told me that we could not afford to feed them. After all, it was in the middle of the Great Depression. He took

a hammer and methodically killed each of them by hitting them in the head, one after another. Now, the reader must understand that my dad was a kind and gentle man. I am certain that he was only doing what had to be done. That made quite an impression on me, and I have thought about that many times over the years. I have never understood how he could have killed those puppies. I do not think that I could have ever done that.

And then there was an old abandoned sawmill back in the woods behind our house on the hill. We would walk back there occasionally when my dad would take me squirrel hunting. On one outing, I saw one of our dogs defecating in the woods. After he finished, I asked my dad what that was on the ground. My dad told me that it was the remains of the food that the dog had eaten for supper the night before. That was not an important event either, but it is something that I remember.

The old Sally Gilbert Crawford home place was at the bottom of our hill on the seldom-traveled, red sand, and gravel road. I think my grandparents probably owned the forty acres of property and a very basic frame house. After my grandfather died in 1940, my grandmother realized that she could not stay on the place by herself, so she advertised for a man to run the farm for her. A "Mr. Watson" was hired, and sometime later married my grandmother. They had a few acres of corn, a few acres of cotton, about three cows, and two horses. They also had chickens and guinea fowl. Mr. Watson was a grouchy old man and did not have much time for kids and the things that kids liked to do. My grandmother was a sweet old lady that worked hard and talked to me in a quiet voice. I remember her skin was very white and wrinkled. She loved her sons and daughters but did not talk about it or openly show it. The youngest daughter, Floy, still lived there on the place. Floy was about eighteen years old at the time as I remember. There was a young man that would come by to see her occasionally. It seems that they later married, but that did not work out.

I spent a good deal of time at my grandmother's place and remember it well, even though I was quite young. The small, tar-paper-covered house was only 10 yards from a sandy road that had almost no traffic on it. Most of the family land was across the road where two or three small barns and the farm animals were located. There was also a fresh water spring across the road where we got our drinking and cooking water. It was about one hundred yards away on the edge of a line of trees at the base of a hill. I liked to go to that spring and watch the water bugs run across the surface of water. It was hard for me to understand why the bugs did not sink into the water.

When I was four or five, I remember spending time with my grandmother and Mr. Watson at the old home place. She would talk to me and try to keep me entertained, but economic times were still very hard, and I had to play with discarded items or whatever I could find around the farm. I remember that we regularly ate fried eggs and cornbread for supper. We also had fresh vegetables from the small garden when in season. Food was never thrown away but was

always kept and served later as leftovers. Times were hard, and there was not much to eat in those days.

I remember when TVA came through the area and installed power lines. It was probably in 1943 or 1944. People were excited to get electric lights and other appliances when they could afford them. Someone wired our little farm house, and I remember one naked 60 watt light bulb hanging down in each room. We did not have a refrigerator yet, but there was an old icebox. The ice delivery man came around once every two weeks, and we would buy a 50 pound block of ice. He would place the block of ice in a hole in the ground that was filled with sawdust and covered with boards. My grandmother would chip off a few pieces of ice each day to put into the icebox which was located in the kitchen. It always amazed me that the ice block would last for two weeks—even in the summer.

In those days, my father loved to hunt, and he would hunt coons as many nights a week as he could get away without my mother going into a rage. She was frequently unhappy about one thing or another, but hunting was the one thing that my mother was always unhappy about. Looking back, I can see why my dad probably enjoyed getting out with the coon dogs and a friend or two and away from all of the fussing at home. He told me that when he was a teenager, the family only had one .22 caliber rifle, and he used that rifle to kill enough squirrels to keep the family from going hungry during the early days of the Great Depression. After I turned four or five, he would take me coon hunting and squirrel hunting with him. Many years later, we enjoyed going quail hunting together. By this time, he had acquired a few shotguns and rifles and enjoyed target practice and skeet shooting. He was actually a very good skeet shooter and continued doing that until he was 87 or so years of age. I still have that old .22 caliber rifle that he purchased from Sears and Roebuck in about 1927.

After the tragic house fire, mentioned earlier, and the later struggle to grow corn and cotton crops on those red clay Mississippi hills around Philadelphia, my father applied for a civil service job. He was hired and sent to Hawaii to support the war effort. His work involved the installation of aluminum pieces in or on the outside of military airplanes. When my dad left for Hawaii, my mother took my sister and me to Kosciusko, Mississippi to live on an old family farm with her parents, the Agents. Along with my mother's father, Richard Clarence Agent, and mother, Texie Stuart Agent, there were two aunts living there, Nellie and Katherine. Aunt Nellie had been married at one time and had a son, Bobby Singletary. He had finished high school and was away in the Army. Katherine was in high school, but she married Billy Williams as soon as she graduated.

Living on the Agent farm near Kosciusko in 1944 and 1945 with grandparents was the only thing we could do because of the hard economic times and the war. Those days on the farm generated many good memories that are still with me. I can recall all of the adults sitting around the fireplace on Christmas Eve. We had no TV or even radio at that time. During the colder months, the fireplace provided warmth and a limited amount of flickering light. The

adults would sit around that fireplace after dinner and talk; they would eat homegrown peanuts and pecans and throw the hulls and shells into the fireplace. They would also eat some fresh fruit, which was only available on very special occasions such as Christmas. My grandfather, who we called "Pa-paw," would chew Day's Work tobacco, and he would spit into the fireplace. The conversation was mostly about the war and about hard times. But, there was also a lot of talk about their large extended family. Not many people could afford to come see us in those days. Everything was rationed and money was scarce. Mr. Hannah and his wife were neighbors, and they came by regularly to visit. Mr. Hannah talked a good deal about the Mississippi Delta. Of course, I had no idea what he was talking about at the time.

I remember one Christmas morning, probably in 1944, my mother took me and my little sister Joan outdoors in the snow and showed us tracks on the roof where Santa had landed the night before. I remember thinking about the fire in the fireplace and all of the tobacco juice on the hearth. I wondered why Santa would want to come down the chimney when he could just come in the front door which was never locked. We did not get very many gifts from Santa in those days. Toys were few and far between. Additionally, there was no money to purchase gifts for adult family members. The old socks that were hung at the fireplace for the kids were usually filled with small amounts of candy, pecans, fruit and maybe an item of clothing if we were lucky.

The old Agent place was on Highway 35 about eight miles south of Kosciusko. My grandparents did not own the 100 or so acres. but rented it instead from someone for about \$160 dollars per year. I am not sure if they shared any of the crops with the landowner. They grew cotton and corn, and they cut a lot of pine timber from the land. They also grew some sugar cane and took it to a nearby farm to be processed into molasses. I can remember hoeing cotton and corn across the road from their old home place. It seemed like those rows were very, very long to me when I was between four and eight years of age.

My grandfather had two mules, Molly and Blue. They provided the horsepower for him to plow rows of corn, cotton and sugar cane in the fields and in our large family vegetable garden which was located behind the barn. Those mules also pulled a wagon which was our basic family transportation. Generally, however, we walked everywhere except when we were going into town. About once each month my grandfather would go into Kosciusko for flour and some very basic staples. He would let me go with him, and we would ride in his wagon. It would take the full day to get there, shop, and return home. There was no traffic on the roads in those days other than an occasional wagon or two. My memorable purchase, if there was enough money, was a little round box of BB's which cost about five cents back then as I recall. I had inherited an old Red Ryder BB gun from one of the family members.

We were pretty much self-sufficient in those days because it was the Great Depression, and no one had any money. The Agents raised a few hogs, had three or four milk cows, some

chickens and a large and wonderful garden. And we ate very well at the Agent's farm. I can remember breakfast time, which was about 6 a.m. each morning; there were eggs, biscuits, an occasional piece of thick cut bacon and molasses along with a large glass of fresh milk from our own cows—unless they had gotten into the bitter weeds the previous day. I refused to drink that bitter milk. The big meal of the day came at noon and was called “dinner.” While working in the fields, my grandfather would watch the position of the sun and announce that it was time to go to the house. After we came in from the fields, we would wash up and sit down to a grand meal from the garden. The wonderful home grown food most often consisted of items such as cornbread, peas, new potatoes, butter beans, snap beans, green onions, squash, okra, hot peppers and fresh sliced tomatoes.

After the noon meal, we would sit on the shady front porch for an hour or so to rest and also to avoid the sweltering noonday sun. The older folks would usually catch a short nap. Then we would hook up the mules and go back to the fields. I recall walking behind my grandfather so many times as he skillfully handled the reins and shouted “gee” and “haw” to get the mules turned in the direction that he wanted them to go. I remember how the back of my grandfather's work shirt and overalls would be wet with sweat when we came in from the fields. During the rest time on the front porch, his clothes would dry and make salt circles on his back. On our return to the fields, I could count the salt circles and tell how many days he had worn those clothes since they were washed.

Those family members who worked in the fields usually had about one or two sets of work clothes. These clothing items were washed once per week and my grandmother would use the big, old, black kettle in the back yard to heat up the water and boil them clean. There was a well nearby with an old fashioned hand pump. It was located between the smokehouse and the corncrib, not far from the back of the house. On Mondays, if it was not raining, the clothes were washed then hung up to dry on a long clothesline that ran from the smokehouse to a big pine tree and then down towards the outhouse. I remember that those clothes smelled so clean and fresh after they had hung out and dried in the sun and fresh country air.

Farmers usually like the rain. Not only was it necessary for growing crops, there was always something special about a rainy day. Part of it for me was the smell of rain. When it would rain during workdays, most people on the farm would leave the fields to find a dry place and maybe take a nap. I would usually help my grandfather repair things out in one of the barns. Sometimes, I would just prowl around and explore. One of my favorite things was to watch my grandmother milk the cows. There were two or three cats around the barns, and they helped keep the mice population down. My grandmother could point and squeeze a cow teat, and the stream of milk would go straight into opened mouths of the happy cats. She would also fill an old discarded iron stove leg so that all of the farm cats could drink fresh, warm milk.

When the weather turned cool, the clothes washing area was also used to kill and process hogs. Sometimes neighbors would join us for “hog-killing.” They used that same old, large, black kettle and a scaffold with a pulley to lower the hog carcass into the boiling water so that the hair could be more easily scraped off. It was a family affair, and everyone worked to cut up the meat and put it away in wooden boxes of salt to cure in the smokehouse. The next day was reserved for making sausages and rendering the fat into soap. They somehow used that old, black kettle to boil the fat and mix it with lye to make soap.

That old farm house we lived in was constructed with wide unpainted wooden boards arranged and nailed in a vertical pattern. Narrower wooden strips were then nailed outside to cover the cracks between the wider boards. The wooden exterior had become gray and weathered-looking over the years, and it had a tin roof. The front yard was about 25 yards from the highway and sloped down slightly towards the house and outbuildings. The foundation of the house rested on the ground at the front porch but was about three to four feet off the ground at the back side of the building. There were large rocks that were stacked high under the back side to support the house frame. There was no insulation in those days, and I can remember looking down through the floor cracks and watching dogs scratching and barking. My grandmother would step out on the small back porch and throw dirty dishwater out onto the ground. The kids always avoided that wet and muddy area as we came up the back steps into the kitchen.

The house had two small bedrooms on the north side with a “dog trot” or outside hallway between the two sides of the house. The south side had one larger bedroom, a family room with fireplace, and a small kitchen with a wood burning stove. I usually slept on the north side in the back bedroom under a thick feather-filled cover. The bed was cold when I would first climb in but would warm up quickly—if I remained very still for a few moments. However, I can remember waking up and going out to the washbasin to wash my face and finding the water frozen solid. There was no heat except for the fireplace and wood burning stove in the kitchen, both of which were on the other side of the dog-trot hallway.

When my dad came home from Hawaii in late 1945, we moved to Pensacola, Florida, so he could continue with his civil service job. He worked on Airplanes at the Pensacola Naval Air Station. We lived in a little garage apartment, and the streets in our neighborhood were made of hard white sand. I continued my first grade of elementary school when we lived in Pensacola. We spent about one year living there. I can clearly remember one evening when there was great excitement—firecrackers were going off and automobile horns sounded. My parents told me that the war was over! Now things like sugar, candy, tires, gasoline, and about everything we needed would soon be available.

We moved to Memphis, Tennessee not long after that memorable and noisy occasion. Airplanes were no longer needed by the military, so my father found a job at the Memphis Furniture Company. He helped build sofas and chairs. I remember riding for the first time to

the big city of Memphis in the winter of 1946. We drove beside two tall WMC radio station towers after nightfall as we approached our destination. My parents had bought a nice, new, little, white frame house from Mrs. Earnest for \$2600 at 2840 Oxford Drive in Rugby Park just north of Memphis. I finished the second half of my first grade year at Frayser Elementary School and continued attending schools at Frayser through grade nine.

That period of time brought some good memories as I grew up, and I can also recall some that were not so good. There were two big sweet gum trees on our back property line. I quickly learned to climb those trees and eventually built a tree house in them. It was just a simple platform, between the two trees about thirty feet high. Over the years I remember sitting there routinely surveying the whole neighborhood. I could see out, but others could not see me, as I was hidden by the thick leaves during the summer. Many, many childhood hours were spent plotting and scheming while sitting there in those two trees.

My dad would often take me hunting with him. It seemed that he knew all of the landowners around Memphis and North Mississippi, and he had permission to hunt on their land. I did not particularly enjoy hunting that much, but I did like going places with my dad. If it rained while we were in the woods or fields, we would usually find a tree to sit under and wait for the rain to stop. When it looked as if the rain might continue for a long time, we would put our wet dogs in the trunk of the car and head for the house. I remember so well the smell of wet coon dogs and squirrel dogs.

As a six-year-old kid, I remember sitting around a fire in the woods one night while my dad and Earnest Cox waited for the coon dogs to strike a trail. It was Christmas night in 1946, and I was hoping that Santa Clause would bring a cap pistol and holster to me. I remember asking my dad if he thought Santa would bring what I wanted. He said that he didn't know what I would get. On that particular outing, I remember thinking about all of the kids on our street, and then I started thinking about all of the kids in Memphis. I grew suspicious about Santa Clause's ability to visit all of the children in the world on one single night. That was the time when I decided that it was a mathematical impossibility for one man to be in so many places at the same time. That was the night when I saw through the magic of Santa Clause.

I went to school at Frayser Elementary for my first five years of classroom education. It was an old, red brick building about two miles from our house. I walked to school each day as did other kids my age. I did not study much and made very mediocre grades. I was more interested in exploring new places and making new friends. A good deal of time was spent in a big ditch that was located across the road and down the hill from our house on Oxford Drive. I can also remember that the boys in the neighborhood played a lot of baseball and football in people's yards. I remember seeing the first TV in our vicinity in about 1947 or 1948. We would gather at a friend's house after school and watch "Howdy Doody." When our family finally purchased a TV, I remember coming home from a movie one Saturday

night and seeing it for the first time. My sister and I were so excited. The Lone Ranger was playing on our new 10 inch black and white TV.

There was another moment in time that I will never forget. I was riding bikes with a friend on Overton Crossing, a two lane, paved road that ran from Rugby Park towards North Memphis. We were exploring everything that needed to be explored on that particular day. I remember prying a sewer cover up from the side of the roadbed and pushing it aside so that we could examine the flowing stream in a larger pipe down about six feet from the manhole opening. We held our noses and looked into the flowing sewage. There were many, many used condoms passing by the viewing area. Of course, we knew what condoms were for, and I remember telling my friend that there must be a lot of screwing going on. It was on that day that I realized sex must be a big deal because we could see that there must have been hundreds or maybe even thousands of condoms passing that point daily.

There were many times when I did stupid things. It is no wonder that some people felt that I was a mean boy. I remember that my mother and father often talked about how a neighbor, Buddy Campbell, drove through the neighborhood too fast. He would come out of his house, jump in his car, and spin off, and dust would boil up from the dry and dusty driveway. One day when I was just wandering around, as boys will do, I happened to see a long chain piled up next to a basketball goal in the side yard of the Campbell's house. And next to it was Buddy Campbell's car. For reasons that I cannot remember, I looped one end of the chain around the base pole of the basketball goal and the other end around Buddy's car bumper. And I then went about my business and forgot about it. Years later, his sister told me that Buddy almost killed himself when he took off and the car reached the end of that chain. She said that it snatched the car completely around. No one ever asked me about it, but some apparently speculated that I was the likely culprit. And I cannot remember his ever speeding through the neighborhood again.

When I entered the sixth grade, it was at a big, new school building about 200 yards across the field from the old elementary building. My sixth grade teacher was Mrs. Boyd, and she was a lovely person. I know that my grades went up because I tried very hard to please her. Unfortunately, as years passed, I continued to focus mainly on other things such as a new paper route and on getting a new bicycle and, later, a motor scooter. That motor scooter would eventually give me something every kid needed—mobility. I was ready to go to new places and meet new people. I am sad to report that some of them were unsavory characters that would later have a negative influence on me and on my life. The principal at Frayser High School, Mr. Leon Stevenson, told my mother, who worked in the school cafeteria, that I was “running around with the wrong boys.” So at her request, I stopped being seen with Johnny Parsons, who sometimes smoked cigarettes. To be truthful, however, Rugby Park was not the nicest part of town. Finding good kids to run around with was not easy. And I honestly do not remember trying very hard to find them.



Our family always went to church on Sunday, both morning and evening. We also went to “prayer meeting” on Wednesday nights. We considered ourselves Christians and that meant trying to do the right things. My dad always said a blessing before every meal. And he lived a good life and tried to set a good example. I know that he wanted his two children to grow up to be good people. But I could never have measured up to the standards he set. I did not follow in his footsteps in a religious way either. But who knows how I would have turned out if my parents had not tried very hard to raise me properly in a religious home?

I told the following story at my mother’s funeral service in 2007. It was about an embarrassing church experience that I remember quite well. It happened during a Sunday night service at the Rugby Hills Baptist Church where we were members. The young men’s group, ages 9-12, met upstairs for class. Preaching services were going on downstairs in the main auditorium. The church was pretty new and a good portion of the upstairs area had not yet been finished. After being dismissed, I stayed on the second floor for some unknown reason and decided to explore the big, unlit attic that had not yet been floored. As I carefully moved, lightly stepping on each rafter, I knew one wrong step and I would fall through the rafters and sheetrock ceiling. One wrong step and there was no place to go but down. Then it happened. Everything began to take place in slow motion. I came crashing through the ceiling of the sanctuary, right on top of the minister as they were singing the closing hymn “Just as I am, without one plea.” I have retained a vivid recollection of that event. While falling, I momentarily glanced at the congregation over my left shoulder on my way down. Their faces were seriously distorted, as if in shock, and their eyes were about as wide open as they could possibly get.

The thing that I still miss about church services back in those days is the religious music and hymns. All of those famous old hymns bring back memories of my youth and my dear family. I remember so well how everyone really put their hearts into hymns like “The Old Rugged Cross,” “Just as I Am,” “Standing on the Promises,” “Softly and Tenderly,” and “What a Friend We have in Jesus.”

I could always find some sort of job when I was a kid. People constantly wanted things done, and I was usually in the right place at the right time. Mrs. Irby hired me to ride in her car and throw newspapers on her route. I would go to construction sites and do cleanup work for them. At ten years of age, I shined shoes at the local barber shop. When I turned twelve, I went to Mr. Dent’s store and got a job sacking groceries. There must not have been laws about child labor at the time because I never had any trouble finding work. At home, I was always expected to do chores such as working in the garden or cutting the yard with an old rotary push mower. My dad said that it was good exercise for me.

I remember riding my bicycle to Aunt Katherine’s house when I was about eleven years old. She was always very nice to me and I liked to go and visit during the period before she and Uncle Billy started having children. They lived near the Raleigh area just inside of the

Memphis city limits. I remember two events that happened about this time. The first one left a scar on my forehead that was mostly concealed by my hairline. Their house had rectangular, metal-frame windows that rolled in and out using a hand crank. I remember being outside under one of those windows. When I raised my head, I hit the corner of a metal window frame that happened to be cranked out. I should have gone to the doctor for stitches. But I did not get the needed medical care. Instead, I acquired a scar that became more and more visible as my hairline receded over the years.

Another event that I will always remember involved taking my first airplane ride while at Aunt Katherine's house. There was a little airport over in that part of town, and there was a sign that said: "Airplane Rides \$5." A friend and I saved five dollars each and took a 30 minute ride in a piper cub airplane. I never told my parents about that event. It was truly an unforgettable experience and after all of those years, I still get a feeling of excitement when I see airplanes lift off the runway.

As a youngster, I had several jobs working in retail stores. That meant that I worked after school and on week-ends. That may have kept me out of some trouble, but I longed for the time I could have a normal job and get the weekends off like other people. That did not come, however, until I had finished college. At twelve, I sacked groceries at Dent's Store. They had three checkouts, so the store was not too big. At lunch on Saturday, I would get 30 minutes off for lunch. I usually went across the street to "Steve's Bar-B-Q." I would spend \$1 and this would buy three Bar-B-Q's, at 25 cents each, four big orange soft drinks at 5 cents each, and 3 cents for taxes. That was my usual meal, believe it or not.

My mother did not finish high school. She never had a real career other than what people in those days referred to as being a "homemaker." She did have several part-time jobs along the way. She worked as a clerk in a Woolworth store in downtown Memphis for a while. She later worked in the cafeteria at Frayser School for a few years. After that, she worked the morning shift at Mr. Dent's grocery store in Rugby Park. She worked behind the ice cream counter. Interestingly, I worked the after-school shift behind the same ice cream counter after-school when I was in the ninth and tenth grades. I would go to work and relieve my mother, and she would go home. On Saturdays, at age 14, I sacked groceries at the A & P store near the big Sears building in North Memphis.

I can recall doing some stupid things that only teenagers would do back when I worked in various grocery stores. At Mr. Dent's Supermarket, I remember having a disagreement with Sonny Harper, my immediate supervisor. My way of getting back at him was to tape a big sign on the passenger side of his car while he was at work. I hoped that he would not see it when he got off from work and would drive around town for several days before someone called it to his attention. The sign said "I am a Queer." I did not tell anyone about it, so maybe he was not sure who actually did it. Again, they probably suspected me, but no one ever mentioned it to me.

My father worked at Memphis Furniture Company for a relatively short time. It was tough, hourly work and he did not like the union factory atmosphere. His fellow workers were always telling him to “slow down . . . do not work so hard.” That just was not my dad. He had always worked hard and was not about to slow down at that point. He had another quality that helped him rise above other workers. It was the “gift of gab,” and he wanted to someday find a job where he could use those skills.

His next job was with the Chamberlin Company. He sold products that winterized houses, and in the beginning, he even helped install some of those products in houses. It was basically a door to door type of selling job. He always wore a coat and tie and managed to sell a lot of weather stripping, rock wool insulation, and storm windows to homeowners. He eventually became the top salesman in the Memphis office. That job lasted four or five years.

He then managed to get a job with the National Burial Insurance Company. He stayed with that company for 25 years and retired at 62 years of age. The job involved selling industrial (small burial) insurance policies and collecting weekly and monthly premiums on a route in the South Memphis area. The company expanded over the years and started offering life insurance policies. He worked so hard doing things most people could not do. I remember that he always left for work very early in the morning and came home in the afternoons to take a short nap. Then he would go back out on that route to sell policies to working people after they returned home from work. He worked very hard to provide for his family and because of his long hours, I did not get enough time with my dad while growing up. I honestly believe that if he could have spent more time with me and expected more from me, I could have gotten a better start in life. But there is no sense in blaming my father for my early problems and shortcomings. That rests squarely on my shoulders.

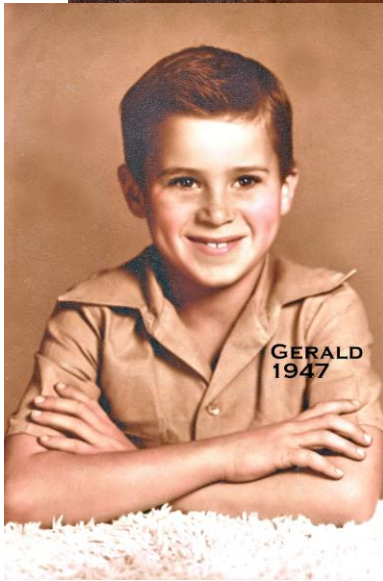
(Photographs follow, also see - <http://geraldcraw.net/>)



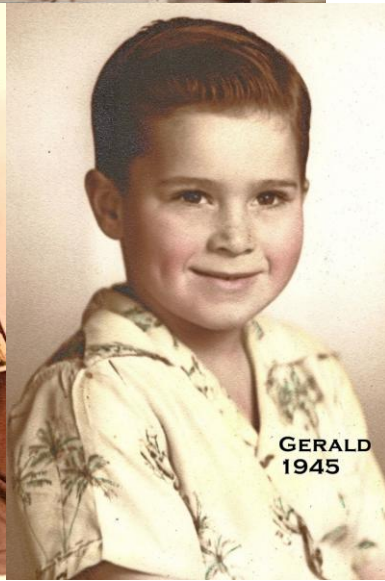
JOHN  
BERRYMAN  
CRAWFORD  
1942



SCYBLE  
CRAWFORD  
1946



GERALD  
1947



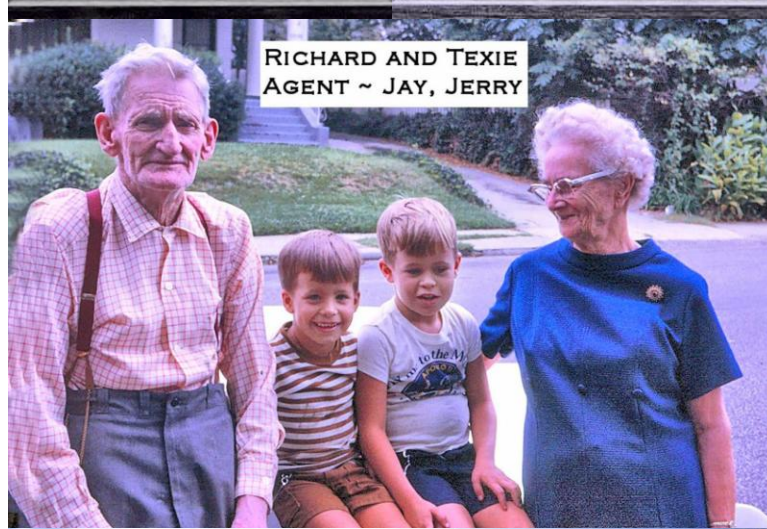
GERALD  
1945





JOHN BERRYMAN CRAWFORD, JR.

SALLY GILBERT CRAWFORD



RICHARD AND TEXIE  
AGENT ~ JAY, JERRY



CRAWFORD HOUSE  
1941 TO 1944



## Chapter 2 – High School Days

Rugby Park was on the low end of the economic spectrum and one of the toughest neighborhoods in the North Memphis area. It grew even worse as the years passed. There was plenty of trouble for a kid to get into, and I managed to get into more than my share while living there between the ages of six to fifteen. I was starting to run around with some tough boys in my freshman year of high school and had gotten into a few scrapes.

This was about the time that I worked delivering newspapers on a route. I carried that route for several months on a bicycle. Then I somehow convinced my dad to let me buy a motor scooter. There were many close calls on that motor scooter. I do not think a driver's license to ride a motor scooter was even necessary in those days. There was one time when I ran into the side of little white Nash Rambler that belonged to the old neighborhood pharmacist. He was moving rather slowly at an intersection, and I just did not see him. It hurt my arm a little, but I never went to the doctor or even told my parents about it.

In those days, newspaper carriers were allowed to leave school at 2:30 instead of 3:00 p.m. like all other students. I remember that I would get on my scooter, crank it up, and maneuver it over to the loose gravel. I would then lean it over on its side so that the back wheel was spinning freely. At that point, I would open the throttle and simultaneously raise the scooter up so that the spinning back wheel would come in contact with the loose gravel. You can imagine what happened. It would throw gravel everywhere. All of my school friends would watch out of the school windows for my daily "show-off" event.

A major turn of events came along shortly after I entered the ninth grade. The freshman football coach, Mr. Pendergrass, stopped me in the hallway at Frayser School and asked if I would like to try out for the Freshman Football Team. Of course my answer was "Yes." I was becoming a big boy, and it did not take too long to learn how to lower my head and to bulldoze people around. Football gave me more confidence than I probably needed to have at the age of fourteen. Some of the tough country boys that I had learned to avoid over the years now found out that I should no longer be harassed.

One particular event that my own sons have heard about was the "Cotton Taylor" incident. There was a tall, blond, redneck boy that had always bullied me around. One day in the gym, he was pushing me around and asking me "what I was going to do about it?" Finally, with my new found self-confidence, I could take it no longer. I kicked him in the groin with all of my strength. He folded up like a pocketknife and fell to the floor. He never caused me any problems after that. My size and athletic experience now gave me the needed self-assurance to do things that I would have never tried in the past. And the girl factor entered into the equation. Unfortunately, this led to some complications that my good old dad helped me try and undo.

There was a cute, little, blonde girl named Sandra Mitchell that lived over on the next street. She was a little older than me, and she taught me many things that I did not know much about as a high school freshman. This involvement started in February and lasted through May. As the summer approached, I managed to purchase a small motorcycle and somehow found a way to continue working part time at the supermarket. These activities kept me busy, and I became much more difficult to find. Sandra's married brother came to see my dad one day to tell him that she was pregnant. I think my dad gave him some money for her to have an abortion. Abortions were illegal in those days, and I never knew any of the details. That is about the time that it was decided that I would be better off transferring to a different school.

My parents considered sending me to a military school to try and get me "straightened out." They talked to a recruiter for the Columbia Military Academy in Columbia, Tennessee. That was fairly costly, so they looked at other alternatives. I wound up attending Christian Brothers High School in Memphis for my sophomore year. That move was good in that I did not get into trouble as much that year. The brothers ran a tight ship. Discipline was not an issue. However, academically it was a waste of time. I earned only one-and-a-half credits and had to attend summer school to catch up.

That sophomore year of high school at CBC was memorable in several ways. I rode to school each day with two other students who had cars. Both of them lived out in the Rugby Park area. One was Ferman Cox, a senior and a great student. The other classmate was Billy Wilson, who was one year ahead of me. He was not such a good student. As a matter of fact, it was Billy Wilson that provided me with my first bottle of Budweiser. I think that I started smoking regularly when running around with Billy. Mr. Wilson, Billy's father, owned several dump trucks and had a small trucking business.

Billy Wilson's parents invited me to go with the three of them to California during the 1955 Christmas vacation period. They had a brand new Buick Roadmaster, and it was plenty big for the four of us to travel in together. It seems that Mr. Wilson had a big lawsuit pending against his small company. He fully expected to lose the suit, so he wanted to "see the world" before he reverted back to being poor. It was a great way for me to see the West Coast, and I think that this is when I first recognized the excitement of travel and the magic of photography. I also remember meeting a darling blonde girl in California. We spent a great deal of time together during this ten-day period. Her name was Mary Spinks. She also taught me a few things that I never forgot.

The one scary thing that I did not know before we left on the trip was that Mr. Wilson was a total alcoholic. He always kept a fifth of whiskey in the front seat. He drank whiskey and chased it with Coca-Cola all the way to Los Angeles and back to Memphis. Somehow, we made it home without having an accident.



During the spring of 1955, my parents were busy building a modest new ranch style house in Bartlett, which is an East Memphis suburb. I decided to attend Bartlett High School for my junior year instead of returning to CBC. I had only earned one and one half credits at CBC, so I had to go to summer school at Bartlett. This new school was pretty exciting for me. It was located in a more rural setting and was a better all around situation. It did not take long for me to make friends with some interesting guys and to become involved with a few girls. Some of these people have turned out to be my friends for more than 60 years.

My junior and senior years at Bartlett High School were good in some ways and not so good in other ways. I did have a few friends and most, but not all, were a bad influence on me. Some of those friends were Bob Fish, Larry Lockhart, Nicky Harris, Goose Farley, and Jerry Duncan. I wasted no time becoming known as a “bad boy” because I stayed in trouble and did not take school seriously. Moreover, I partied and drank too much and ran around with tough guys. I worked at different places, so my parents were never able to keep up with my activities. Besides, they were working too.

I just did not know what to do with my life. I knew that my family hoped that I would amount to something, but I just could not see the roadmap that was needed to get there. My folks had never been to college, and they did not know what steps to take. Further, my dad was so busy working that I saw him very little. It bothered me quite a bit that he never went to any of our football games. (My mother did go to those games, however.)

As a junior, I managed to make the Bartlett football team at the guard position. However, I played mostly on the defensive squad. When the season was about half over, I was injured one afternoon during a practice session. I was about to make a downfield tackle when Steve Pensinger, a running back, managed to stop me from making the tackle. I received a concussion and a badly broken nose and stayed in the hospital for about three days. The doctor did a lousy job of repairing my nose. It was still fairly crooked. That caused me a lot of pain and breathing problems later in life. About 28 years later, in 1985, Dr. Gaylon McCullough, a noted plastic surgeon, rebuilt the superstructure of my nose. That helped my breathing problems a great deal. And he helped straighten my nose so that it would look a little better.

It was about twenty years later when I gave that football injury some proper thought. For the first time, I could clearly remember how it happened. Steve Pensinger hit me in the face with his fist! It is probably good that it took me so many years to visualize how the injury actually happened. I am certain that I would have waited for the right place and time to repay him for that very painful injury.

My sister Joan and I never had much of a relationship. We were three years apart in school and rarely saw each other when we were growing up. I never stayed at home because of work or football. People have told me that Joan was a saint. She was more like my dad, quiet, kind

and hard working. She must have also been adversely affected by our home environment. I suspect that she, too, could not wait to get out of that house. At Bartlett, Joan was not a social butterfly and didn't have high profile friends. She did have a nice boyfriend at Bartlett school, and I remember that he was a freshman football player. His name was Don Billingsley. Her qualities were best described as being a nice person and a kind person. I am ashamed of the fact that I did not make much of an effort to know her better.

It seemed as though I stayed in some sort of trouble all of the time at Bartlett. When I did get into trouble, my good old dad would usually help fix the problem. Looking back, I am thankful that he was there to help. However, I wish that we had taken the time to talk more about those situations, and maybe he could have given me guidance about avoiding problems in the future. I was basically out there on my own, trying to grow up and solve the world's problems by myself. In later chapters the reader will see that I tried extra hard to help guide my own sons towards good behavior, to help with character development, and with possible career paths. I simply wanted them to make good choices. Maybe I tried too hard with them? I think that my oldest son may have felt that I was too involved in his life. Hopefully, he will read these words some day and will see why I tried so hard to help him do well in school and go to college so that he could have a better life than his father.

I think Bob Fish, one of my two best friends at Bartlett, had an IQ of about 90. But everyone loved him, and he was a class favorite. Although he was small, he was a good running back on the football team. We later worked at summer jobs together, and he even went to Northwest Junior College with me for one year. Bob was not a good influence on me. I did try to help him along the way. His grades were marginal, and he cheated or did whatever was required to pass his classes. He never went to a senior college. His first job was being a cameraman for a local Memphis TV station. Bob later found a job at the telephone company where his dad had always worked. Bob married a local girl. I do not think she ever went to college. They had two daughters. Bob always drank too much. He had family problems and never moved up into management at the telephone company. His wife was a diabetic and died in about 2006. Bob retired from the telephone company with a small pension and has started living with a girlfriend named Rhonda. I do not think Bob will live too much longer. On one recent occasion, he called me and said that he was broke and did not have enough money for food. Cindy suggested that I send him some money. I sent him \$400, but I never expect to get it back.

Larry Lockhart, another friend at Bartlett, was an absolutely crazy fool and lived like there was no tomorrow. His dad and brother were both bricklayers. Larry never went to college but managed to become a radio personality at a small radio station in Mississippi. Friends told me that he lived a very "hard" life. He died at the approximate age of 50 in Raleigh, Tennessee.

Nicky Harris was another friend at Bartlett School. He was a fair student but came from a poor family. His father died when he was quite young. He supported his older mother by working long hours at a grocery store in East Memphis. I worked with him at that store for a while. We had some good times together. We went to Florida after our high school graduation, and he stayed there and found a job in the plumbing business. He married a local girl and later retired as a master plumber. His wife worked at a credit union. I visited with them in Fort Lauderdale in about 1990 while teaching on the weekends for Nova University. After a few drinks, his wife was a little too friendly with me directly in front of her husband and that made me feel very uneasy. I do not know what was going on with them, but I felt very sad for Nicky. I have seen them one time since then (in 2007) at a class reunion, and they seemed happy.

Goose Farley, another friend, was a gifted athlete. He was one grade behind the other friends and was our team quarterback. Additionally, he was a standout basketball player. He was from a pretty good, working class family. His dad was his biggest fan. Goose Farley was a better student than most of us. After Bartlett, I lost touch with him. I do know that he married one of my old girlfriends and became the coach at Bartlett School. Sadly, his wife, Betty Dixon, died of some sort of cancer early in life. Goose died a few years later with a heart condition.

The last friend that I want to tell about is Jerry Duncan. He has had a long and positive influence on me, and I am forever thankful for his friendship. Jerry was a class leader and excellent student at Bartlett School. Jerry played right guard on the football team, I was the center during my senior year, and Goose Farley was our quarterback. There were more yards made between the center and right guard than any other play during our last year together.

Jerry Duncan's influence reached far beyond football. His father was a dentist and his mother was a dental assistant in his office. Joe Duncan was Jerry's younger brother. They were all quality people who had money and lived in a very nice suburban home. They had a great deal of class and this was something I had never really seen in my life. While having meals at their house, as a case in point, I remember watching as they placed a napkin on their laps and their knife on the edge of the plate after being used. I had never seen that before. Jerry's father talked to both of his sons and helped them plan for their future. Dr. Duncan loved good music, good food and wine, and bird hunting. Joe Duncan became a wealthy lawyer. Mrs. Duncan was a fine lady. I learned so much from the Duncan family.

One memorable experience happened while I was at Bartlett School. I had always loved motorcycles and had two or three of them while in high school. I remember going regularly to the Harley Shop for service and repairs. I remember seeing a guy there, and we talked occasionally. He attended Humes High School and was about three or four years older than I was. He sang in a band and was a pretty cool guy. I remember going to a formal dance at the Chisca Hotel during my junior year and that guy and his band provided the music for the

evening. My date was Nancy Almingdinger, and we consumed a good amount of wine during the evening. We actually did not listen too much to the band that night.

The Next day was Saturday, and I went down on South Main Street in Memphis to get a haircut. When I walked into the barber shop, I saw my musical friend in a barber chair getting a haircut. As the barber worked on his hair with scissors, I walked over, and I told him that I was sorry that I had not listened more to his music the night before. I told him that I had heard that he was going to "cut" a record." I also said to him "One of these days you are going to be famous," and I then asked if he would give me his autograph before that happened. I went to my chair and took the blank edge from a newspaper and handed it to him with a pen. He was rather embarrassed at my comment. He tilted his head down and said "Aw, I do not think you need to worry about that." He then signed the piece of paper and that was the last time that I ever talked with Elvis Presley. I know that he went into the military about two years later and that he died on August 16, 1977. I also remember that I stopped smoking on that date. My thoughts were "if someone as famous as Elvis can die at age 42, then someone like me can also die young." I was almost 38 at that time.

Primarily because of Jerry Duncan's influence, I had tried to become a better student at Bartlett, but somehow seemed torn between doing the right things and continually being a "screw up." I just could not achieve any degree of credibility. As an example, I remember getting the lead role in the senior play, but I lost it because I was expelled from school. I did a stupid thing and here is the story. My geometry teacher, Miss Briggs, saved Gladiator brand wrappers from the packages of notebook paper that students purchased. She would send the wrappers to the company and get items such as pencil sharpeners for her classroom. One day after lunch, I was walking through the elementary wing of the school building and noticed a large stack of Gladiator wrappers on a table in one of the empty classrooms. They had been banded into bundles of 100, and this made it easy to pick up a couple of bundles so that I could give them to Miss Briggs. I just did not think. Some kid saw me and told his teacher. She went to the principal straightaway, and I was kicked out of school. My father had to go to my school and beg Mr. Barnes to let me back in so that I could graduate.

I can remember many other stupid situations. Specifically, I can remember that some football players were sitting in a car at lunch one day when the principal's son walked past the car. I reached under the seat and pulled out a bottle of whiskey and pretended to drink from it. This caused a problem. Then there was another time when I sold a pistol to a friend at school. On another occasion, several football players cut school to watch two professional football teams practice for a preseason game in Memphis. All of us were suspended for three days. Then there was a situation with a married girl in the locked auditorium during lunch. That "tutoring" arrangement was a fairly regular event for me, and it was finally discovered and observed first-hand by the principal.

There was another sad episode that I will write about. Bob Fish had met these two girls, and he invited them over to his house for a party. Larry Lockhart, Hugh Huffman, and I were also invited. There was a lot of drinking, and one thing led to another. One of the girls later turned up pregnant, and she decided that I would likely be the best father from among the four possibilities. This was long before paternity testing became available. That girl's father came to see my father. After talking separately with the four boys involved, my dad undertook the difficult chore of explaining the situation to that girl's father. I do not know what happened after that. Nothing much was ever said to me about my bad judgment or the final outcome. I have thought about that situation many times, and I am not proud of my behavior. That poor father must have been so disappointed in his daughter, and her whole life may have been changed because of our poor judgment. It is still so embarrassing for me to think about my poor father and how he must have felt in all of this. I am so thankful that my own sons never participated in some of the stupid things written about in these pages.

In my junior year, I was voted "most handsome" but that was not such a big honor. Looking back, it is easy to see why I was never selected for any leadership positions in high school. I was not invited to be on the honor council, to be in the Key Club, or on the team that represented Bartlett on a local current events TV quiz show. I used poor judgment, ran around with the wrong guys, and never applied myself. I was headed in the wrong direction. I will never understand why Jerry Duncan liked me enough to try and help me improve my situation. But he did, and he is one of two main people in my life that truly helped me through difficult periods. Maybe my own two sons can now see why I was so determined to do whatever it took to get them on the right road so that they could become important, accomplished, and happy people.

This is probably a good place to write about my three experiences with jail. The first time it was for reckless driving in Memphis when I was 17. Two bread trucks were being driven side-by-side with their doors open and the drivers were talking to each other. That went on for several minutes, and I finally passed them in the center turn lane. My dad had to sign for me to be released. A second time that I was taken to jail was in Florida after our high school graduation. I was not driving, but all four of us in the car gave the patrolman that stopped us for speeding so much harassment that he hauled us all to the jail in Ocala, Florida. We had to apologize to the patrolman. The third time was in Cleveland, Mississippi. I was in traffic court dealing with an accident involving another college student. He fully and completely misrepresented what happened, so I told him that I would "whip his ass." The judge put me in jail until I promised not to bother the boy.

In spite of my mistakes and poor judgment, Jerry Duncan helped me get into a Memphis High School fraternity where I met other quality people with high standards. He had already made plans to go to Southwestern College (now Rhodes University) in Memphis. I knew that I needed to go to college somewhere, but my high school grades were horrible. And there was the issue of money. The important thing here is that Jerry Duncan was a great friend and

he encouraged me to go to school somewhere. Jerry continued to be a friend and role model, and I have looked up to him for so many years.

The Assistant Principal at Bartlett was Mr. William Kessler, and I liked him a lot. He lived in Memphis and drove past our house each morning on the way to Bartlett School. I rode to school many times with him. There was one incident that I will never forget. It should be clear to the reader by now that I wanted to do better and become a good student. This story demonstrates my efforts to improve. Our school was scheduled to compete with another county school on local TV. It was a sort of game show involving questions about current events that came from the current week's newspaper. Mr. Kessler assembled interested students for a tryout to select the final four participants. I was there with about eight of the smartest kids in school for the selection process. I noticed that certain kids were asked easy questions and others were asked very difficult questions. It did not take a mental giant to see that he had already decided which students were going to be on the Bartlett team. Needless to say, I did not make the team. But I think Mr. Kessler always liked me for one reason or another.

About forty years later, following a class reunion, October 17, 1997, Mr. Kessler wrote to me and said some nice things, as follows:

Dear Gerald,

Thanks to you and your classmates for the invitation to the fortieth anniversary of your graduation from Bartlett High. It was exhilarating to visit with those we knew so long ago and to learn of their progress and success.

Thanks, also, to you for your cordial note and the beautifully organized preview of the Internet program. Indeed, it came across just like your preview. All of this is being filed with our treasured documents.

In a personal view, Gerald, I congratulate you on what you have achieved in these years. As I recall, once upon a time, you vowed to me that you were going to get a Ph.D. – and bless your heart, you did just that! Furthermore, the fact that you have authored hundreds of professional papers certainly marks you as a builder. It is not difficult to see that both your colleagues and your students are fortunate beneficiaries.

I am exceedingly proud of you. Keep up the good work!

Sincerely, William R. Kessler

Early in my senior year at Bartlett, I forged some papers to show that I was two years older and this enabled me to join the Tennessee Air National Guard. The Vietnam War had started and National Guard duty was one way to avoid the draft which I would soon be facing. I

again found some wild friends in the ANG and by this time had truly learned to party. My senior year grade point average in each of five classes was exactly 75, as I remember, and that was the minimum score required to get credit for each class. In spite of all that happened, I graduated from Bartlett High School in late May of 1957.

I could not wait to leave home and go somewhere—anywhere. I just wanted to get away from all of the fussing and confusion at home. My mother had given birth to my youngest sister in 1955 and this added to her workload and stressful mental situation. Home was not a place for me. I wanted to be on my own somewhere. Shortly after graduation, I went off to San Antonio, Texas for ten weeks of basic military training. That was my first airplane flight in a commercial aircraft.

Because of my height, I was moved to the front of one of the four lines of troops that made up a platoon. I think I was considered to be a squad leader. All I did was follow orders, work hard, and it was easy. It was a simple way of life, and I did not have an opportunity to get into trouble. However, it did not take long for me to see that a career as an enlisted man in the military was not really what I had in mind.

While at Lackland Air Force Base, I wrote to the football coach at Northwest Mississippi Junior College, in Senatobia, Mississippi. They had earlier shown some interest in my going there on a small football scholarship. I received a return letter from Coach Jimmy Jackson, and he told me that I was welcome to try out for the team when practice started in late August.

After basic military training was completed, the 155th ANG group was flown back to Memphis. It was great to be finished with ten weeks of tough treatment. After a few days rest, I then headed off to Northwest Mississippi Junior College on August 24, 1957. Although I did not realize it at the time, my life would change forever after my parents dropped me off at the Junior College in Senatobia, Mississippi about 60 miles away. My home would never be with my mother and father again. I was now on my own with no intention of ever returning for more than a few days for a visit.

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Organizational note - The idea for these Memoirs originated in mid 1999. I knew that both of my parents were getting older and would not last too much longer. It was important to ask them many questions and to help fill in the blanks before they grew too old to remember important details. But, that did not happen. My intentions were good, but I just kept thinking about it and putting it off until there was more time. Maybe I could get serious about the project after retirement. Unfortunately, my dad was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2000. We were able to spend many hours talking as his memories slowly faded away. Those memories are priceless.

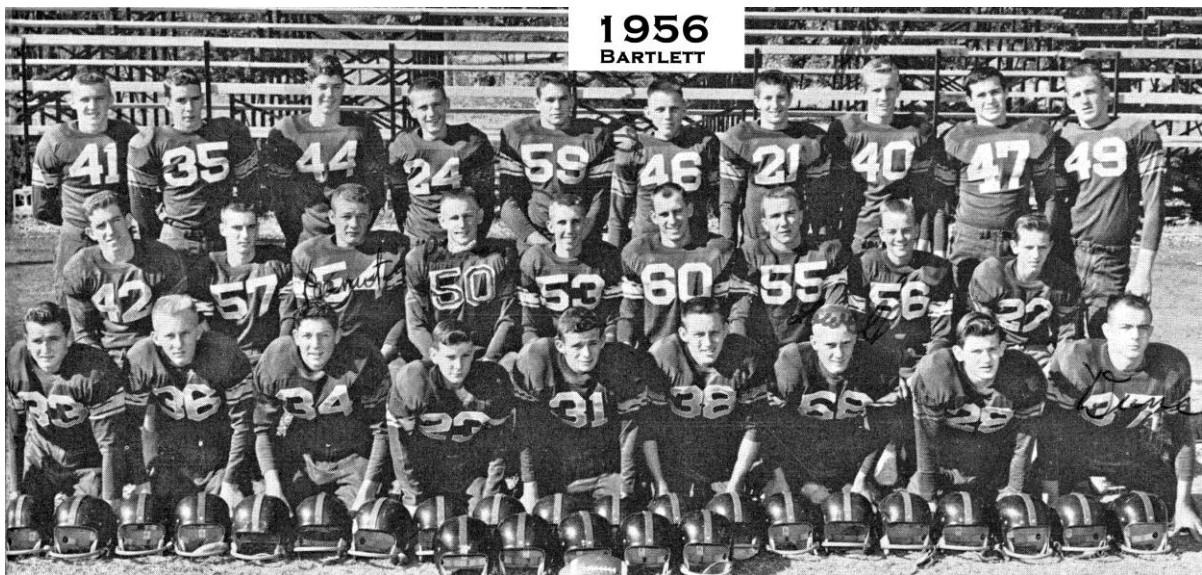
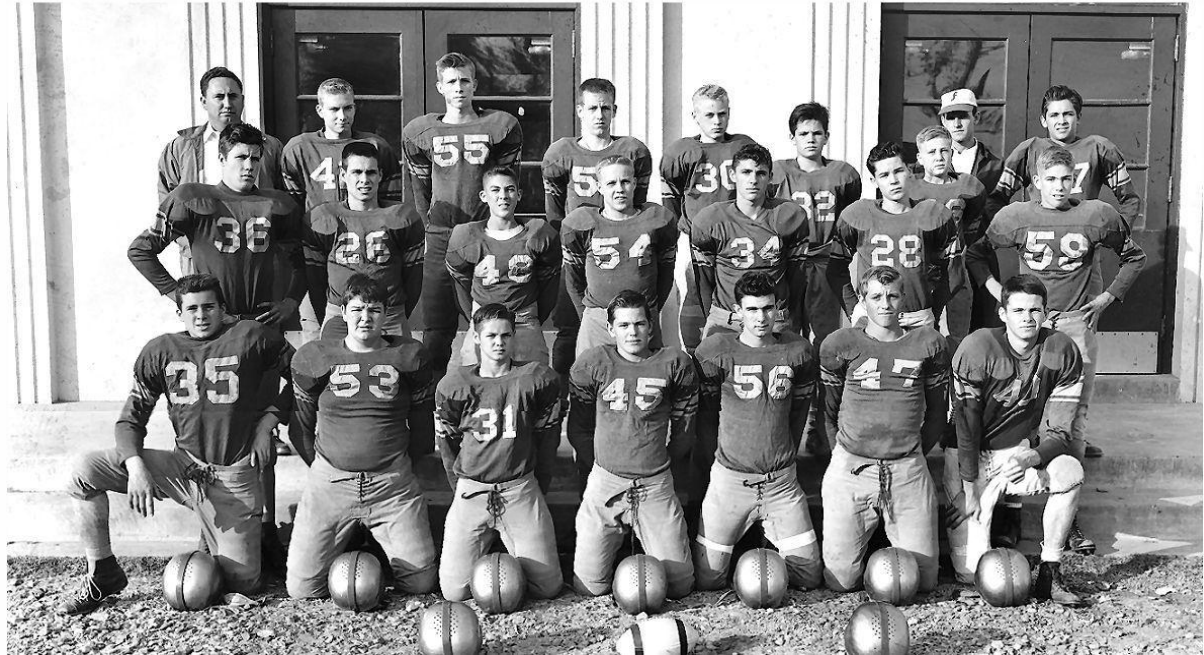
My mother provided a good deal of information after my father passed away in 2005. She insisted on staying in the old farmhouse rather than going to a retirement home. My trips to the farm became more frequent in order to help her around the place. There was a lot of work that needed to be done. On my visits, we spent time together talking about the past. Her mind was still pretty clear. She passed away two and one half years after my dad, in 2007. I retired from UNA in 2008 and could then invest more time on this important writing project.

While working on this manuscript, there has been a strong need to write about my wonderful parents. I have tried to do that while those memories were still fairly fresh. The next two chapters are, therefore, mostly about John and Scyble Crawford. After that, I will return to my story" ... *Incredible Journey*.

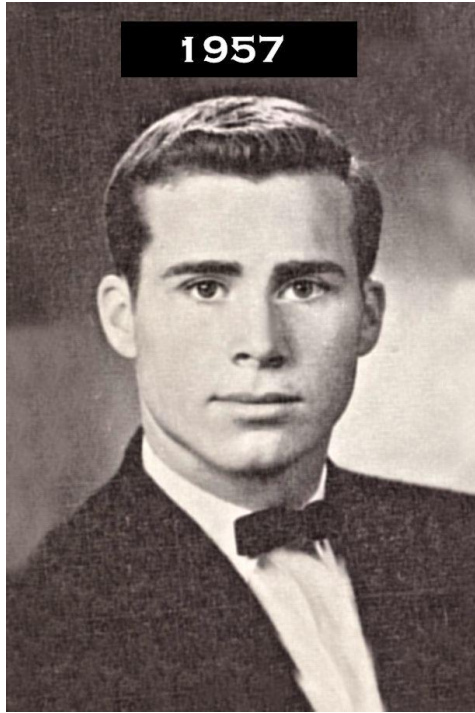
(Photographs follow, also see - <http://geraldcraw.net/>)



**Frayser School Freshman Football Team - September 1954**



1957



### **Chapter 3 - My Dad – John Berryman Crawford III**

This chapter is about a very special man, my dad. There has never been a kinder or a better man, and I still miss him so much. My dad and all of his family members were gentle, soft spoken people. After suffering for about five years with Alzheimer's, he passed away on April 19, 2005 at the age of 92. The little, old, quiet man with thinning gray hair that we buried back then was not the same strong and compassionate person that helped me so many times when I was growing up. He helped me get out of trouble so often. Oh how I wish that I had listened to him more when I was young. He always knew what to do when problems came along. He could make things work. He could explain anything. He was a positive thinker and could always find the good in people. He was a God-fearing person and never missed church on Sunday morning, Sunday night, and on Wednesday night. He and my mother had a family Bible and they read it often. I remember that he offered a blessing at every meal.

On many occasions as a child, I remember telling my mother that I wished I had been named John Crawford, Jr. In later years I learned that my dad was actually, John B. Crawford III, but I never recall him using anything other than John Crawford. As mentioned earlier, I never cared much for my name "Gerald" when I was younger, but after all of these years, it has served me well, I guess.

My dad had the "gift of gab" as some called it. That is probably the reason he was successful over the years selling things. People were attracted to him because he could always find something nice to say about and to almost everyone. When faced with a decision, he would take out a piece of paper and list the good things on the left and bad things on the right side of the page. Then he would compare what the expected outcome would be as a result of making or not making a decision. He thought logically and was careful to make rational decisions. It is unfortunate that my dad never went to college. Although he did attend a business school to learn "bookkeeping" for a short time in Jackson, Mississippi, he was somewhat limited in his business knowledge. But he knew how to work hard and how to save his money. He also knew how to fix things that were broken. And there were a lot of broken things around our house. His motto was "wear it out, use it up, and make it do". That philosophy had a lifelong effect on me as you will later understand.

My father's thinking was strongly shaped by his poverty as a youngster and by the Great Depression. His father, John B. Crawford, Jr., died on July 19, 1940 when my dad was 29, and I was almost one-year-old. After my grandfather's death, my grandmother later remarried and stayed on the old place for about ten additional years. She then moved to Jena, Louisiana to be with three of her children who lived there, Marvin, Ruby and Floy. Jena is where my grandmother passed away in about 1954.

My father, or Pop, as we called him later in life, was born in 1912, and he had several brothers and sisters. He had three brothers, one older and two younger. I did not know the oldest brother very well. Uncle Marvin was known as a happy-go-lucky type individual, and I have heard some wild stories about him. He lived in Jena, Louisiana. He spent time in the Army and was worldlier than his three brothers. He was an automobile mechanic most of his life and lived in a house trailer. He drank and smoked too much and died too soon from emphysema. The two younger brothers were Henry and Frank. Both of them lived in Memphis and spent a good amount of time in the same types of jobs that my father followed. My father helped both of them get jobs at the National Burial Insurance Company. They both visited regularly with our family.

I remember both of these brothers so well, and I can say that they were also kind and gentle, hard working men. They were very special family members. Both of these men looked up to my father as the leader of the family. Uncle Frank was next after my dad and he had a wife named Juanita, a daughter named Frankie Sue, one named Sherry and a son named Michael. Frankie married a teacher and moved to Lexington, Kentucky. We visited with Frankie and her husband in 2015.

Uncle Henry had a wife named Julia, a daughter and two sons. Judy Kaye (Crawford) Hill was the oldest and we have stayed in contact with her. She lives up in Bath Springs, Tennessee and runs a women's spa at Parsons, Tennessee. The middle child was Phillip and he had a congenital mental condition, similar to high functioning autism. The youngest son was Henry. I never knew him but remember that he had problems as a teenager, according to my mother. At one point, Uncle Henry sent him to live with my parents on the farm, hoping that they could help straighten him out. He found some local friends, got into trouble again, and finally left the farm. I do not know whatever became of him.

My father had three sisters, Ruby, Ruth, and Floy. Ruby was the oldest daughter and lived in Bay Springs, Mississippi. She was married to a guy named "Shack" Pugh. I have heard that Shack was a big drinker and could not hold a job. The middle daughter, Ruth, lived in Jena, Louisiana, and was married to Homer Richardson who owned a local garage. He was a fine auto mechanic as I remember. Uncle Homer had one eye that towed inward as I recall. They had three children. The son was Homer Lee, and he was well educated and became quite successful as a chemical engineer. He lived in Morristown, NJ at one time. He and his wife visited with me when I lived in Madison, NJ. His kids were literally "the kids from hell," and I did not look forward to seeing them again. I hear that he has now retired to a farm near Hattiesburg, Mississippi. There was also a daughter, and her name was Jeanette. I have no idea what ever happened to her. I do not remember anything about the third child. Floy was my dad's youngest sister, and she was a very sweet person. She was married for a while but divorced and lived in Jena, Louisiana most of her life. She had one son, Kenneth Ray. Floy passed away in about 2006. We sent flowers to her funeral.

It is interesting to think about my dad's family. All of them were soft spoken and were truly kind people. They never said hard things about others. My dad always believed "If you cannot say something good about another person, don't say anything." My parents were always more than willing to help others who were down on their luck and in need. My dad would regularly loan money to people. And everyone seemed to pay him back. Later in his life, I remember that he always carried a good bit of money in his pockets. I was always afraid that someone would see that roll of bills and rob him.

As a boy, my dad generally took me along when he went hunting. I can remember stomping around in the woods with him at night, waiting for the dogs to pick up a trail. Sometimes we would build a campfire and wait for them to strike. Barking dogs hot on a trail was truly music to my dad's ears. He could tell when they would "tree" the coon, and we would rush there and try to scare the coon down one way or another. Oftentimes my dad would shoot his .22 rifle up into the tree to get the coon to jump down. The usual result was a big coon fight with the dogs. The coons generally lost, and the dogs would be bitten and scratched up a good bit. That is what my father loved to do. I never developed a taste for that sort of hunting, but it was a good excuse to go places with him.

We talked a lot while sitting around the campfires on those hunting trips. I remember one story he told me about a time when the circus came to his town. There was a big old bear that was apparently one of the main attractions. The owner offered to pay \$20 (which was like \$300 today) to anyone that could fight or wrestle that bear and pin him down. The bear wore a muzzle so that he could not seriously hurt anyone. My dad was about 19, and he decided that he needed the \$20, so he stepped into the ring with the bear. It seemed that the bear had done this countless times and knew exactly what he was doing. But my dad managed to somehow grab the bear's nose, and he twisted it really hard. The bear began to roar in pain, and the owner stepped in and broke up the fight. He told my father "don't hurt my bear." My dad had a scar on his back to always remind him of that incident. He did not tell me whether or not he got the \$20.

When money was scarce, and that was often, my dad would skin the coons he killed and tack their hides to flat boards in order to dry. He would then sell the hides to someone for three or four dollars apiece. He usually gave the coon meat to various people who enjoyed or needed the meat. When we hunted squirrels, he would skin them, and we would have fried squirrels. After I turned 16 or so, my dad developed an interest in hunting quail. I went with him many times up until I finished college and moved off to New Jersey. Quail were a southern delicacy, and he would dress them, and we would have them at meals when I came home to visit.

My dad could fix anything. I didn't always agree with his "wear it out, use it up and make it do" philosophy, but he taught me how to do so many things. It bothered me, however, to do a job with him because we usually had to fix the tools before we fixed whatever needed fixing.



His background of being poor would not allow him to just throw a tool away and buy a new one. Most of his tools and mowers were literally—junk. I felt that he deserved to have better things. Later in life my parents had saved money and were no longer poor. But they just would not spend their savings.

Back when we had little money, I remember thinking about how I might someday make a living. As a teenager, I often woke up drenched with perspiration, deeply concerned about how I would ever be able to support a family. Those very real fears later drove me to work for success at any cost. I wanted my family to have nice, new things. Until this day, I usually avoid buying used or cheap things, opting instead for new products with good value and reasonably high quality, especially tools, cars, and clothes.

My dad taught me so much and I am eternally grateful for having learned many useful things from him. Probably the most important thing was to work hard— “Do more than others and you will always get ahead.” When he worked at the furniture factory in Memphis, he said that union people were always putting pressure on him to slow down. My dad did not care for loafers and lazy people. And he did not like quitters. He would not join the union. I remember one time when I was about 12 years old and had a paper route. It was a cold, rainy day, and I broke the chain on my bicycle. So, I just threw the papers in the ditch and went home. When he learned about it, he took me in the car and we picked up those papers and finished delivering them. I always remembered that lesson when things were difficult and not going very well. It helped me on the high school football team when I wanted to quit.

Another thing he taught me was to be tight with my money. Like many depression era people, he was very careful with his money. He said that most things depreciated and that smart investments like land and real estate appreciated. Further, he encouraged me to pay off my loans quickly, or better yet, do not borrow money. He did not like to pay interest or rent to anyone. After I became an adult, he often asked if I had paid off my house. But I am not sure that he ever truly understood the business concept of leverage or opportunity costs. In this context, it means that when one was earning 8-10 percent on investments, it would not be wise to use that investment money to pay off a 5 percent house loan. Furthermore, interest on a home loan was tax deductible. The main thing he wanted me to do was pay off that house. He did not like debt of any kind!

Pop did not much care about travel. He said that he had seen enough of the world. He had been to Hawaii, to the Bahamas on a work-related trip, and to New Jersey one time to see me. In the eighteen years that I was under their roof, I remember spending only one night in a hotel or motel. We took a “vacation” once to New Orleans and that was for one night. My dad preferred to drive all night getting there and to drive all night getting home. I remember that in 1973 when Cindy and I were preparing to teach in Europe for six months, we were so excited about the upcoming adventure. When we told “Pop” about it, he said “Why do you want to go over there?”

My parents were so tight with money that they preferred to live in an old house with worn furniture, to wear old clothes that were almost threadbare at times, to drive old worn out vehicles, and stay at home rather than travel. It was the old depression era thinking that guided their behavior. They preferred their security over any excitement that might come from spending money. I am so sorry that they were never really able to enjoy the fruits of their labor the way we would have done. I am certain that their philosophy was a factor that pushed me in the opposite direction. I always wanted to have a nice car, a nice home, and I wanted to see the world—all of it.

Another attitude my dad tried to pass along to me centered on the many benefits of thinking positively. He was so positive right up to the time he passed away. He got up early and was eager to work and get things done. He liked to be around people who carried a smile on their face and people who were excited about being alive. He never complained but preferred to find the good in every situation and every person. People liked him, and they liked to be around him. My father never had an enemy that I can recall.

He always tried to teach me that honesty is the best policy. He certainly set a good example by being honest in all his dealings. My mother, on the other hand, did not always follow those rules. I do not mean that she was dishonest; she just knew how to "embellish" a story when it served her interests. I wish that I could have been more like my father and less like my mother in that way.

Another thing that he tried to teach me, more by example than words, was the evil in alcohol and tobacco. He smoked Camel cigarettes when I was very young but stopped doing that early in his life. As for alcohol, I never saw my dad take a drink of anything. And he taught me that family was the most important thing a man could have. He believed in trying to get along with each family member, although that was rather difficult living with my mother. I never saw my father mistreat my mother in any way even though she was hard to deal with much of the time.

I was about 14 or 15 when my grandmother, Sally Gilbert Crawford (Watson,) passed away in Jena, Louisiana. All of my dad's brothers and sisters were present at the funeral. The one thing that I most remember was that none of these brothers and sisters seemed to show any emotion at that funeral. I remember thinking that if my mother had just passed away, I would have been so traumatized that I would find it hard to speak. (And, when my mother did pass away years later, I had a very emotional and difficult time doing the eulogy.) I guess that my dad was just brought up not to show feelings and emotion. I think this was more than likely a problem in my parents' marriage.

I do not recall my dad ever telling my mother or me that he loved us, although I know without any doubt that he loved us more than words can express. Further, I never saw him hold hands with my mother or put his arms around her. There is a photo on page 1998 of our

family website that I remember taking when we were up at the farm on May 10, 1998. My parents were standing beside each other in front of a tall, honeysuckle bush with red blossoms. While setting up the photo, I took my dad's left hand and placed it on my mother's shoulder. I remember thinking that I had never seen that before. Looking back, I now know that my mother may not have felt that she was loved (enough), and my father just did not know how to show her or tell her.

There is another facet of my father's behavior that bothered me back in those days. He did not seem to be a planner. Maybe he was a planner and just did not let us in on what was going through his mind. This behavior caused problems with my mother and later with me. So many times, I remember that he would come in from work at noon and tell my mother, "If you can get ready by 5 o'clock today, we will go on a trip." This usually meant to Mississippi or Louisiana to see his family. And I remember that my dad never planned much or taught me how to plan. It was usually a wait and see type of thing. As a result of this lack of training when I was young, I probably went in the other direction by over planning everything after I became an adult.

My dad always tried to keep me fairly busy around the house. He believed that "an idle mind was the devil's workshop" and his system worked pretty well, up until my teenage years. He came up with work projects to keep me busy and out of trouble. I always cut the grass at our house in the summers and cleaned up things outside. I had always loved to ride bicycles and the next logical step was to get a motorized version. My dad did not want me to get a motor scooter, but I finally convinced them that it would be a good thing. When I learned about motor scooters and later motorcycles, it changed my life, and I did not stay home very much after that. Later when I had sons of my own, I tried to keep them away from motorcycles. That worked fine until the oldest son, at age 26, decided to get one. And that is another story.

In 1955, my parents hired Mr. Dent and David Campbell to build a ranch style house on a vacant four-acre lot they had purchased in Bartlett, an East Memphis suburb. I remember that my parents paid \$10,000 for that house. It had three bedrooms, one bath, and a single carport. We moved to Bartlett where I finished my junior and senior years and (barely) graduated at Bartlett High School. I played football at Bartlett and worked at a local supermarket in the East Memphis area and at a service station one block from our home on Munson Road.

It has already been noted that my dad worked all of the time. He had worked at the Memphis Furniture Company for several years and then moved to the Chamberlin Company where he sold home insulation products door-to-door for several years. Later he became an insurance salesman with National Burial Company where he worked for about 25 years before retirement in 1973. It should be noted here that he worked hard and was rarely at home. He was unable to lend needed stability in a volatile home situation. I counted the days until I could get out of the house. I just wanted to get out on my own—anywhere was OK.



My dad was always so proud of me, even though I was not as good to him or as kind as I should have been. There is a video here of my father talking about his ideas and about life in general. The video was made in 1992 when he was 80 years old. In that video, he recounts a few of my accomplishments, and he does it with great enthusiasm. He was very generous with his comments. I guess that he forgot about the many times I did not do the things that I should have done. He also seems to have forgotten the heartaches that invariably come along when raising a family. He was always so pleased that all three of his children finished college.

When we went to the farm each month, after I had a family of my own, Pop would always take me around and show me his new cows, the hay he had put into the barn, and other projects on which he had been working. He was always proud of his large garden at the back of the house. He had plenty of tillers and tractors to keep his garden looking like a classic photo from Progressive Farmer magazine.

Pop never seemed to have arthritis or other common ailments that older men typically contract in their later years. He could work as hard as anyone when he was in his mid 80's. The only ailment that Pop ever had to my knowledge was a serious hernia. I do not understand why he failed to have that surgically repaired. He wore a brace contraption, or truss, around his lower stomach under his clothes all of his life. I never was bothered with this problem, but it is interesting to note that both of our sons had hernias and had to have them repaired.

My dad would always say that he could "jump up into the bed of a truck, flatfooted." I never saw him do it, but I will bet that he could do it at one time. He always stayed in good shape and kept his weight at a healthy level. He never had heart trouble or those sorts of problems. I think he was about 86 or 87 when we noticed that he was beginning to get Alzheimer's.

My first indication of an Alzheimer's problem, although I did not realize it at the time, was in the spring of 2000. Cindy and I went to the farm on Sunday for our monthly visit. Pop met us at the car when we arrived and after a short greeting, said "Gerald I want you to come see my garden." I said OK but let's go in first and see Gramps. On the way inside, he again asked me to "come see his garden." Once inside, he sort of tugged on my sleeve and asked me once more to "come outside and see his garden." I, more firmly said "Pop, I will go out there in a few minutes." After looking back, I can now see that he was speaking more like a child than my usually reserved dad. After that, we began to see more and more similar situations. My mother had to start looking after him closely as he would forget things. As Alzheimer's advanced over the months and years, she complained that it was like taking care of a child. There was also some concern that my mother might mistreat him. When it became too much for her, shortly after Christmas in early January of 2005, we moved him into the McKenzie Nursing Home on the grounds of McKenzie Hospital.

He got along pretty well in the nursing home during the next few weeks. I would go to see him, and at times he could carry on a conversation like always. But he would forget things and needed a lot of help. My dad passed away on April 19, 2005 at the hospital in McKenzie, Tennessee. I can remember the sad period leading up to his death. He started having problems and just would not eat enough to stay alive. On March 21, we received a call that he had been taken over to the hospital. I remember that our youngest son, Jay, was working briefly at a nearby Jackson, TN hospital, and he was able to visit with my father. Jay said that the situation did not look good. After about two or three weeks in the McKenzie hospital, my dad got a little better, and they transferred him back over to the nursing home.

I went up there three times that week, and remember that on April 15, I went into his room and he seemed fine. He put his hand on my arm and said "Gerald that is really a nice shirt." Those were the last words that I ever heard him say. His progress was temporary, and he got worse over the weekend. Snooky then came up from Florida to see him. We all knew the end was near. I went up to the Nursing home on April 19. Snooky, Joan, and my mother were there, and they were all sitting in chairs on one side of the room, talking about draperies as I recall. I went to my dad's bedside and saw that he was wearing a respirator. The nurse told me that he had earlier aspirated some food, and it had gotten into his lungs. He was unconscious and was laboring to take each breath as the machine seemed to force air into his lungs. His eyes were closed and his head was tilted to the left as he involuntarily struggled to breathe.

It was almost all I could do not to cry. I went out into the hall to wipe my eyes and happened to see the nurse standing there. I asked her how long my father had been that way. The nurse said to me "Son, you need to go and see his doctor. There are things they can do to relieve his suffering." I asked her, "Where is Dr. Colatta?" She said his office was right behind the hospital. I walked back there with tears in my eyes and asked the receptionist if I could see Dr. Colatta. She asked my name, and I said "Dr. Crawford" hoping that the title would get me in to see him sooner. It worked; she took me right back to his office.

Jerry Crawford, our oldest son, had talked with Dr. Colatta about Pop's situation a few days earlier at my request. Jerry had advised Dr. Colatta that "sometimes it is just better to let seriously sick old people peacefully pass away." When Dr. Colatta entered the room I struggled to speak and tearfully told Dr. Colatta that it was time. I just couldn't watch him suffer any longer. He told me that I must be careful in what I say. The correct term to use was "pain management." I asked him how long it would be, and he said that he would call over to the nursing home right away.

I probably should have asked Joan, Snooky, and my mother for input, but I was so torn up that I did not want to waste any time doing what I knew had to be done. When I walked back into Pop's room the nurse came in very soon and applied a patch to Pop's arm. I was the only one, other than the nurse, who knew what was about to happen. I sat there, and watched

Pop's breathing grew more and more shallow and within 20 minutes, he was at peace. Joan realized that he had stopped breathing, and she rushed over to the bed. No one offered to get the nurse. We all knew that it was time. Joan offered a short prayer. It felt like the weight of the world had been lifted from my shoulders. I knew that my father would have wanted us to do it this way. The nurse called the funeral home. Snooky and I went back to the farm, and I worked in the yard. I just needed to be by myself and to remember my dad. Snooky and I later went to the McKenzie Funeral Home to handle the arrangements.

The funeral took place at 2:30 p.m. on Friday, April 22, 2005 at Bethlehem Baptist Church, 4125 Macedonia Road in Henry, Tennessee. There were many people at the funeral, and we appreciated them coming to show their respect. My mother had a hard time with the situation. Her eyes were sort of glazed over. I did not look forward to the months ahead, as I knew they would take a heavy toll on her and on the rest of us.

I prepared about 50 photographs, showing Pop doing many things during his active life. They were posted on easels at the front part of the church beside the casket. I looked briefly at the peaceful remains of this fine man. His body was pale, small, and quiet as he lay there in the casket. What was left was not the strong, enthusiastic, warm, and kind man that so skillfully helped me grow up and become a man.

My sister Joan was so upset by Pop's death that she was not able to help much with the details of the funeral service. She did write the obituary as follows:

*John B. Crawford, III, age 92, of Henry, died April 19, 2005, at the McKenzie Health Care and Rehabilitation Center. Services for Mr. Crawford were held at Bethlehem Baptist Church, Henry on Friday, April 22 at 2:30 p.m. Following the service, burial was at Bethlehem Baptist Church Cemetery.*

*Mr. Crawford retired from National Trust Life Insurance Company in Memphis after 25 years of service. During his tenure there, he was the recipient of numerous awards for outstanding service. Following his retirement, he and his wife moved to Henry, where he was involved in cattle farming for many years. John Crawford was a member of the Masons and the Eastern Star. He was an avid hunter and a recognized marksman of skeet and trap shooting competitions in and around Memphis and Shelby County gun clubs.*

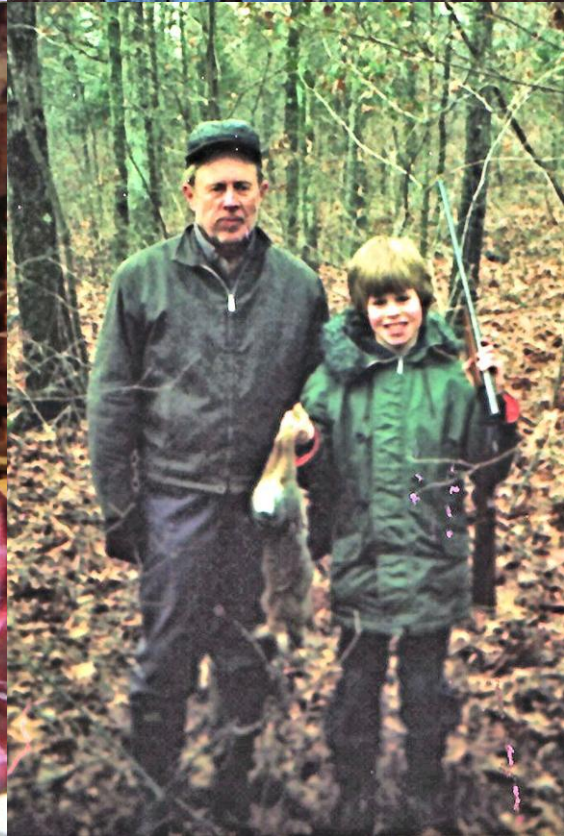
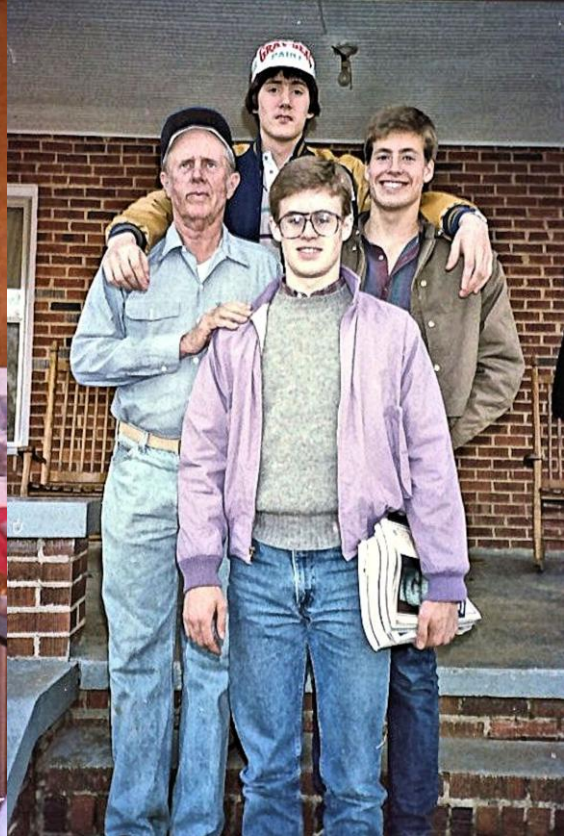
*John Crawford is survived by his wife, Scyble Agent Crawford of Henry; a son, Dr. Gerald L. Crawford (Cindy) of Florence, Alabama; two daughters, Joan Crawford Pritchett (James) of Martin, and Mary Kathryn Crawford O'Brien (Steve) of Parrish, Florida; four grandsons, Dr. Gerald (Jerry) Crawford, Jr. (Krista) of Florence, Alabama, Dr. Jay Crawford (Stacie) of Texas, Jim*

*Pritchett, Jr. (Suzanne) of Martin, and Kevin O'Brien of Parrish, Florida; eight great-grandchildren, Hannah Crawford, Clint Crawford, Grant Crawford, Emma Crawford, all four of Florence, Alabama, Bo Crawford, J.B. Crawford, both of San Antonio, Texas, James Pritchett, III, and Lydia Beth Pritchett, both of Martin; and one sister, Floy Crawford Ezell of Jena, Louisiana.*

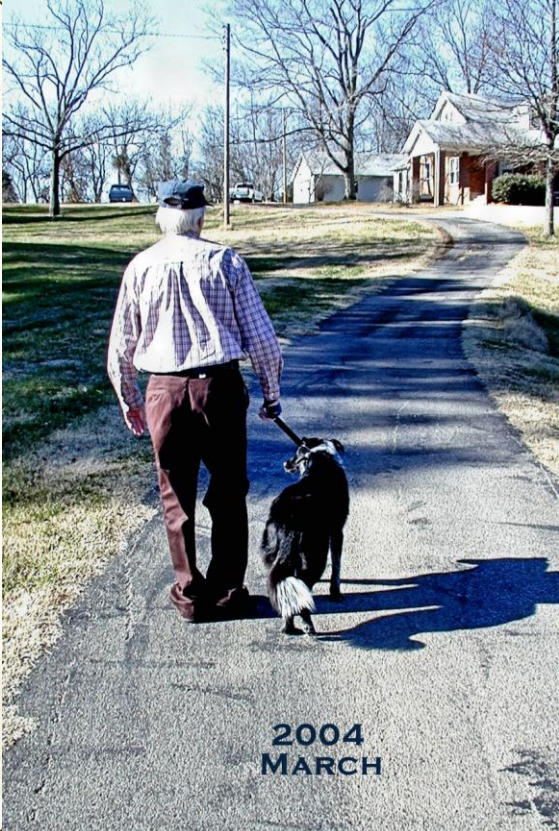
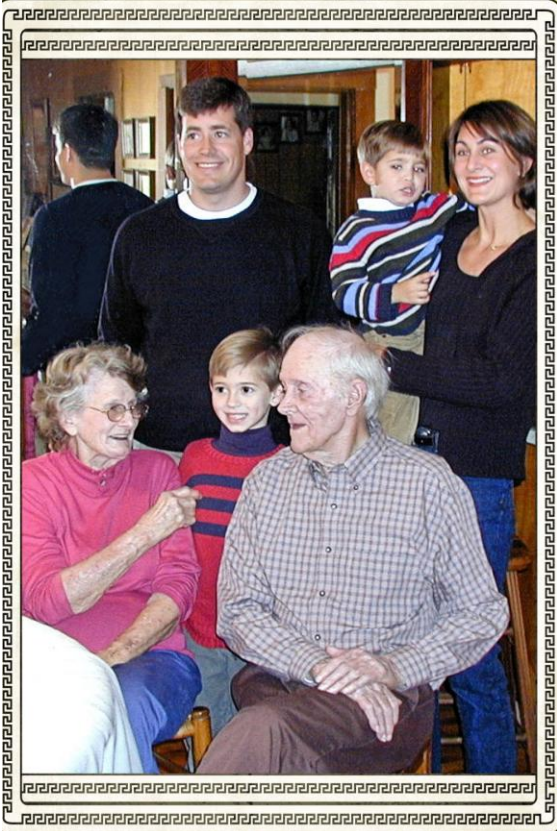
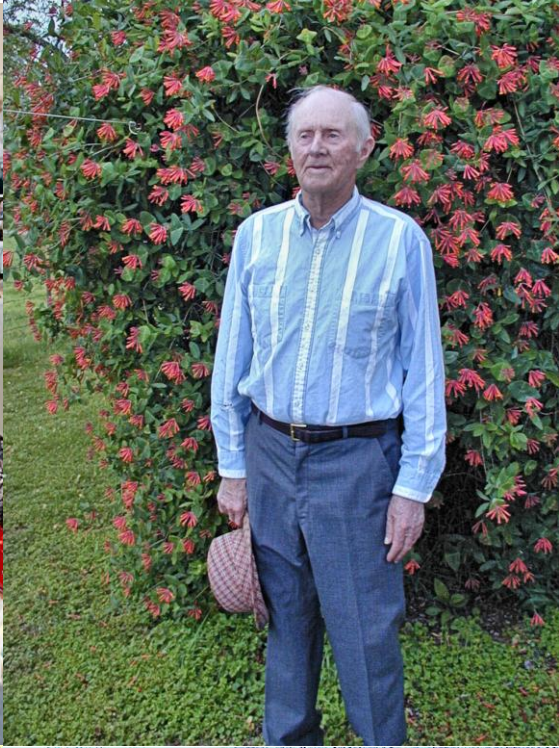
*Mr. Crawford was preceded in death by his father, John Berryman Crawford, II; his mother, Sallie Gilbert Crawford; three brothers, Marvin Crawford, Frank Crawford, and Henry Crawford; and two sisters, Ruth Pugh and Ruby Richardson.*

My dad was buried there in the church cemetery beside the sanctuary. I picked out the headstone that was later added. It has now been more than ten years since he passed away. I have thought about him many times each day since his death. I wish that I could have been a better son. I should have spent more time with him. I surely could have listened more to him, and I wish that I had shown more respect for him and his ideas while he was alive. There is no question in my mind that my small and modest achievements in life were made possible by my dad's efforts. If I could only have been more like him, my life (and the lives of all of those around me) would have been even better.

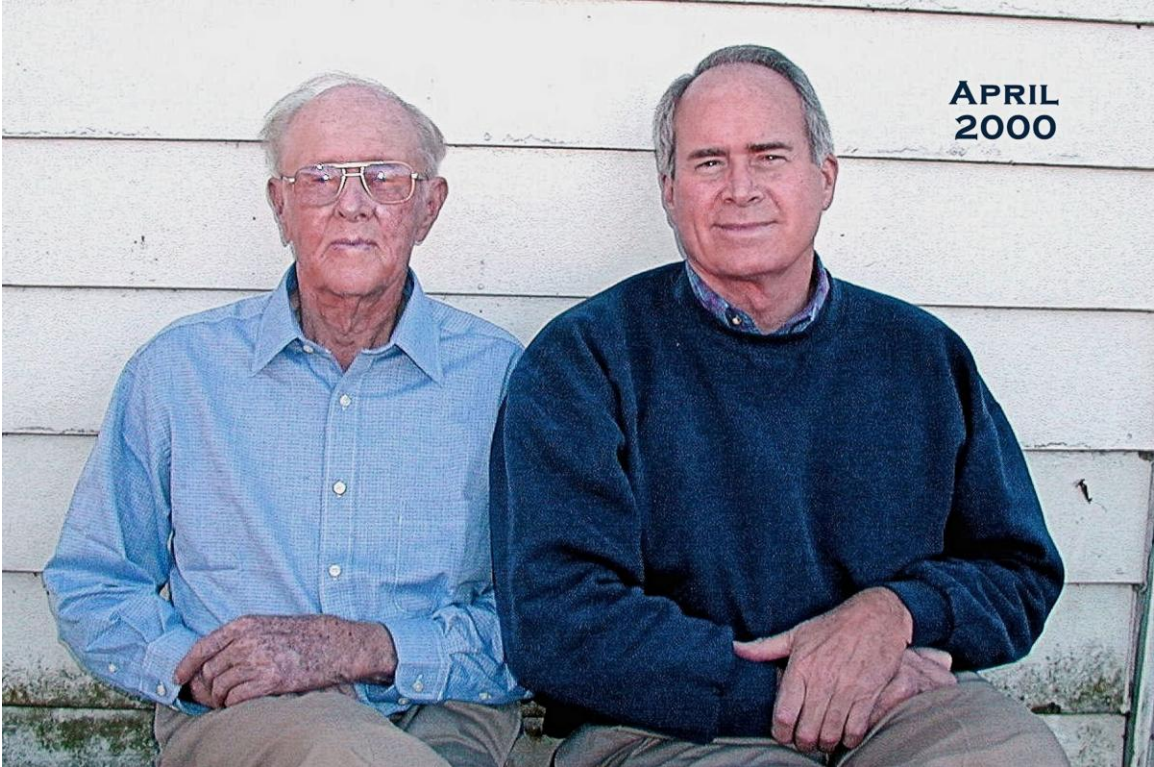
(Photographs follow, also see - <http://geraldcraw.net/>)















## Chapter 4 - My Mother

Scyble (Norvell) Agent Crawford was a good mother in that she always took good care of her family. We were at all times properly fed and had clean clothes to wear. She made sure that we went to school, and she encouraged us to do the right thing. She usually worked part-time somewhere and would take her hard earned money and use it to help us when we needed things. She would always have a snack for us when we came home from school. And she would usually help me with my homework in the evenings. My mother never finished high school. She strongly encouraged her children, however, to stay in school and get a good education. She wanted us to be able to earn a decent living so that we would not be dependent on the goodwill of others or some labor union for a job. I always knew that my mother loved me and would take care of me one way or another. She was a good person and always meant well.

Gramps, as we called her later in life, was born in Philadelphia, Mississippi, on December 27, 1919. Her mother was "Texie" Elnora Stuart Agent, and my mother's dad was Richard Clarence Agent. In those days, "Mama" Agent ran the house, and "Papa" worked in the fields and kept a low profile most of the time. My maternal grandparents had four daughters, Nellie, Nora Dell, Scyble, and Katherine. These daughters were influenced heavily by the Stuart side of the family. Everyone knew that it was best not to get them "stirred up" if at all possible.

The oldest daughter, Aunt Nellie, divorced after a short marriage, and both she and her son lived with Mama and Papa. Aunt Nellie's son, Bobby Singletary, was more like an uncle to me rather than a cousin. I looked up to him a great deal and probably went to Delta State College because he had gone there and encouraged me to do the same. Aunt Nellie passed away in about 1990.

The second daughter, Aunt Nora Dell McCullough lived until she was almost 98 years old and continued to be just as bright and alert as anyone up until the very end. She was married for many years to Uncle Carl who passed away in about 1985. He was a great guy but loved to take a drink. As a child, I remember going to visit Aunt Dell at Christmas. We would often go to the Ackerman, Mississippi jail to see Uncle Carl. They had five children, Mary Alice, Dorothy, Bessie Wayne, Ed and Chippie. I see Bessie and Ed regularly at family funerals. Ed McCulloch lives in Batesville, Mississippi.

Katherine was the youngest Agent daughter. She married Billy B. Williams soon after she graduated from high school in Kosciusko. They had five children: Claude, Stuart, Glenn, Sandra, and Russell. Claude is the family patriarch and a successful businessman in Collierville, Tennessee. Stuart is now retired but was a very successful engineer and factory manager at Plough, Inc., in Cleveland, Tennessee. Glenn is a fireman at Bartlett, and Russell owns a plumbing business in the Memphis area. Sandra is a medical technician and is

married with a family and lives in Memphis. I saw all of them at Uncle Billy's funeral in 2013.

At about age 40, Katherine decided that her life was not exciting enough. She moved out, left five kids with my Uncle Billy, and married a motorcyclist who had served jail time. I hear that he turned out to be a pretty good guy, but I never really felt comfortable with that situation. My feelings were probably related to the fact that I was going through a vaguely similar and very painful divorce situation at about the same time. I did see my Aunt Katherine a few times after she left the family. She died at the age of 50 or so with a form of cancer.

Mama and Papa Agent had seven sons, Homer, Lester, Olis, Joe, Otto, Darrell, and Paul. I never knew Olis but have been told that he died at age 15 or 16 from blood poisoning in connection with a knee injury received while playing ball. Uncle Homer was the oldest and became a barber in Memphis. He was a good man although he liked to drink and always had a flushed, reddish-looking complexion. He walked with a severe limp. His wife's name was Bernadine, and they had a daughter named Peggy Sue and a son named Marvin. Uncle Homer was the driver of a car that was involved in a horrible accident in 1940. His hip was badly injured, and he suffered all of his remaining years from that head-on auto accident. My immediate family was also traveling in that same car with him that day. My mother was badly injured in the accident and suffered with back and neck problems most of her life because of the wreck. My dad was also injured. His nose was cut pretty badly. I was nine months old and was thrown clear of the wrecked cars but otherwise not injured. The man driving the other car was said to be drunk, and he was killed in the accident.

The next Agent son was Uncle Lester, or "Jack" as he preferred to be called, and I did not know him very well. He and his wife Hilda always lived in Canton, Mississippi. They had a lovely daughter. Her name was Betty Sue. She is married and lives out in Arizona. My next uncle was Joe, and he was a good man. He married May Malone, and they raised four kids outside of Memphis, near the Raleigh area. Junior was Uncle Joe's oldest boy, and Helen was the oldest daughter. The next child was James, and then came Shirley, the youngest. None of these kids went to college as far as I know. I spent many days of summer vacation as a youngster with James Harold at the old Agent home place in Kosciusko, Mississippi. Uncle Joe and his son Junior both passed away fairly recently in 2014.

Uncle Otto was the next Agent son, and he was so memorable to me. He married Ruth, and they had three kids, Helen, Clydie, and Richard. Otto and Ruth divorced many years ago, and my uncle then married Gladys. When I was thirteen, I was over at his house one day, and he calmly tossed his car keys to me and said "Gerald would you go to the store and get some cigarettes for me?" I told him that I had never driven a car by myself. He then asked me directly if I could drive, and I said "yes sir." And I am happy to report that I ran that errand for him in his new '52 Chevrolet without having an accident. When I think back on that day,

I can clearly remember that I blew the horn and waved at everyone I passed on the street that day. I will always remember Uncle Otto. I went to his funeral in 2012. It was a sad day for me.

The next Uncle was always my favorite. Uncle Darrell was married to Dorothy and they had four girls. The oldest was Mackie and then came Johnny Faye. The third little girl was killed many years ago by a car backing out of their driveway. Sadly, the driver was my mother's brother, Homer. Uncle Darrell's fourth daughter was Vickie.

When Joan and I were young, we would often see Uncle Darrell on Sunday afternoons. My mother would take us over to Mama and Papa Agent's house. I remember one time it was snowing on Sunday, and Uncle Darrell came sliding into the driveway on Vinton Avenue. I must have been about 13 at the time. He and I sat in his truck and talked for a while. He then reached under the seat and pulled out a bottle of whiskey. He took a drink and then asked me if I wanted a drink. I said "yes" and took a little one. I can remember that it was my first time to ever do that. There was another memorable time when I was about 15 and rode a motorcycle. I asked Uncle Darrell if he wanted me to take him for a ride. He got on, and I gave him a nice fast ride, one he never forgot. Many years later, he remembered that ride and still told people about it. Uncle Darrell always retained his well-developed sense of humor right up to his death in 2015.

Uncle Paul was the youngest Agent son. He is still alive in 2016. To me, he was probably the mildest mannered child out of the whole bunch. He definitely was not as loud nor drank as much as the rest of his brothers. He was married to Polly, and they had three kids—Linda Kay, Mike, and Rita. Polly died in about 1985 with cancer, and after a time, Uncle Paul married Faye. Uncle Paul worked at and retired from Otis Elevator Co. in North Mississippi. He then moved to Birmingham and started a second career as a maintenance man at a junior college. He has now fully retired from that job.

I have written that my mother tried very hard to be a good mother and that is an undisputed fact. However, some people did not consider her to be a quiet, easy going, gentle person. She was strong-willed and had her own ideas about how things should be done. My cousin, Bobby Singletary, assured me that these character traits were inherited from my grandmother Agent and her Stuart-side of the family. Her strong personality and her forthright ways regularly caused a good deal of anxiety with others. It also took a heavy toll on my mother, on my dad, and on both of my sisters. How my dad was able to live with her occasional volatility is beyond me. He must have been a saint to put up with her behavior for so many years.

A big part of my adult life was spent struggling with my mother's strong emotions and my concern about her well being. She would "fly off the handle," as my father would say, over the smallest thing. We all spent a disproportionate amount of time either loving her or trying

to get away from her. I believe that she was probably bi-polar, which to me means that she was very happy or very sad—there was not much in between. The bad times seemed to become more frequent as she grew older.

In spite of her human weaknesses, she had many good qualities and much strength. Some of the things I remember about my mother will stay with me until my last days. First, I knew without any doubt that my mother loved me, and I hope that my sisters knew that she loved them as well. She frequently told us how much she loved us. As I may have written, my dad loved us very much, too, but he just did not know how to say those words. I am thankful that my mother taught us to express our feelings to other family members. Because of her, I was able to always tell my children and my wife that I loved them. And I hope that my sons learned how to show emotion and to say those magic words to their families.

My mother always listened to what the kids had to say, and she tried to help when there were problems. She did not want anyone picking on us or mistreating her kids. More than once when we were small, I remember that she would call or go to see the parents of bigger kids that might have mistreated us. And on several occasions, I can remember my mother going one step further. When someone continued to pick on me, my mother would show me how to “smack him in the nose with all of my might.” She encouraged me to be tough when there was any form of harassment. She was the one that taught me to stand up for myself. That was an asset for me all of my life I think.

My mother always sacrificed for us and worked hard. She would never let me sleep late or loaf very much. Actually, we always got up quite early every day. She worked part time at one place or another over the years. It was usually at some hourly or retail sort of job and that was about the best that she could do without a proper education. She would walk to work or ride a bus because we never had a second car that I can remember. My mother would spend her small amounts of money to buy basic clothes for us and make sure that we had adequate food. I remember one day when I was starting the second grade, my teacher asked who wanted to sign up for a “free lunch.” That sounded like a pretty good deal to me, so I raised my hand and later told my mother about it. She went to school the next morning to get my name off that list. Our family was too proud to ever accept any type of welfare even though we were probably eligible for it at some points back then.

My mother and father never accepted charity of any kind when we were growing up, even though we were relatively poor or close to it. And neither my mother nor my father ever received an unemployment check. They always thought that anyone could get a job if they went to work on time and worked harder than others. Those same concepts were taught to us, and I can say that I have never been out of a job, accepted charity, and have never applied for unemployment compensation in my life. My dad taught me how to get a job. He told me to go to business owners and ask if I could work for free for a week. And at the end, if the boss

did not like my work then I would stop working with no obligation. As a kid, that strategy worked several times for me.

Our family was charitable in that we were taught to help others and to take food to people when they were sick or out of work. I have heard stories about how my mother would always help neighbors and take food from our garden to them when they needed it. She would always go and see them (or call them later when we had a telephone.) And she would give older clothing to people that needed it for one reason or another.

My mother had musical talent. When she was younger, I remember her playing a guitar and singing in the evenings when we were visiting with family or just sitting outside on a cool evening. She also played the piano and organ. She loved good gospel music, and I recall so well that she sang in church. I love to hear good gospel music until this day, and it has always made me think of the wonderful music we had in church when I was a boy. I still enjoy those old religious standards. I am listening to those songs as I type these words and can say that it reminds me of my family standing and singing hymns at the Rugby Hills Baptist church. I do not recall attending church with my parents after we moved to Bartlett in 1955.

Humor was enjoyed and appreciated by my mother. She was known for telling good jokes and could also enjoy a prank at times. I remember that some of the funny stories she told could be a little “off color.” When Jerry and Jay were little boys, I would often leave one of them with her for a week when I was in doctoral school. It was hoped that she would not tell too much inappropriate material that might later be repeated to others.

And my mother loved pets. She always had some sort of pet—cats, dogs, baby deer, baby coons, birds, and chickens. She could train them to do tricks or about anything one can think about. She liked to keep a small dog, and she usually kept it in the house. My dad had his hunting dogs which he, of course, kept outside. They were not treated like pets but more like working dogs up until he grew older. They had two dogs up until the very end, Rabbit and Speck. I gave Rabbit to the Smith lady across the street, and I gave Speck to the Prossers’ who also lived across the street there in Henry, Tennessee. Speck, a border collie, was quite old and developed an intestinal growth. He died soon after my mother passed away. I do not know whatever happened to Rabbit. I should have checked up on them more and would have done so if I had not lived so far away.

We always tried to go up to the farm at least once each month. We usually drove up there on Sundays and returned to Florence that same evening. The driving time was about five to six hours total. My mother usually prepared a fine noon meal with vegetables and beef or pork from the farm. It was always a feast and everyone usually ate too much. After my mother grew older and became more eccentric, she would keep shoveling food at us even though we

had finished eating. She expected people to eat a lot of food. This became a problem for me, especially when I was trying to lose weight.

Gramps always took good care of my dad. She fed him well and kept the house clean and organized for a country home. She helped him in the garden when springtime came around. She would probably have liked to live a little better, I think, but after all of those years of “making do,” she seemed content to live a simple, farm life in her later years.

In about 2000 when my dad was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease, my mother began to take the lead in everything. Although she was outwardly kind to him, I think she was finally able to get him to do things her way. I felt so sorry for him when we would go up to the farm. There was one period in about 2004, I think, when my mother and I had a major disagreement. Cindy and I had been up to Joan’s house with my parents. My parents went home early. When Cindy and I decided to leave, we had to drive through McKenzie on our way back to Florence. The fact that we did not stop by to see her really made my mother angry. She raised hell about that for a long time. I just stopped going up there. Finally, after about six months, I knew my dad would not last forever, so we went up there for his 91<sup>st</sup> birthday. After a while, we began to hear that my mother was mistreating him. He did not want to take baths, and she would slap him on the legs with some sort of switch. He was like a child at that point, and we knew something had to be done. We were finally able to get him into the McKenzie Nursing Home.

Then another problem became apparent. My mother had a hard time living by herself in that big, old farmhouse even though she would have no part in going to a retirement home. In my opinion, it was not safe living there alone. There was one worrisome event that occurred when she fell down out in the yard and could not get up. Thankfully, a school bus driver saw her lying in the yard and stopped the bus and came up to the house to help her get up and into the house. After much arm twisting and pushing, we were able to get her settled in the assisted living home. After a while, she really seemed to enjoy it. But that did not last too long.

After a few months there, I heard that she had gone to the hospital in Jackson to get a pacemaker. I am not sure how this all came about. I had been out of the country a lot and just left those things up to my sister, Joan. But apparently that pacemaker was a bigger problem than the heart problem it was supposed to help. I think the pacemaker was marginally useful and that it made a lot of money for the Indian doctor that put it in. What’s more, the incision for the pacemaker caused an infection that finally killed her. She would take a round of antibiotics, get better, then go back over to the assisted living home. We went through that several times, and finally, they took the pacemaker out. I was at the hospital in Jackson and was with the radiologist when her MRI came back. He looked at it and said, “Oh, I see something else bad.” It was a big dark spot of cancer on one of her kidneys.

So, upon her release, I took her back to the assisted living home. I remember driving with her in my truck in heavy rain. Most of my thoughts were centered on what our next steps would be. There was nothing anyone could do, considering her age and condition. Later, in McKenzie, I asked Dr. Colatta what could be done. Again, after my dad had passed away, our son Jerry conferred with him and the decision was made to stop trying to keep her alive. I asked Dr. Colatta how long she would live, and he said he did not know. I told him that I was scheduled to go to China for one month. He said "I believe that we can do another round of antibiotics and keep her alive for one month." I said OK and felt better about it because, who knew, maybe that round of antibiotics would finally work. But they didn't. By this time, Joan and I were so angry with each other about handling the estate that there was no communication between us. Joan's husband resented every moment she spent with my mother. So there was no communication between my sister and I. Joan did not know what Jerry and I had decided to do. She never discussed it with the doctor, according to Dr. Colotta.

I came back from China on September 10, 2007, and the last round of antibiotics was now finished. My mother had changed a great deal while I was away. She now looked so drawn and near death. The local hospice group was called and had started providing heavy medication. The pain and agony was overwhelming and would last for twelve more days. My mother had been through some very hard times, and she had wasted away to perhaps 80 pounds. I am not sure whether or not she recognized me as she lay in that hospital bed. I sat in a chair beside her hospital bed on September, 21. I leaned over and talked quietly in her ear. I told her that she had been a wonderful mother and that I loved her very much. We knew that she would not last much longer.

I am now fully convinced that there was no need to put her through all of that pain. If I had it to do over again, I would have asked Dr. Colatta to use a morphine patch, as he had done with my father to "control the pain." I last saw her alive on Friday, September 21. She died on Saturday morning, September 22, 2007 and was buried on Tuesday, September 25, 2007. She had asked me two years earlier to say a few words at her funeral. I promised her that I would do it. The text below shows the outline for the eulogy that I delivered at her funeral. (The text is in all capitals. The purpose was to make my notes easier to see from the lectern.)

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**THANK YOU REV. HALL AND THANK ALL OF YOU FOR COMING TODAY.**

**WE ARE HERE TO MORN THE PASSING OF MY MOTHER, SCYBLE CRAWFORD. I HOPE THAT WE CAN ALSO CELEBRATE HER LIFE. IT WAS A LIFE IN WHICH SHE TOUCHED MANY OTHERS, INCLUDING THE LIVES OF MANY PEOPLE IN THIS ROOM.**

**ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO, AFTER MY FATHER PASSED AWAY, MY SISTER SNOOKY AND I WERE SITTING WITH MY MOTHER AT THE DINING ROOM TABLE. WE WERE HANDLING THE MANY DETAILS FOLLOWING HIS FUNERAL.**

**MY MOTHER SAID ‘GERALD, I WANT YOU TO SAY SOME THINGS ABOUT ME AT MY FUNERAL. SNOOKY AND I LOOKED AT HER QUIZICALLY AND I ASKED ‘WHY WOULD YOU WANT ME TO DO THAT?’ SHE SAID, “I JUST WANT TO MAKE DAMN SURE THAT SOMEONE SAYS SOMETHING GOOD ABOUT ME.” I GAVE HER MY WORD THAT I WOULD AND THAT IS WHY I AM HERE TODAY.**

**A LOT OF PEOPLE IN THIS ROOM KNEW MY MOTHER LONGER AND IN DIFFERENT WAYS THAN I DID, SO I DECIDED TO ASK A FEW OF THEM WHAT GOOD THINGS THEY REMEMBERED ABOUT HER.**

**CLAUDE WILLIAMS, HER NEPHEW, SAID “I REMEMBER HER BLACKBERRY COBBLER. IT WAS THE BEST THAT I EVER TASTED.” EVERYONE REMEMBERS THOSE WONDERFUL MEALS AT HER HOUSE. SHE TAUGHT A LOT OF US TO COOK. ONLY THIS WEEK, KRISTA IN FLORENCE, ALABAMA CALLED TO GET GRAMPS FAMOUS BARBECUE SAUCE RECIPE.**

**JIM PRITCHETT, A GRANDSON, REMEMBERS “WONDERFUL TIMES SPENT DURING THE SUMMERS AT THE FARM.” GRAMPS WOULD TAKE HIM FISHING. JIM WILL NEVER FORGET THOSE GOOD TIMES.**

**BOB SINGLETARY, WHO WAS MORE OF A BROTHER THAN A NEPHEW, REMEMBERS THAT MY MOTHER “HAD MUSICAL TALENT. SHE COULD PLAY A GUITAR, PIANO, AND LOVED TO SING. SHE ALWAYS HAD A GOOD TIME AND LOVED PEOPLE.”**

**AUNT NORA DELL, MY MOTHER’S SISTER, SAID “SCYBLE WOULD ALWAYS PITCH IN AND DO MORE THAN HER SHARE OF THE WORK. SHE WAS A HARD AND WILLING WORKER.”**

**UNCLE PAUL, ONE OF MY MOTHER’S BROTHERS SAID “SHE WAS ALWAYS WILLING TO HELP OTHERS THAT WERE NOT AS FORTUNATE. AND THAT SHE WOULD GIVE SOMEONE THE SHIRT OFF HER BACK IF THEY NEEDED IT.”**

**UNCLE DARREL, ANOTHER BROTHER, SAID THAT “MY MOTHER TREATED EVERYONE ALIKE, WHETHER THEY WERE RICH OR POOR, HANDICAPPED, OLD OR YOUNG, BLACK OR WHITE. SHE PAID SPECIAL ATTENTION AND CARED FOR AND HELPED SOME RETARDED CHILDREN IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD WHEN SHE WAS GROWING UP.”**

**UNCLE OTTO, MY MOTHER’S BROTHER, ALWAYS “ENJOYED BEING AROUND MY MOTHER. HE SAID SHE ENJOYED A GOOD JOKE NOW AND THEN. SHE MADE HIM LAUGH A LOT WHEN THEY WERE YOUNGER.”**

**JERRY CRAWFORD, OUR OLDEST SON SAID “GRAMPS HAD A SENSE OF HUMOR.” JERRY SPENT A LOT OF TIME AT THE FARM IN THE SUMMERS, AND HE REMEMBERS, “WHEN HE WOULD ACCIDENTALLY BREAK SOMETHING WHILE PLAYING, SHE DID NOT GET UPSET ABOUT IT. HE WOULD JUST PICK IT UP AND KEEP GOING.”**



JAY CRAWFORD, OUR YOUNGEST SON, SAID "SHE WAS SO ENTERTAINING." HE ENJOYED BEING IN HER COMPANY BECAUSE SHE WAS SO HAPPY AND KIND. SHE PLAYED WITH US WHEN WE WERE YOUNG."

MY SISTER, JOAN, REMEMBERS THAT "GRAMPS COULD SEW AND THAT SHE MADE A GREAT MANY OF JOAN'S CLOTHES WHEN JOAN WAS A YOUNGSTER. JOAN WORE THEM WITH GREAT PRIDE BECAUSE SHE KNEW THAT MY MOTHER HAD PUT A LOT OF LOVE INTO MAKING THOSE CLOTHES."

I REMEMBER THAT MY MOTHER LIVED THROUGHOUT HER LIFE WITH GREAT NECK AND BACK PAIN AS A RESULT OF A SERIOUS AUTO ACCIDENT IN 1940. I WAS ONLY 9 MONTHS OLD AT THE TIME AND WAS THROWN CLEAR OF THE WRECK. I WAS A FAT BABY, AND WEIGHED 29 POUNDS AT 9 MONTHS. WHEN MY MOTHER WOKE UP IN THE HOSPITAL SHE ASKED "WHERE IS MY BABY?" THE NURSE SAID "HE IS IN INTENSIVE CARE. HE IS ALL SWOLLEN UP." THEY PUT MY MOTHER IN A WHEELCHAIR AND CARRIED HER UP TO INTENSIVE CARE. MY MOTHER LOOKED AT ME AND SAID, "HE IS NOT SWOLLEN UP; HE IS JUST FAT."

SCYBLE CRAWFORD LOVED ANIMALS AND ALWAYS HAD A DOG OR TWO, A CAT, A BABY DEER, OR A BABY COON. AND SHE COULD TRAIN THEM TO DO ALL SORTS OF TRICKS.

MY MOTHER ALWAYS STOOD UP FOR HERSELF AND HER CHILDREN. AS MANY OF YOU KNOW, SHE COULD BE PRETTY FORCEFUL WHEN NECESSARY. I REMEMBER ONE TIME WHEN I WAS ABOUT 10 YEARS OLD, I CAME HOME AND TOLD MY DAD THAT A BIGGER BOY HAD BEEN PICKING ON ME AND HAD ACTUALLY BEATEN ME UP. MY DAD IN HIS QUIET AND LOVING WAY SAID "SON, YOU NEED TO TALK TO THAT BOY AND TRY TO WORK OUT YOUR DIFFERENCES." MY MOTHER OVERHEARD THE CONVERSATION, AND SHE CALLED ME OVER AND SAID, "I WANT YOU TO MAKE A FIST AND YOU MUST WALK OVER AND HIT HIM AS HARD AS YOU CAN RIGHT IN THE NOSE, AND HE WILL NEVER BOTHER YOU AGAIN." I DID WHAT SHE SAID, AND THAT BOY NEVER BOTHERED ME AGAIN.

SHE HAD OTHER VALUES THAT SHE TRIED TO PASS ALONG TO US.

1. YOU MUST ALWAYS BE ON TIME.
2. YOU SHOULD TRY TO NEVER BORROW MONEY.
3. YOU MUST ALWAYS PAY YOUR BILLS ON TIME.
4. SAVE MONEY FOR A RAINY DAY.

MY MOTHER ALWAYS HAD A NICE GARDEN. SHE COULD GROW THINGS, AND SHE TAUGHT US THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A GARDEN LIKE THEY DID BACK ON THE FARM WHERE SHE GREW UP.

MY MOTHER ALWAYS WORKED HARD IN THE HOME AND AT VARIOUS JOBS. SHE WORKED IN A WOOLWORTH'S STORE, A SCHOOL LUNCHROOM, A DAIRY BAR, A BAKERY. SHE SAVED MONEY IN A COOKIE JAR. WHEN THE KIDS NEEDED SOMETHING REALLY BAD, SHE WOULD ALWAYS COME UP WITH A FEW DOLLARS TO MAKE US HAPPY.

SHE ALSO SACRIFICED A LOT FOR US. SHE WOULD DO WITHOUT THINGS SO THAT WE COULD HAVE SHOES OR CLOTHES OR A FEW GIFTS UNDER THE TREE AT CHRISTMAS.

I ESPECIALLY REMEMBER SUNDAYS WHEN SHE WOULD FRY A CHICKEN AFTER CHURCH. PEOPLE WOULD OFTENTIMES EAT WITH US ON SUNDAY. I REMEMBER THAT MY MOTHER WOULD ALWAYS GIVE OTHERS THE LEGS AND CHICKEN BREASTS. MY MOTHER WOULD TAKE THE CHICKEN BACKS AND WOULD NEVER COMPLAIN ABOUT IT.

SCYBLE CRAWFORD ALWAYS TAUGHT US THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY. SHE WOULD ALWAYS TAKE US TO MAMA AND PAPA'S HOUSE, OUR GRANDPARENTS. AND WE VISITED UNCLES AND AUNTS REGULARLY.

OUR MOTHER AND FATHER ALWAYS TOOK US TO CHURCH ON SUNDAY MORNING, SUNDAY NIGHT, AND WEDNESDAY NIGHTS. THEY WERE RELIGIOUS PEOPLE. AND THEY TRIED TO TEACH US TO BE GOOD CHRISTIAN CHILDREN.

I REMEMBER ONE SUNDAY NIGHT AT RUGBY HILLS BAPTIST CHURCH, I WAS ABOUT 7 OR 8, AND I ATTENDED A MEETING UPSTAIRS IN THE NEW CHURCH. THERE WAS A LARGE SECTION OF THE UPSTAIRS THAT HAD NOT YET BEEN FLOORED. IT WAS DURING THE PREACHING SERVICE, I DECIDED TO EXPLORE AROUND UP THERE IN THE ATTIC. SO I WAS WALKING ACROSS THE RAFTERS AND I MISSED A RAFTER AND FELL THROUGH THE CEILING, RIGHT BESIDE THE PREACHER AS THEY WERE SINGING 'JUST AS I AM'

I RECEIVED A NICE LICKING FROM THAT. AFTERWARDS, MY MOTHER LOOKED AT ME AND WINKED. SHE SAID "WE REALLY THOUGHT THE LORD WAS COMING TO TAKE US AWAY".

THERE IS ONE LAST GOOD THING THAT I WANT TO TELL YOU ABOUT MY MOTHER. SHE WAS ALWAYS SO SORRY THAT SHE DID NOT FINISH HIGH SCHOOL. SO SHE INSISTED THAT HER THREE KIDS GET AN EDUCATION. SHE NEVER SAID, "IF YOU GO TO COLLEGE ..." IT WAS "WHEN YOU GO TO COLLEGE." BECAUSE OF HER INFLUENCE, HER THREE KIDS DID GO TO COLLEGE. I WAS THINKING ABOUT THIS EARLIER AND REALIZED THAT HER 3 KIDS EARNED A TOTAL OF 9 COLLEGE DEGREES. AND, IF WE COUNT THE 3 SPOUSES AND FOUR GRANDKIDS, THERE ARE 24 COLLEGE DEGREES THAT HAVE BEEN EARNED. PROBABLY BECAUSE MY MOTHER WOULD NOT HAVE HAD IT ANY OTHER WAY.

AS I CONCLUDE THIS EULOGY, I AM REMINDED OF THE FAMOUS CHRISTMAS MOVIE *IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE* WHICH WAS FILMED IN 1946. HOW MANY OF YOU HAVE SEEN IT? YOU MAY REMEMBER THAT IT STARRED JAMES STEWART AND DEALT WITH THE THEME: "WHAT THE WORLD WOULD BE LIKE IF GEORGE BAILEY HAD NEVER BEEN BORN." YOU WILL RECALL THAT GEORGE'S GUARDIAN ANGEL, CLARENCE ODBODY, SHOWED HIM A VERY BLEAK PLACE. THAT IS WHAT IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN LIKE IF SCYBLE CRAWFORD HAD NEVER LIVED. YES, MY MOTHER WAS A GOOD PERSON AND SHE CHANGED MANY LIVES WHILE SHE WAS WITH US. THE WORLD WOULD NOT BE WHAT IT IS TODAY WITHOUT HER!

I HAVE TRIED TO KEEP THE PROMISE I MADE TO HER. AND I HAVE SAID SOME GOOD THINGS ABOUT OUR MOTHER. WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, SHE WAS A TRULY REMARKABLE WOMAN AND A WORLD CLASS MOTHER.

IT IS A LOT LIKE THE CHRISTMAS MOVIE I TOLD YOU ABOUT, SHE HAD A BIG AND POSITIVE EFFECT ON MANY PEOPLE IN THIS ROOM, AND I AM TRULY THANKFUL THAT SHE WAS MY MOTHER.

THANK ALL OF YOU FOR SO MUCH FOR COMING TODAY. NOW I WILL TURN THE PROGRAM BACK TO REV HALL.

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The obituary for my mother follows:

**SCYBLE AGENT CRAWFORD 1919-2007**

*HENRY, Tennessee: Scyble Agent Crawford, 87, died Saturday, September 22, at Lakeside Retirement Center in McKenzie following an extended illness. Funeral services were Tuesday, September 25, at 11 a.m. at Brummitt Funeral Home in McKenzie with burial in Bethlehem Baptist Church Cemetery in Henry.*

*Mrs. Crawford was born December 27, 1919 and grew up in Kosciusko, Mississippi. She and her husband, John, moved to Henry in 1974, following his retirement from National Trust Life Insurance Company in Memphis. She was a member of Bethlehem Baptist Church of Henry.*

*For over 50 years, Mrs. Crawford was actively involved with the Order of the Eastern Star in Memphis and later in McKenzie. She served in various positions of leadership, including the office of "Worthy Matron". She was preceded in death by her husband, John Crawford; one daughter, Mary Kathryn (Snooky) O'Brien; her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Agent; two sisters, Kathryn Bobbitt and Nellie Singletary; and two brothers, Jack and Homer Agent.*

*Survivors include: one son, Dr. Gerald Crawford and his wife, Cindy Crawford, of Florence, Alabama; one daughter, Joan Pritchett and her husband, James Pritchett, Sr. of Martin; a son-in-law, Steve O'Brien of Bradenton, Florida; grandchildren, Dr. Jerry Crawford and his wife Krista of Florence, AL, Dr. Jay Crawford and his wife Staci of San Antonio, TX, Jim Pritchett and his wife Suzanne of Martin, TN, and Kevin O'Brien of Bradenton, FL; and great-grandchildren, Clint, Hannah, Grant, and Emma Crawford of Florence; J.B., Bo, and Molly Crawford of San Antonio; Lydia Beth and James Pritchett, III of Martin; and one sister, Nora Dell McCulloch of Ackerman, Mississippi; four brothers, Paul Agent of Birmingham, Alabama, Darrell Agent, Joe Agent, and Otto Agent, all of Memphis, and Bobby Singletary (near brother) of Starkville, Mississippi.*

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(Photographs follow, also see - <http://geraldcraw.net/>)



1975



1976



1985



1995





2000



2007



2006



AUGUST  
2007



## Chapter 5 - Junior College and Military Days

Readers may recall that I had joined the Tennessee Air National Guard in October of 1956. My main reason for doing this was to reduce the possibility of being drafted. Some friends had also signed up, and they told me that it was a good thing, especially summer camp. The extra money was an additional incentive. Our newly enlisted group attended weekend drills until the summer of 1957 when we were sent to Texas for basic military training.

That basic training program at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio was not a bad experience. I stayed out of trouble and learned to march. And I liked the physical demands and military structure, discipline, and general order, something that I had never really seen before. After basic training was finished, I returned home and went to Northwest Mississippi Junior College in Senatobia, Mississippi. It was only about sixty miles from Memphis, but it was exciting to be away from home and on my own.

The Junior college football experience, surprisingly, was not a Sunday school picnic. Those guys were big and tough. Most of them were flunk-outs from senior colleges, and the others were military veterans who had played football in the military service. I weighed 218, and I was the smallest tackle on the team. But I was faster than my fellow linemen, and I knew how to get into the plays without making the other lineman mad. If I had done that, they could have made it tough on me. I managed to play in every game that first year, and the coach told me once that I was his "most promising freshman lineman."

I made some great friends that first year. We have stayed in touch with each other for more than 50 years. The best guy out of the group was Ron Rogers from Cleveland, Tennessee. He was a defensive end on the team and like me was not a truly gifted football player. We went to Memphis a few times together, and he once met my parents. He was married and had worked in a paper mill there in Tennessee. His best friends were two unrelated guys, Jack White and Bob White, both also from Cleveland. Jack was another "above average" football player and a somewhat strange little guy that had no business going to college. He was a drop out from Memphis State and not much of a student to say the least. Bob White was a big guy that played tackle. Ron Rogers and Jack White did not return to Northwest for their second year, but I stayed in touch with Ron over the years. Because of him in 2005, most of the football players from our 1956-58 years all started going back to the junior college for an annual homecoming get together.

Our coaching team back then was evidently pretty bad. We had big tough players but did not win a single game that first year. I enjoyed the college experience, but I was not a truly outstanding player, and my classroom performance was even more mediocre. I met several pretty girls and had a lot of memorable experiences at NWJC. Being on my own certainly helped me to grow up—fast.

While in college, I remained in the Tennessee Air National Guard all the way through undergraduate school and for one year after senior college graduation. In my early years with the Guard, our primary mission was air reconnaissance using RF84 (fighter) jet aircraft. My weekend job each month was in ground refueling, and I worked on the military side of the Memphis airport while I refueled jets. I drove large 5000-gallon tanker trucks from the fuel dump to airplanes on the tarmac and filled them with JP-4 fuel. The thing that I remember was that everyone drank beer during the two weeks of summer camp each year. There would be cases of beer iced down in tubs most of the time where we worked. How we were able to drive those big trucks right up to airplanes without having an accident is hard for me to understand. But I do not remember anyone ever getting drunk or having an accident on the flight line.

There was another interesting thing that I learned about while in the Guard. I met a fellow guardsman named Claude Cockrell. He was a big guy with lots of money that he earned as a salesman in Memphis. He had a CB radio in his car, and it was the first one that I had ever seen. Laws setting up CB frequencies had only recently been passed. I was fascinated that he could talk to people in Panama and other far away places on cool cloudy days when the “skip” would be “out.” There were also some six meter “hams” in our military unit. I learned to like getting on the radio and later obtained my ham license in 1960 after going off to college at Delta State.

During my six-year military enlistment, I was in high school about one-half year and in college four years. I usually had a full plate most of the time, so I did not take my military duty very seriously. I held the rank of Airman Basic until the completion of basic training at Lackland AFB in San Antonio. At the Basic Military graduation ceremony, I earned one stripe (Airman Third Class.) At my discharge about six years later in 1963, I still had only one stripe. The clerk told me that he had never seen anyone get discharged as an Airman Third Class after six years of service. I never even took the test needed to advance in rank.

Even though I did not get promotions, I did learn some important things. There was one military idea that seemed to stick with me throughout my life. It was called “preventive maintenance.” Back home, we had been taught to follow my dad’s rule: “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it,” and this was most likely related to the fact that most everything at our house was usually broken. In the Air National Guard unit, I learned to replace parts before they failed and to properly maintain equipment. That was a milestone in my thinking, and I made a serious effort to distance myself from the family training I had received as a youngster. Since those days, I have followed the practice of preventive maintenance.

Following this idea, I promised myself that I would never again own or use “junk.” Few people in my adult life probably understand the reasons why I always want new things and things that are not scratched or dented. As a child, everything in our house was old, worn,



and probably broken. So I promised myself that when I grew up, I would always have nice things such as cars, tools, and clothes. It is still that way with me.

I was fortunate to be able to go to college and stay in the Air National Guard. When I missed weekend drills, I would usually make them up at other times. At Northwest Junior College, I remember regularly getting bruised, eyes blackened, nose broken, and teeth knocked out during Saturday night football games and then going to a weekend drill on Sundays. People wondered how a human body could take so much punishment.

I truly enjoyed our regular military summer encampments in distant places. We went to Texas and Wisconsin and to Gulfport, Mississippi three years. Our refueling crew would work hard on the flight line during the day and party hard at night. In my last two years of Guard duty, our unit changed missions and became an air-to-air refueling unit. We acquired 17 giant KC-97 Tanker aircraft. Although I did not have flight status, I regularly rode in those big tanker airplanes.

On warm spring days, I remember taking naps in the cavernous cargo bays of our giant ANG airplanes. Occasionally, I would wake up to find that the plane had taken off on a mission. I would casually walk on the catwalks, around the big tanks, and up to the cockpit. The pilots would ask, "What are you doing here?" I would tell them that I was working on the plane back in the cargo bay and did not realize that it was taking off. They did not seem to mind. They just wanted my name to be on the manifest list so that they did not get into trouble. My first trip to Mexico and some other great trips happened that way.

There was one scary situation that happened when I was riding in the cargo bay of a KC-97 airplane. It was at night, and we were coming back from a training flight to Texas. There were only two pilots and myself on that big airplane. I was looking around and saw a small room. It was filled with radio equipment. I sat down and turned on a Collins radio receiver and tuned it to the ham radio bands. I listened for a while and happened to hear a Delta State friend talking with someone. So I reached down and turned on the Collins transmitter and tuned it to the correct frequency so that I could speak with him. The second that I touched the transmit button, every light on that airplane went out. That included overhead lights, dashboard lights, outside landing lights, and all flight radios. I very quietly turned off the radio equipment, closed the door, and walked up to the flight deck where the two pilots were calmly dealing with an emergency situation. They took out their flashlights to see the flight panels and somehow managed to fly towards the Memphis Airport, using a built in compass. They did not realize that I was the one that had caused all of the problems. I asked them how they were going to land, and they said that they would approach the airport, fly low over the tower, rock the wings up and down, and the flight controllers would declare an emergency. They would then route other incoming planes away so that we could land. There were fire trucks and other emergency ground trucks on the sides of the runway when we touched down. Of course in those days, the Memphis Airport was not a busy place like it is today.

My Air National Guard experience was probably the least noteworthy period of my entire life. I did not accomplish much and did not learn a great deal from that huge six-year investment of time. I have thought about this and tried to decide why my performance was so abysmal. I have about concluded that it was perhaps related to the fact that I was supervised by enlisted people. They were just typically “good old boys” with low level civilian jobs. I just really was not motivated to take orders from or compete with those “hourly” or enlisted people for recognition and promotions. And I did not yet have enough time or education to become an officer. It is sad because I later wished that I could have been a real military officer and enjoyed my time in military service. Maybe that is one reason why I was so proud of Jerry and Jay when they became officers and had so many rich experiences.

Now, let’s go back to those junior college days. It was interesting how I came to select my major field of study: business administration. At my freshman registration for classes at the beginning of school, the lady asked what major I wanted. I told her that I did not know. After some discussion, it was decided that business was probably best since it did not require a course in algebra. It is almost amusing to look back and realize that I later spent about 50 years in a career that was basically decided during a ten minute period of time by a lady that worked in the registrar’s office at a junior college. I guess that situation fairly well demonstrates the absolute lack of planning and career counseling that I received as a youngster. No one ever asked me what I wanted to do when I was growing up.

Overall, my junior college grades were very average, mostly “C’s” except one “B” in Accounting. I lived in the athletic dorm during the first year, and not much study took place there. During the season, football practice required at least three hours per day, from 3 to 6 p.m. After dinner, we were just too tired and bruised to study.

I cannot explain why, but for some reason, I was elected as a class officer both years at the junior college. I think it was probably because I was a big, fairly nice, outgoing kid, and I usually gave the gals a good run for their money. They were probably the ones that picked out the people to vote for in those elections. I was the “reporter” both years, but I do not remember ever reporting anything to anyone during that time period. The scholarship that I received by playing football paid my \$30 per month room and board. There was no tuition in those days for Mississippi residents. I had registered using my Aunt Nora Dell’s address in Ackerman, Mississippi so that I would not have to pay an additional \$30 per month out-of-state tuition.

I joined the Baptist Student Union because I was accustomed to going to church. Another reason was that there were always some pretty girls in the religious clubs. And even at my young age, I had discovered that church girls were the ones most likely to get into the back seat on dates. There was one particular girl that I enjoyed spending time with and her name was Margie. She was a tall, dark-skinned girl from Senatobia. Her father ran a service station in downtown Senatobia.

The Baptist Student Union would have parties, and sponsor activities for students. On one occasion, I remember going on a Sunday afternoon hayride and cookout to Sardis Dam with Margie. Many bales of hay and some loose straw were loaded into the back of a large open bed truck for the slow ride to Sardis. Along the way, several of the couples, including the two of us, sort of disappeared under the hay. It is not difficult to imagine what young people do on hayrides. Once we arrived at Sardis Dam, Margie went to help the other girls with food preparation. When I walked over to the serving line, Margie asked me if I wanted a hot dog. I said, "maybe later." I could not help but focus on what she had been handling on the way to Sardis.

There are many great football stories that could be told about that first year. Here is one that some might enjoy. It was our last game of the season, and we were playing Hines Junior College near Jackson, Mississippi. The weather was very cold, and a light rain was falling that night. The falling mist would freeze into thin sheets of ice on the grass, and I remember sliding across the ground and being scratched or even cut by the patches of thin ice. It was the third quarter, and we were losing badly. Our players were all exhausted, muddy, and even bloody from the ice scratches and cuts. I had been playing but was now on the bench sitting beside my friend, Ron Rogers. We had parkas over our heads to keep from getting completely wet. The coach was walking the sidelines in front of us, and he smoked cigarettes as he paced back and forth. He flipped a cigarette butt off to the side, and it landed at my feet. I reached down and picked it up and took a drag or two under the parka. No one could tell because it was raining and so cold that everyone was exhaling condensation as they breathed. Ron Rogers has kidded me about that for more than 50 years.

That was not the only thing that happened that night at Hines Junior College. The stands were quite full and someone back behind our bench started chanting, "Put Crawford in. Put Crawford in." More and more people joined in, and soon the whole grandstand was cheering for me to be put me into the game. I have no idea who started it or why they started it, but it was unnerving, especially when we were down 46 points, and I was so tired and cold. I did not want to go back out there on the field.

After the football season was over, several football players would regularly go to night clubs in West Memphis, Arkansas on weekends. One favorite place was Danny's Club, and another was The Cotton Club. There was usually a lot of drinking, some dancing, and some fighting. On more than one occasion, we stopped by the blood bank on our way into Memphis and each one of us sold a pint of blood for ten dollars. We used that money to buy liquor. In those days, one could buy three-fifths of whiskey for ten bucks. I remember riding back to school with six guys after one of those Cotton Club evenings. I managed to get into an argument that led to a fight with Alton Moore, our football manager. He was a big guy and had an attitude problem. It started when he reached into the back seat and rolled up my back window. My fingers were caught in the opening, and he would not roll it down so that I could get my fingers out. So the driver stopped the car, and Alton Moore and I slugged it out on the side of

the road. At two in the morning, there was very little traffic on Highway 51 back in those days.

We were both pretty sloshed, and I do not remember much about the fight. But I do remember the next day at school. Alton Moore's eyes were both totally purple and completely swollen shut. And he had to have help getting to class for almost two weeks. He must have had one of those strange types of skin that swells and discolors easily. I do not remember hitting him that many times; however, he looked like he had been in a terrible auto accident. People still kid me about that fight. I am glad that I never had any contact with Alton Moore after we graduated from Northwest.

There is one other story that I will write about. After a home football game, there was a big crowd of students at the restaurant across from the college. I went there with several football players. I noticed that there was a really pretty girl sitting with another group in a booth next to ours. She was not a student at NWJC, so I asked a friend who was sitting in the booth with her to tell me all about her. One thing led to another, and I remember leaving the restaurant arm in arm with the pretty visitor. I borrowed a friend's car, and we drove around and finally parked on a dark road. I do not remember what I told her, but it must have been a pretty good story. We had a nice time together. I apparently made a good impression on her that evening.

On the following Monday, at the required school general assembly held in the school auditorium, the speaker had already started talking when I just happened to look back, over my shoulder and saw that pretty visitor walking down the aisle slowly looking on both sides of the aisle. I knew what she was looking for—me! To avoid embarrassment in front of the whole college, I got down on the floor, under the seats and crawled through people's legs along the entire row of football players and escaped out the side door.

That first year, I also dated a nice girl from Batesville, Mississippi. She was an honor student and was a good influence on me for a time. She later went to Ole Miss in her sophomore year and graduated there. I have been told that she later became a speech pathologist and married a prominent farmer in the Batesville or Como, Mississippi, area.

During spring practice of that year, all of the football players were pushed pretty hard to improve our attitudes and abilities. While playing defensive tackle, I remember getting into a fistfight on the field with Whitey Vaughn. He was playing offense and continually "leg whipped" me during every series so that I was unable to get into the play action. That is not a legal technique and is considered unsportsmanlike. I became furious at him and started going for his face with my fists on every play. He knew that I was in a rage and could not be stopped, so he shouted to the coach for help.

There was another event that I cannot forget. It was in the spring game, I think. I was running downfield on the kickoff, and Bob Hogue was blocking for the ball carrier. He somehow threw a forearm, and it rang my bell. I saw purple stars and had to crawl off the field. That is

when I lost a front tooth and had my nose broken again. There were no face masks in those days.

During the summer after my freshman year, Bob Fish and I were lucky to get a job at Clayton-Brown, a big wholesale grocery company in Memphis. I read in the newspaper that the company had gone on-strike and needed workers. We went there to apply for a job and found at least 200 people in the employment line. I happened to recognize one manager down in the front who was doing some of the interviewing. He was the father of a fellow NWJC football player. He saw me back there at the end of the line and motioned for the two of us to go into his office. After a brief talk, he gave us summer jobs.

Although it is now hard for me to imagine, I drove a 42-foot tractor-trailer rig and delivered cases of groceries to stores all across North Mississippi. I had a young, black man named Oliver as a helper. It was heavy duty work for both of us, and it certainly helped me get in shape for the upcoming football season. Bob Fish worked back at the warehouse unloading boxcars. That truck driving experience gave me a lot of confidence to later be able to back up boats, trailers, and to later drive a large motor home.

Football during my sophomore year at NWJC did not work out the way I expected, but it was probably for the best. When I reported for practice in late August, many of my friends did not return to school. I was slotted as a starting tackle, but there was a whole new crop of big incoming players. The week before our first game, I was having a cleat for one shoe replaced and was a few minutes late for practice one hot day. The new assistant line coach, Charlie Duck, decided that he would teach me a lesson about promptness, and he said, "Come over here Crawford, and let's do a little head-on tackling drill." He pointed the entire front line towards me, and I was told to tackle each person as they ran at me, head on, one at a time. I remember that the first guy was Louis Willis, a big, tough, 6'2" lineman. The coach tossed him the ball as he lowered his shoulders and started running full speed toward me. When he was about two yards away, I stepped aside like a matador, and he went hurtling into the rocky hard soil of the practice field. I do not know what got into me, but I just did not need such unreasonable harassment at that point in my life. So I took my helmet off and tossed it to the coach and said, "Coach, take this helmet and shove it" as I trotted off the field.

I fully expected the head coach to call and ask me to come back and join the team, but he never did call. That was the end of my athletic career. Looking back, I am very happy that events unfolded as they did. If I had continued playing football and getting those inevitable injuries, I believe that the quality of my later life would have been reduced as I grew older. That is the reason why I did everything possible to discourage our sons from playing contact sports in high school. I hope that they can understand my position after reading these words.

Back in Bartlett, I had already talked Bob Fish into attending NWJC with me when school started in September. I was a sophomore, and he was a beginning freshman, but we roomed

together in Pickle Hall, a non athletic dorm. Now, I had more time to study and to do normal things that every student likes to do. He and I bought a 12-inch black and white TV for about \$260 (in today's money, that would be about \$1200) and placed it in our room. I managed to install a wire antenna so that we could get all three Memphis stations. We were the only students at the college with a TV in our room. One can see that we had plenty of traffic and plenty of visitors.

There was one other memorable incident that should go on paper. Quite frequently there would be a poker game going on in a room across and two rooms down the hall from where Bob Fish and I lived in Pickle Dorm. They sometimes played cards around the clock. It was noisy and kept us awake. I remember on one occasion that I took a cherry bomb and removed the fuse. Then I dumped the powder out and stuck the fuse back into the body of the cherry bomb. I then lit the fuse and stuck one arm into the room and tossed the bomb onto the card table. That cleared the room, but it was only a temporary solution.

My next action a few days later proved to be a more permanent solution to the noise problem caused by "thoughtless poker players." One morning after a sleepless night, I met my first class then returned to the basement floor of Pickle Dorm. I noticed a pretty good-sized dead rat, lying on the ground near the outside door. As I walked towards my room, I noted that the door to the card player's room was open. I looked in and found that the occupants were not in their room. As I looked into that room, I just happened to notice a nice, neat round hole in the wall where the door knob had punched through the sheetrock. It was very quiet that morning, and no one was on the floor. I quickly went back and picked up the rat by the tail and pushed it into the round hole. I could hear it fall down inside of the wall. Then I quickly went to my room as though nothing had happened.

It took about two days for the rat to start to smell. Finally, it got so bad that the two room occupants could not stay in there. I noticed that maintenance people, janitors, even administrators came to look for the source of the smell. That went on for two or three weeks. No one could find it. I think those two guys even stopped using the room. There were no more card games in that room as long as I can remember.

I had all C's in my classes because I did not study very much, particularly during that first year. My grades were a little better as a sophomore, but we also partied more. There was one teacher at Northwest that I grew to like and respect. His name was Mr. James P. McCormick, and he taught accounting. There was great appeal for me in the systematic and orderly handling of business data. That was the first time in my life that I had been exposed to a system with rules and expected outcomes. And I liked the classes in accounting a lot. I even made my first "B" in Mr. McCormick's class. I remember that he told me that "I was plenty smart and could do anything that I set my mind to do."

If there was anyone, other than my friend Jerry Duncan and my father, who may have had a positive effect on me up to that point in life it was my junior college accounting teacher, Mr. James P. McCormick. He was disabled from his military service. I had a lot of respect for him because he treated people fairly. That does not mean he was easy. It just means that he was kind and helpful, but he expected a lot on test day.

I remember that I was about two weeks into my last semester of the second year when one of my advisors contacted me and asked if I planned to graduate. I told her, "Yes, I guess so." She said that I was one semester hour short and that I could actually graduate if I went through late registration and took a one hour class in library science. Somehow it worked out, and I later received a two year college diploma, even though I do not remember actually going through the graduation service.

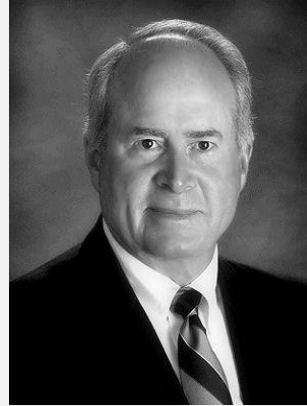
To conclude this chapter of my life, it can be said that I had survived to age 19 and had finished two years of college. That was more than anyone else in our family had done. And despite a serious lack of academic achievement, my appetite for more education had grown after finishing at NWJC. The decision to attend Delta State in Cleveland, Mississippi had more or less been made. My cousin Bobby Singletary had gone to school there and said that it was a good place. I remember talking to the DSC recruiter when she came to the junior college. My biggest concern was "whether or not I could pass the classes at DSC?" I remember that I asked her about Delta State's "flunk ratio." She assured me that I could probably pass if I studied. So I made a formal application to Delta State and left Senatobia with Bob Fish, heading to Memphis to find a job for the summer.

During the summer, Bob Fish and I found work at a casket factory in Memphis. My job was to polish and inspect caskets as they came off the assembly line. That job was so boring that I could not wait to finish and go back to school. In the fall, I headed to Delta State to complete my last two years of college, and Bob Fish went back to the junior college to finish his second year. Bobby did finish at the junior college and later got a job at the telephone company where he retired about thirty years later.

It should be pretty clear that any accomplishments up to this point in my life were pretty few and far between. But in retrospect, I must say that Northwest Junior College, as we called it back then, did give me a good start in life. And I would have never dreamed that in 2009, Northwest Mississippi Junior College would name me 50<sup>th</sup>-year "Alumnus of the Year." I still think that there must have been a mistake somewhere. The story below appeared in the Memphis Commercial Appeal newspaper:

## **Longtime Businessman and Educator Named Northwest Alumnus of the Year**

By Brittany Greer | 10/6/09



Northwest Mississippi Community College Alumnus of the Year, Dr. Gerald Crawford of Florence, Alabama, accredits Northwest for giving him the confidence needed to succeed in business and as a professor for more than 40 years. “Northwest was my first time away from home. It was such an exciting experience that allowed me to meet great people and learn life lessons. It was a time of friendships and growing up,” said Crawford. Northwest, along with other community colleges, do a lot for students who are adjusting right out of high school, according to Crawford. “Community colleges are a much needed step between the big world and the small world. Smaller colleges nurse students along the way.”

Crawford said he was a weak high school student and was not prepared for college back in 1957. “I believe I would have flunked out of a big four-year school. At Northwest, however, I was able to adjust to the college environment. Smaller classes and caring professors enabled me to ask questions and get answers. I grew to enjoy my classes,” said Crawford. One particular teacher at Northwest, James P. McCormick, told Crawford that he was smart and could do anything if he really set his mind to it. “That was the first time I had heard this from a teacher and it changed my whole attitude. I realized that learning could be fun and I started to study more and to participate in my classes. Northwest opened my eyes to endless possibilities,” he said. Crawford made his first—and perhaps his only “B” at Northwest in Mr. McCormick’s accounting class. “That ‘B’ helped lead me to a long and rewarding career as a professor. I was the first in my family to earn a college degree. Since that time, 26 degrees have been earned by immediate family members. Northwest had a domino effect on our family.”

Another person who had an effect on Crawford at Northwest was his football coach. “Coach Jackson was a tough guy. He expected a lot from us. I enjoyed being able to travel with the football team. It was a whole new world to me.” Crawford has been instrumental in organizing reunions of his Northwest football players over the past several years during Homecoming.

Crawford’s former classmate, Memphis physician Dr. Jerald Duncan said, “Any college or university would love to point to their own Crawfords sprinkled through the alumnus and alumna roster with a rising of pride. We can all be proud to know Dr. Crawford for he has made a positive difference for all whose paths he has crossed.”

Crawford, a native of Philadelphia and Kosciusko, graduated from Northwest in 1959 with an Associate of Arts degree in Business. While at Northwest, he was a class officer both years and was a member of the Dramatics Club, Wesley Foundation and participated in football and track programs. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Delta State University, a Master of Business



Administration degree from the University of Memphis and a Ph.D. in Marketing from the University of Arkansas.

After graduate school, he worked for almost 10 years with R. J. Reynolds Industries, a large consumer goods company. He started as a retail salesman in Memphis then moved up through the Sales Department to later serve as the Assistant National Sales Promotion Manager in the home office. He left the business world to begin work on a Ph.D. in 1970.

As a graduate student and teacher, he was able to complete his coursework and dissertation in December of 1973. His first job as a professor was overseas and involved teaching M.B.A. classes to U.S. Air Force officers in England, Greece and Turkey. Crawford and his family truly enjoyed living and working in Europe. He also enjoyed teaching courses in a new and rapidly expanding field of study, international business. In his years of teaching, Crawford was fortunate to live in eight countries, to work in 23 countries and to travel in more than 100 countries. Additionally, he has worked on various United Nations, U.S. Agency for International Development and U.S. Information Agency projects in Western and Central Europe, Southeast Asia, the Former Soviet Union and in the Middle East.

Crawford taught at the University of North Alabama for 33 years and has authored approximately 200 scholarly papers, journal publications and cases in textbooks. More than half of his articles and cases have appeared in publications. His research and teaching interests often involved helping businesspeople in developing and transitioning countries and helping professors use computers in the classroom. "As many of you know, there is more to being a college professor than teaching in the classroom. Professors must keep up with a changing world. In doing this, they are expected to conduct research in their field of study and to publish research findings. This was an aspect I truly enjoyed. I was able to help people in other countries develop their marketing, branding, packaging and overall business," said Crawford.

Dr. Crawford retired from the University of North Alabama in Florence, Ala. in 2008. He is married to the former Cynthia Crook, a retired teacher in the Florence City School System. They have two sons, Gerald Jr. and Jay, and seven grandchildren. The couple's sons are both physicians.

Homecoming activities will begin on the Senatobia campus at 8:30 a.m. with an alumni and friends reception in Haraway Center. Alumni presentations will proceed at 10:30 a.m., and afterward there will be a barbecue lunch on the grounds. The Northwest Rangers will take on the Northeast Tigers at 2 p.m. at Bobby Franklin Field in Ranger Stadium. Crawford will also be recognized during halftime activities. The 2009 Homecoming Queen will be crowned during halftime ceremonies.

(Photographs follow, also see - <http://geraldcraw.net/>)

**NORTHWEST MISSISSIPPI JUNIOR COLLEGE FOOTBALL 1957**



**NORTHWEST MISSISSIPPI JUNIOR COLLEGE Reunion 2007**





**September 1957... 50 Years ago! Northwest Mississippi Junior College**



**GAYLON BOOKER**  
Halfback



**JACK WHITE**  
Ranger Co-Captain



**RONALD ROGERS**  
End

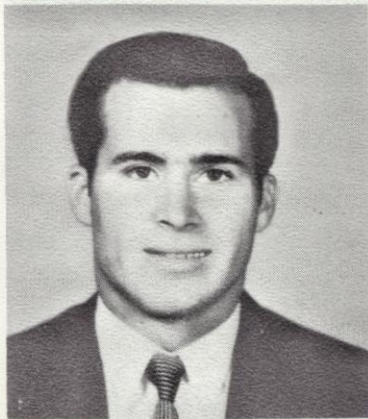


**EARL BABBS**  
Tackle



**GERALD CRAWFORD**  
Tackle

**GERALD L. CRAWFORD, Memphis, Tenn.**  
Business  
Football, 1; Track, 1; Freshman class reporter; Sophomore class reporter; Ranger Rocket Staff, 2; Dramatics Club, 2; Wesley Foundation, 1,2.





## Chapter 6 - Delta State College

After earning a junior college diploma and spending the next summer working the night shift in a casket factory, it became clear that I needed more education. And, believe me, no one could have been more ready to leave the "blue collar" ranks. Delta State College or DSC, as it was known back then, was my choice for a senior college because it had a good reputation. Also, it was smaller, a lower cost school, and it was in Mississippi. The school had about 650 students in those days. There was still some lingering concern about whether or not a student with my weak academic background could pass business school classes and become a college graduate. No one had ever accused me of being too smart, and no one had ever accused me of being overly motivated either. Even though I feared failure, I decided to enroll and hope for the best.

At that point in life, I was just another country boy that had never done very much to set myself aside from the many other "rednecks" in the world. By this time, however, it was clear that a college education was essential if I ever wanted to find a decent job and have a family. Working at that casket factory, driving a truck, working in service stations and grocery stores was just not enough. My goal at that point was to get more education, maybe even graduate from college, so that I could earn at least \$100 per week. That was a pretty high goal in those days, one that I would not reach until I turned 26 years of age. The reader will later see that my first real job out of college paid \$65 per week.

About one month before school started, I drove down to Cleveland to make sure that everything was in order. It was not too far away from Bartlett, about 120 miles, which took only two and one-half hours driving on Highway 61 South. I was pleased that all of my documents had been received by the school and that they were expecting me on the first day of the fall semester. On my way back home, just as I had crossed over the state line, I stopped for gas at a service station in Tennessee. They seemed quite busy, so I made a casual comment to the owner of the station. I told him, "You need some more employees." And his reply was, "Do you want a job?" I asked him a few questions and received the right answers, so I started to work the next morning. That was a good way to pick up a few bucks over the next weeks. I remember that I was driving my dad's six-cylinder, gray, 1949 Ford that he had, more or less, loaned to me. I used it every day to get to that service station job for the next month.

Upon arrival at Delta State, I was assigned a room in Stadium Dorm and my roommate was Robert B. Shute. He was 26 years old, a U.S. military veteran, and had flown fighter jets in the Navy. He was not just another college kid, and I developed a healthy respect for him. He was worldly and smart, and he taught me a lot of things that year. We would debate some of the toughest problems facing America. Robert was a skilled debater, and I usually lost in those private, sometimes heated discussions.

After my 20<sup>th</sup> birthday on August 31, I was now eager to move ahead at this new school. In those days, there were about twice as many male students in colleges as there were females. And one thing that most young men look for is girls. There were many more nice-looking girls at Delta State than I remember back at the junior college. It did not take long to locate the women's dorms, and I managed to meet a few girls, during the early part of the semester. Colleges typically encouraged church activities in those days, and I again found them to be a rich source of friends. I attended church services regularly while at DSC and even joined the Baptist Student Union.

At twenty, I must have been fairly naïve about most political issues. I even joined the Young Democrats Club on campus. Strangely enough, I guess that I had bought into some of the ideals of liberalism that seem to run rampant in most colleges. Professors in those days, and even more so today, teach ideas that favor big government programs and more taxes. My roommate, Robert Shute, however, helped convert me during that first semester from being a Social Security loving Democrat to a more business oriented Republican. It should be noted that my conversion to Republicanism was not fully completed until I started my first job out of school and noted what seemed like a large amount of money being withheld for taxes.

Robert and I drove to Memphis one weekend not long after classes had started at Delta State. Once there, we met John, one of Robert's friends from Goodman, Mississippi who lived in Memphis. The three of us then stopped by to visit with a third friend from Goodman. Her name was Carol, and she was married to a Marine that was serving on military duty in Vietnam. The three of them talked a good bit about their friends and past high school days in Goodman, Mississippi.

Carol served snacks, dip, and drinks. After an hour or so, I noticed that Robert and John became very drowsy and even fell asleep. I assumed that Robert was tired from a long day and from driving. But I felt good and was wide awake. Carol later told me that she had loaded their drinks so that Robert and John would go to sleep or even pass out. Then it would be possible for the two of us to get to know each other better. I did get her phone number that night, and we made it a point to see each other regularly during the following year. Not long after we met, she came down to Cleveland for a surprise visit. Unfortunately, I already had a date on that Saturday night but managed to see her after carrying my date home. I did not feel badly at the time about seeing a soldier's wife while he was serving our country. It did bother me later after I grew older, but not too much.

Robert had a girlfriend at DSC, and her name was Adrienne Reynolds. She was fairly attractive and a very good student. Her complexion was somewhat "ruddy" as I recall, and she was from Kentucky. Robert was a handsome guy, and I always thought that he could have gotten a prettier girlfriend. He finished at Delta State that year and moved back to his hometown in Goodman. He sold Insurance and later became the mayor of Goodman. He

married a local divorcee, and they had several years together before she died with breast cancer.

People said that after her death Robert really started drinking heavily. He once came to visit us in Florence, and we went out for dinner at Princeton's Restaurant. He became somewhat intoxicated, and I had to tip the bartender so that he would give us watered-down drinks. It is interesting to note that we maintained our friendship up to the years 1999 or 2000. When I tried to call him after that, it seemed that his phone had been disconnected. I did not hear from him for a few years. Finally, I telephoned the then-current mayor of Goodman and asked about Robert's whereabouts. He told me that Robert had grown so despondent about losing his wife that he shot himself in his bathtub and died in 2003 at the age of 68.

At Delta State, I continued working towards a BS degree in business and decided to get a second minor in history. It was necessary that I select a second minor and history was sort of interesting to me. The other minor was accounting. My study habits had improved a little over the junior college years. However, I was still not a strong student. Being at a new school and in an unfamiliar situation, it was necessary for me to try and pick professors and classes that were not overly demanding. I simply lacked the academic confidence that most of my peers seemed to have had. That first semester, I took intermediate accounting, English, marketing, office machines, and history.

There were several girls at DSC that I had known earlier from Junior college. They had also transferred to the new school. Unfortunately, none of them appealed to me. There was one girl that I knew from junior college. I had hoped to get to know Betty Sue Powell better. It was actually her sister that I had known from Northwest. That sister, Peggy Powell, was a beautiful cheerleader who married one of my friends, Ralph Roy. I met Peggy's sister at their wedding. Those girls were from a very country place near Tunica, Mississippi. But I never got around to having an actual date with Betty Sue. She was only a freshman. I did go out a few times with another girl that I met from the Baptist Student Union. Her name was Martha Rowe, and she was a pretty, little redhead from Greenville, Mississippi. She was later selected as a "DSC Beauty" and became the homecoming queen that junior year.

I had saved some money from summer and part-time jobs and decided that it was time to buy a car. On one trip to Memphis, I found a blue 1955 Ford Customline at a used car dealership and paid \$500 for it. It looked good to be four-and-a-half years old, but I later found out that it had come from Wisconsin and had many more miles on it than the odometer showed. The doors and fender wells started to rust out from road salt after about three months. The rear end also began to whine. It was discovered that someone had filled the rear end with sawdust. I returned the car to the dealership and asked for it to be repaired under their warranty. I had not realized that it was a 50/50 warranty. This meant that the car dealer would fix it but only pay for half of the repairs. The bill was \$150, so I had to pay \$75 for this work. I called around and found that the dealer had purchased the used rear end from a junk yard for \$50

and his labor was \$25 so I wound up paying the full bill to have it repaired. That was my first real car, and I learned a great deal about how used car people operate. One lasting lesson learned was that when a person buys a used car, he is usually buying someone else's problems.

Sometime in early November of that first semester, I remember eating in the school cafeteria one evening, and I noticed two nice-looking girls, sitting at my table down at the other end. They were friends, and they were talking about a trip they had taken earlier that day. Both of them were members of the Delta Belles, a DSC marching group, and they had been off somewhere performing on behalf of the college. I managed to meet them by asking some questions about the Delta Belles. I found out that the best looking one lived in Cleveland with her family and that she had two sisters. I also found out that she was majoring in home economics and wanted to be a teacher. She seemed quite smart, and I concluded that she was a serious student. It was impressive that she was completing her college program in three years instead of four like the rest of us. One thing led to another, and I eventually asked her for a date.

I cannot remember where Beverly Wolfe and I went on that first date. I do remember, however, that she was interesting and fun. She was an athletic person and had been an all-state basketball player on Cleveland High School's basketball team. As we came to know each other, we started spending more and more time together. As a serious student, a big part of her evenings was always set aside for study. So if I wanted to spend time with her, I needed to study. This was great for my grades and for my classroom self-confidence. I regularly studied at her house which was located only two blocks from the campus. She would often invite me to lunch at her house and later as time passed to dinner with her family. I liked her parents, and I think they approved of their daughter dating me. We became closer over the following months, and I enjoyed being around them. It was nice to have a regular girlfriend so that I did not need to chase all over the place trying to get dates.

Her parents owned the TV cable company in Cleveland, a town of about 10,000 people. Her dad loved to hunt and fish, and he later took me along on many of his fishing trips. He enjoyed drinking beer and frequently took me with him to Cecil's, the local pub. He had three daughters but no sons. I think he looked at me as a substitute son, and it was a new experience for me to have a friend and "father figure" that enjoyed doing all of the same things that I enjoyed. My dad had never done those sorts of things at local pubs. Mr. Wolfe was a great guy and everyone liked him. I truly enjoyed spending time with him. Later in our relationship, he developed an interest in flying and managed to get his pilot's license. I went up with him many times in one of three airplanes that he owned over the years. The last one was a Piper twin, and he especially loved to fly that one.

At Christmas time, I was invited to Mr. Wolfe's hunting club which was located on an island in the Mississippi River channel. It could be reached by car in the winter when the water was



down. We could get there by driving down through Greenville, Mississippi. The oldest Wolfe daughter was married to Ben Dunn, a middle school coach, and the youngest Wolfe daughter was dating a guy named Pete Peden. I had known Pete at the junior college that we both attended. All three of us would go on hunting club trips with Mr. Wolfe. There was a lot of drinking and a little hunting that took place. We also played cards and ate good food. There was an old caretaker at the club, and his name was Bob. The only electricity at the club came from a diesel generator. I remember killing a turkey and, at a later time, a doe. Killing the deer caused me to feel sad, and I made certain to never do that again. Technically, that was my last experience killing things, although I did hunt quail with my dad in later years. I continued going to the hunting club with Mr. Wolfe, but I never actually hunted again while there.

Another thing that I learned to enjoy during this time period was ham radio, a hobby that has been with me for more than 55 years. The spark that ignited this interest was the newly opened citizens band radio system. I began studying to take the Novice Amateur Radio exam. Interestingly enough, Mr. Wolfe was a ham and so was Mrs. Wolfe's brother, Bud. Both of them helped me with the knowledge required to pass the various tests and later to obtain some surplus ham radio equipment.

By this time, I had really learned to enjoy school. Study was no longer a dreaded task. My grades were now much better than in the past. And in the spring of that first year, I managed to make the Dean's List. That trend continued until I graduated from Delta State. The simple truth was that I could not afford to have my girlfriend think that I was a weak student. I tried to make A's as often as possible. I had become a serious student, and I can thank Beverly Wolfe for that. And other things changed at DSC when I became a better student.

I joined a new fraternity on campus, Sigma Theta Psi and was elected as the Dorm Honor Council representative, elected to the DSC President's Cabinet, and became the first president of the new Interfraternity Council. But those nice accomplishments were eclipsed by Beverly's even better grades and her selection to the Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities. I remember creating a "look-alike" letter from the White House and taping it to my dorm room door. It had an official looking White House letterhead, and it read "Congratulations on making the President's List at Delta State. See you in Washington upon graduation." And it was signed "John F. Kennedy."

Mrs. Wolfe was a hard working woman, and I liked her a good deal. She ran the business office at the Cleveland TV cable company, which was their family business. At the end of my first year at Delta State, I had to decide whether or not I should go to summer school at DSU or go to Memphis and try to find a job. Beverly encouraged me to stay in Cleveland and go to summer school with her. And Mrs. Wolfe offered me a job painting and rebuilding their screened-in summer house on the lot next door to their regular home. I stayed in town and went to summer school. That was a good summer.

In my senior year, I moved to a newly built dorm and had a different roommate. His name was David Martin from Coffeerville, Mississippi. He was a quiet, country boy, and he was majoring in education. He did not have to put up with me too much because I was always off somewhere with my girlfriend.

During the Christmas break of my senior year, I had applied for a part-time work position with the post office in Cleveland. When hired, my job title was “substitute mail carrier,” and I helped carry mail on a city walking route during the heavy holiday mail period. Being a mail carrier is hard work, and I remember sweating and being tired even though the weather was cool. And there was another problem. Dogs along my route would harass me every day, and one regularly tried his best to bite me. I dreaded going down that street until I devised a plan. I would pick up a handful of rocks, and I would approach him aggressively, throwing rocks like a machine gun. He learned to avoid that rock throwing mail man. I once hit him on the head and knocked him out. That job not only provided extra money that was needed for school, it helped later when potential employers asked for references and work experience.

As a senior student, there was one unpleasant situation that comes to mind. DSC had a laundry service on campus that was operated by college employees. I went in one day to pick up my weekly laundry bundle, and it was not there. Someone had “already picked it up.” They were never able to locate my clothes. So that left me with one pair of jeans and two shirts to wear to class. They told me to go see the college financial person, a Mr. Hugh Smith. He did not want to reimburse me for my loss. I appealed to him and explained that I did not have the money to buy new clothes. After a lot of unpleasant negotiating, he pro-rated the value of two pairs of used Jeans and three shirts that the school had lost and paid me about \$7. I never liked that man after that. He went on to become a vice-president and big shot at the college. The way he talked down to me most likely put a sour taste in my mouth for the school. This is probably the main reason why I have never made a financial contribution to the Delta State Foundation.

As a college senior, I started giving more thought to getting a job after graduation. The position that I eventually took had actually been on my mind since junior college days. Back in Senatobia, there was a man from R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company (RJR) that would come to our campus every semester. He would stand outside of the cafeteria and pass out sample packages of cigarettes to everyone as they came out of the cafeteria. And there was another student on the junior college campus that did the same thing for Liggett and Myers Tobacco Company. I thought that a part-time job such as that would be a good thing when I went off to Delta State. After a little research, I contacted the RJR Company and their Division Sales Manager in Memphis, Mr. M. B. Wingfield. He liked my approach and asked me to contact him after I started at DSC. When I did get in touch with him again, he told me that the position did not materialize, but he was interested in talking with me about a permanent sales position when I graduated from college. (Readers will later see that I spent about nine years with that company.)

My relationship with Beverly Wolfe continued to develop during our senior year. We now spent almost all of our free time together. As any 20-year-old man knows, there were many benefits in having an exclusive relationship with a girlfriend. One obvious thing was that I did not have to worry about getting dates. This was the first time that I had ever been in that situation. Another thing, her family treated me as though I was a part of their family. And I took her to Memphis fairly often. My parents liked her, and they clearly approved of our relationship. They knew that I had settled down and stopped running around so much. My grades were better and that was a good thing. Some family members told me that she was a lot like my mother. I agree that she was a "no-nonsense" type of person.

Beverly and I had some problems early in the spring semester of that senior year. I cannot remember what caused the problems or why we stopped seeing each other for a short period of time. I do remember telling her that if we should get back together, we ought to get married. Further, it seemed to me that her mother was giving her lots of new things and was probably hoping that we would not get back together. I have no idea why I would have taken that position. It surely was not a logical one. She wanted to get back together but preferred to wait and have a nice wedding after we graduated from college. Somehow, I talked her into getting married secretly in March while we were still in school and then having a real church wedding after graduation. And that is what we did. My parents went with us to Crittenden County in Arkansas, and we were married. Other than my parents, no one ever knew about that earlier marriage for many years.

The approaching graduation at Delta State and an upcoming June wedding motivated me to get really serious about a job. I contacted several large and stable companies that might have an open position. Most of the potential job offers for quality business graduates in those days were with big companies and most seemed to be in sales. I really did not want to get into sales because I knew the type of life my father had lived, and the thought of becoming a salesman was not very attractive. Most sales jobs have low status and are not desirable, in my opinion. However, most people need a job, and as we mature, it becomes clear that few people get exactly what they want in life. On a positive note, many businesspeople told me that selling was a good training ground for future advancement. Ultimately, there was a choice among three jobs that I could select. One job was with Metropolitan Life Insurance Company as a salesman. Another offer came from Firestone Tire and Rubber Company as a retail store management trainee. The third choice was with R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company as a retail salesman.

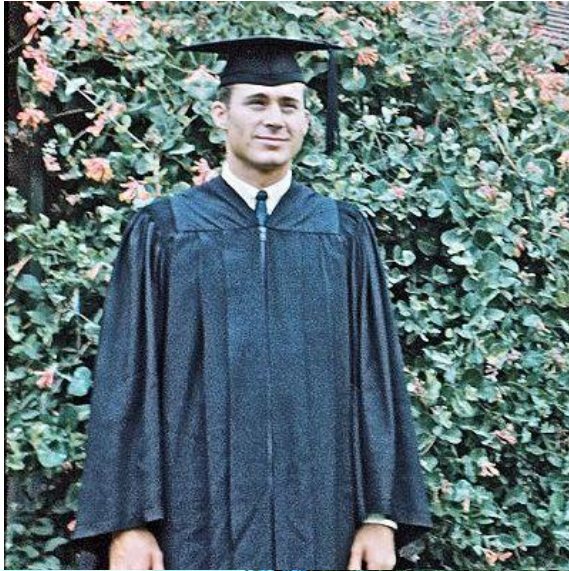
The thought of becoming an insurance salesman did not appeal to me at all. Selling intangible goods like insurance is more difficult than selling tangible products that one can hold in their hands. Furthermore, the personnel turnover in insurance jobs is rather high. It seems that once a new salesman sells to his friends, it can be difficult and depressing to find new prospects. Salespeople face rejection several times each day, and rejection is something most young men do not like. Besides, I wanted more structure in a job, especially on that first

position out of college. The Firestone job was worthy of consideration. But I liked the RJR job best because they provided a company car, and I liked the opportunity to work outside rather than having someone always looking over my shoulder. Additionally, I liked Mr. Wingfield and thought that he would make a good boss. The job paid a fixed salary of \$65 per week or \$1.62 per hour. In addition, a lunch reimbursement of \$1.25 per day was provided. I took the RJR job and was scheduled to start work on Monday, June 19, 1961.

After graduation in May, we had a nice June wedding at the First Baptist Church in Cleveland. We then went on a short honeymoon aboard her father's small cabin cruiser boat in Sardis Lake. After that we moved to Memphis, so I could begin work with R. J. Reynolds. As a retail salesman, my territory included five counties in North Mississippi and in South Shelby County, Tennessee. I remember that I borrowed \$75 from my grandmother Agent, and we rented an upstairs apartment near Central High School. My new wife was employed as a teacher at Fairview Junior High School on South Parkway.

(Pictures follow, also see - <http://geraldcraw.net/>)





**DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY  
CLEVELAND, MISSISSIPPI  
MAY 27, 1961 GRADUATION**

**GERALD LAMAR CRAWFORD**      Memphis, Tennessee

B.S. (Business Administration)

Transfer, Northwest Junior College; Sigma Theta Psi, Grand Scribe 4; Interfraternity Council 4, President 4; Men's Honor Council 4; Student Executive Cabinet 4; President's Cabinet 4; Commerce Guild, Treasurer 4; Baptist Student Union 3; Young Democrats 4.







## Chapter 7 – R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company

It was mentioned earlier that there were two people in my formative years that had a major influence on my adult development, Jerry Duncan and Beverly Wolfe. Jerry was a high school friend that helped me grow up and gain a better long-run perspective. I saw how he set goals, planned and then organized things so that he could accomplish more than most other people. I watched how he and his family lived and related to each other. I soon realized that by doing things differently, it was possible to achieve more and to make something out of myself. I will forever be grateful for his friendship and inspiration in helping me overcome mediocrity. I still remember the little saying that appeared beside my name in our Bartlett senior yearbook: “Striving to Better.”

The second person to help get me on the right track was Beverly Wolfe. I saw how hard she worked in school and how determined she could be. She thought things through and then she worked hard to achieve her goals. In those days, she would not quit. I had to start making better grades when we were dating or else she might think that I was just another loser. My grades at Delta State went up, and this motivated me to work even harder. I would not be where I am today if I had never met her. We were married in 1961.

My job with RJR involved calling on retail stores and wholesalers that sold cigarettes and tobacco products. Representatives were trained to go into stores to clean up and rotate tobacco merchandise. After doing that they would pick up damaged and out of date products. And last they would sell and display RJR products that were not on the dealers’ shelves. Unfortunately, dealers generally felt that salespeople were a nuisance and that they should not get much time or respect. Retailers typically see many salespeople each day, and they know how to get rid of them in short order. Quite a few store managers and owners seemed to feel that it was acceptable, even amusing, to give salespeople a hard time.

Mr. Wingfield worked with me during my first two weeks with RJR. He trained me how to make ten to twelve calls per day. On my first day with the company, he had me stop by a men’s clothing store to buy a hat. He said that a hat would make me look older. He knew how to make sales calls look easy. But I later found that they were not easy. A good salesperson needs a thick skin and a ready smile. The seasoned salesman must be able to smile and keep on selling, even when store managers treated them poorly. It was not much fun, but I was determined to learn the business and not be a quitter. Moreover, it seems that every time I became seriously discontented with my job and started thinking about leaving, they would give me a raise. They seemed to like my performance, so I just kept on working.

After several months on the job, the company brought all of their new salespeople into the home office in Winston-Salem, North Carolina for a one week orientation program. I will always remember seeing the impressive Reynolds Office Building for the first time. It had nineteen floors and was the tallest building in town. We were introduced to all of the top



management people and toured the many factories and operations in the local area. Most high level sales and marketing executives occupied the third floor of the Reynolds Building. These people were all handsomely dressed in suits and ties, had beautiful offices with mahogany desks, expensive paintings on the walls, and plush carpets on the floor. They all seemed to have classy, attentive secretaries and well appointed meeting and media rooms. I was most impressed with the entire "home office" idea. It caused me to think seriously about my future with R. J. Reynolds. I did not like being a salesman but I really liked the idea of working in RJR's home office. I just had to figure out how to get from point "A" to point "B."

On my Delta Airlines flight back home, there were many businesspeople on the Friday afternoon leg between Atlanta and Memphis. The passengers were mostly salesmen returning to their hometowns after a week on the road. The cabin was filled with noise from the piston driven engines, cigarette smoke, and talk among travelers. I remember shutting out the noise and smoke. My mind was replaying the words spoken by those top sales managers back at the home office. I started thinking about what must be done to move ahead and get promoted. It was on that flight, that day, that I vividly remember making a silent but resolute commitment that I would do whatever it took to someday occupy one of those nice offices on the third floor of the Reynolds office building.

On Saturday morning back in Memphis, I read in the newspaper that Memphis State University was starting a new MBA program in their College of Business. Class registration would begin on the following Monday. I made a special effort to go there and register for early morning and evening classes, hoping that an MBA degree would help me to move ahead with the company. When classes started, I found that my newly earned business experience really paid off in the classroom. The material covered seemed easier and more meaningful than my undergraduate classes at Delta State. All I had to do now was attend class, read volumes of assigned material and apply it to my everyday work.

I usually took two classes each semester, including summer school. One class met two mornings each week, usually Monday and Wednesday from 6 a.m. until 7:30 a.m. The second class normally met two evenings each week, usually Tuesday and Thursday from 6 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. Going to class at 6 a.m. two mornings each week and then starting my regular workday was quite demanding. Somehow I managed to study enough to make decent grades in my classes.

I remember that I had my last physical altercation while attending MSU. It happened one morning during summer school. I had finished my class and had driven away from the College of Business building before realizing that I had left some papers in the classroom. So I drove around the block and returned to the front of the building. I saw an empty parallel parking place, so I pulled alongside one car and slightly in front of the vacant space so that I could properly back into it. As I started backing in, a small car sped up and whipped into my unoccupied space. This incident just hit me at the wrong time, and I could not just drive away

and forget about it. So I drove forward and quickly went around the block again. I stopped beside the small car that had taken my parking space. The driver had just stepped out of the small car's passenger side door and closed that door. I approached him and asked what he thought he was doing. He said something like "screw you." And when he said that, I punched him with a left and followed with a right-handed "haymaker." I can remember so well that he literally flew through the air and landed about ten feet from the point of impact. He did not get up, so I casually got back into my car and left. I then drove to the RJR company office, which was only 5 minutes away, before realizing that my Delta State ring was missing from my right hand. I quietly drove back to the campus and went to the spot where the incident happened. I looked on the ground and fortunately found my ring. One would certainly be arrested for that kind of behavior today.

The new job and the college MBA coursework kept me very busy. Time was so scarce, and I remember studying late almost every night. At bedtime after the lights were turned out, I would often raise one arm toward the ceiling and hold it in the air as long as possible. The purpose of this strange behavior was to stay awake a few extra minutes so that I could think about my own interests. I wanted to think about personal things, not about school, work, or home obligations. I do not believe that all of that pressure and hard work helped our marriage. I know that I could have been more attentive and a better husband.

Those two years of graduate school were difficult for me and for my wife. She was working on a master's degree in education. We both were under a lot of stress with new jobs, heavy graduate school schedules, and a new marriage. One might conclude that we did not have much time together, and that would be an understatement. Both of us have been described as hard working and focused individuals that were driven to succeed, whatever the cost.

We visited with my mother and father out on Munson Road every week. They were getting older and my dad was hoping to retire one day soon. Snooky was about nine years old at the time, and I was concerned about the way she was being raised. My mother and dad could not supervise her very well, and she seemed to get away with things that Joan and I could not have gotten away with when we were growing up.

Joan, my oldest sister, had a son named Jim, and he was literally a "hellion" as a youngster. He was an only child and it showed! Joan and her husband apparently did not know how to discipline him. Maybe they thought their way was the best way to raise kids? Strangely enough, in later years, Jim Pritchett went on to become a fine student. He earned two college degrees and then later became a very successful plant manager. But he too developed some interesting mannerisms. These were likely passed along from his odd-ball father. Jim went to the University of Tennessee and majored in chemical engineering, I think. He met and married a local girl, and she became a pharmacist. They had a son and a daughter. Jim was a very strict disciplinarian when raising his kids and this was exactly opposite of the way he was raised. I have since developed my own idea about an observed, cyclical nature of child

rearing practices in families. I will better explain my “every other generation” theory when later writing about my own children.

Money was tight in those years. We did not eat out very often or do things that required a lot of money. The only travel that we did was to go to Cleveland, Mississippi once or twice each month. I enjoyed being around Mr. Wolfe. He regularly took me hunting or fishing. We enjoyed visiting with the other two sisters and their husbands. Ben Dunn, Juanita’s husband, was quite a character. He knew how to party, and he knew how to drink. He was a junior high school coach and teacher at the time, but he later became an insurance salesman. Pete Peden, Jo Ann’s husband, was an interesting guy that I had known from junior college. He was a year behind me in school. He seemed to be a good guy but I was not really very close to him. We managed to get along and never had any real problems. He was working on a degree in entomology at DSC and after that went to Mississippi State to get a graduate degree. They later moved to Atlanta and took a job there, as I recall. Some years later, he came back to Cleveland and went to work in the family TV cable company before he and his wife divorced.

At the age of 23, there was still a lot that I did not know. Actually, I did some stupid things back in those days. Here is a good example: The old 1955 Ford, purchased while at Delta State had about rusted out and would no longer go into second gear. It became non-reliable, and I did not want my wife being stuck somewhere. As soon as I started receiving a paycheck on that first job, we made a new car purchase. It was a cute little 1961 Ford Falcon, and I remember that we paid \$1623 for it. My wife drove the Falcon to school, and I used my company car to get around each day. Here is where the stupid part comes in. After six months, I went down and purchased a brand new 1963 Chevrolet Sting Ray for \$5,600. That amount of money was equivalent to about two years pay in those days. And I did not even consult with my wife about it.

She drove that expensive car to her school, and her principal was upset that she parked in her regular place in the front of the building. He suggested that she park it around in the back lot. He was afraid that people would see the fancy sports car sitting out front and that it might reduce the chance for teachers to get a pay raise that year. Two additional things happened that same day to my wife. She was stopped by the police and given a ticket for speeding. There were many instruments on the compound dashboard, and she may have been confused by these multiple gauges. I also recall a third event that finally caused a problem. At a busy intersection on East Parkway while waiting for the light to change, her foot slipped off the strong clutch pedal and the Corvette literally jumped out into the busy roadway. Fortunately, no cars were coming at the time, but she came home in tears. After about three months, I managed to sell that car. Then it was necessary to buy another one, a 1963 Ford Fairlane.

When we stayed in Memphis on weekends, we would often go for a drive on Sunday afternoons. I remember that we stopped many times at the Memphis airport and watched the

big airliners take off and land. We wondered where in the world all of those flights were traveling to and where they were coming from. I particularly enjoyed the idea of travel and looked forward to doing it someday when we had more money and time. I liked to read about distant places and people in National Geographic magazine. Maybe this interest was stimulated by the far away voices I heard and occasionally talked with on ham radio. Maybe the interest in travel was rooted in my just wanting to be somewhere far away—far away from school and far away from a job that I did not like very much. I just somehow knew in my heart that someday I wanted to travel and see interesting and romantic places. There is an old saying, “Be careful what you wish for because someday your wishes may come true.”

In early February of 1964, we drove down to Cleveland, to spend a weekend with my wife’s family. We had been married almost three years and both of us would soon be finishing our graduate degrees. I remember distinctly that my wife had decided that it was time to have a baby. And, on this weekend, she managed to jump-start that project by encouraging me to do the proper homework. And those efforts would enable the big event to take place 266 days later.

It had taken two full years to earn my MBA degree from Memphis State University. The graduation ceremonies were held on May 30, 1964. I can still remember that the MSU president announced that I was the first person to ever receive an MBA degree from Memphis State University. That occurred because names were listed in alphabetical order, not because I was any smarter than the other 12 MBA graduates. And I remember that the number one single record in America at the time was by the Beatles and was entitled “Love Me Do.” I recall seeing their photo on the front page of the Memphis Commercial Appeal and thinking “those guys really need a good haircut.”

After graduating from Memphis State, R. J. Reynolds invited me to travel to Winston-Salem to talk with the top home office executives about my next assignment and about possible future goals. It seems that I was the first RJR employee to ever get an advanced degree through the company’s education program, and they thought that my achievement should be recognized and used perhaps to motivate other young people within the sales force. MBA’s were few and far between back in 1964.

I did not ask the company for permission to bring my wife on the home office trip, but I did invite her because she had invested a great deal of effort into my getting that degree. When they found out that she had traveled with me and was in the hotel, they insisted that she join us in the Reynolds building. They entertained us royally and it was a memorable honor to spend the day meeting with the President of RJR, Vice President of Marketing, Sales Manager, Marketing Research Director, and others. They all wanted to know about my future interests. I basically told them that I hoped to stay in the sales department and someday get promoted to the home office as a marketing manager. And that is exactly what happened in

the years ahead. A photograph taken that day with those top RJR executives hangs proudly on my wall some 55 plus years later.

At that time, however, I needed more management experience. They promoted me to a supervisory position and transferred me to Maplewood, New Jersey where I became an Assistant Division Manager in the largest RJR sales division in the USA. My wife and I both seemed to feel that the move would be good for us personally and professionally. She had received her master's degree a few months earlier and was now pregnant with our first child. We found a nice apartment in Madison, NJ, and moved there in August of 1964. Financially, the move was not favorable because my wife no longer brought home an income and the cost of living there was significantly higher than in Memphis. That period brought about a precipitous decrease in our income and savings, but at the time, it appeared to be a good career investment.

My new job involved training and supervising 19 salespeople in the north-central part of New Jersey. The work situation was much different than what I was accustomed to as a salesman in Memphis. The people were different in New Jersey and were much more standoffish. It was hard to get to know people up there. They kept to themselves on the job and in their personal lives. It was hard to predict what they were thinking and what they would do next. Selling techniques used there were also quite different than those used in Tennessee and Mississippi. Furthermore, my boss, Mr. Earnie Mikus, was not warm and friendly like company people back in Memphis. I never met his wife or kids nor did I come to know him personally. People kidded me about my southern accent and often treated me as though I were an outsider. The weather was so cold and wet. Starting in early November of 1964, it snowed a little every weekend for 13 weeks in a row that year. And snow typically did not melt away the same as it did back in the South. Snow plows just kept piling it up on curbs and sidewalks. And traffic was horrible in Northern New Jersey.

I found that the quality of sales people working for RJR was significantly lower than what had been observed in Memphis. Only two of the 19 salesmen had a college degree and both were a disaster in my opinion. It was difficult to find qualified applicants for open positions. We usually had to go through employment agencies to get people to apply for vacancies. I found that people in general were usually late for work, and they would take off early whenever possible. They generally did not have positive attitudes. When I worked with salesmen, they usually spent the whole time complaining about the company and its policies.

I remember that Mr. Mikus and I were scheduled to go together to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to a sales meeting. He told me to meet him in Elizabeth, NJ at a parking garage so that I could ride with him. I was new to the area and had difficulty finding the garage he was talking about. I was about five minutes late, so he left without me. I had to drive 150 miles by myself through several cities and in those days, there were very few expressways. Several other similar situations occurred where he treated me poorly. It was obvious that he

did not enjoy training people who were, more or less, passing through his division. But I kept trying to please him and to learn. It was not easy.

There was one good thing, however, that was about to happen. We were going to have a son! On the ninth of November, 1964, Gerald Lamar Crawford, Jr. was born in the hospital at Summit, New Jersey. His mother was in labor a long time and this was not good. He was a breech birth, which means that the risk of injury was higher than a normal delivery. He did have a birth-related condition that involved pulled muscles on one side of his neck. This was discovered early by Mrs. Wolfe, and we were able to follow a recommended regimen of stretching and massaging those tight neck muscles on one side so that his head and chin would be properly proportioned as he grew. Later when he was about four, he developed a crossed eye that had to be corrected. I believe that the crossed eye was related to the birth injury described above. The eye problem was corrected when he was almost four years old. He turned out to be a very handsome and a very smart young man, and I was so proud of him. He became my little buddy, and we went everywhere together.

We did not really enjoy living in New Jersey for 16 or 17 months but somehow managed to survive the ordeal. Neither of us complained to anyone outside of the family. It was a truly happy occasion when we learned about a possible move back to the South. I remember the day when my boss, Mr. Mikus, called me in to tell me that I was being transferred. His exact words were “Well, Jerry, the worm has turned. They want you down in the home office.”

I remember making my last sales calls in Newark. It was cold and snowing. My last stop was at the Essex County Tobacco and Candy Company. It was located on the edge of a tough section in the city, and there were many high rise “project” buildings on all sides of the wholesaler. The trunk of my car was open while I gathered merchandise to take inside. Someone in the tall building above threw their garbage out of an upstairs window, and it landed all around my car and in the snow near my feet. I looked down and saw some chicken bones and a salad dressing bottle. I thought to myself how lucky I was to be leaving that place. Flying out of Newark on that last day was a great blessing, and I remember thinking as the plane lifted off of the snow and ice-covered runway, “Thank God I am leaving this place.”

When our little family arrived in Winston-Salem, my new job became Assistant to the National Advertising Manager. This was also a training slot, and I was probably scheduled to be there for a year or two. The advertising manager was Bob Rechholtz who was about 35 years old. He was a former Army officer and had a few years of marketing experience with P&G, probably the top marketing company in America. He was all business and didn't care too much for sales department people passing through his department. To me it seemed that he needed more fiber in his diet. All of the young marketing department guys sort of looked down their noses at sales department people, and I was tagged as a sales department trainee. My year spent in the advertising area was challenging. To tell the truth, I lacked the

background to make big advertising decisions at that level. I later concluded that I had simply moved up too fast. But as always, I did my best, and I certainly learned a great deal. The daily exposure to top people and corporate decision making was invaluable experience for my resume.

In Winston-Salem, we rented a little house at 109 Anita Drive on the west side of town. Not long after the move, my wife pretty much decided that it would be a good time to have another child. For the second time, I was encouraged to do my homework. The only reason for this note, and the earlier one, is that, as best as I can remember, those were the only two times that I was ever encouraged in this way. And I accept the full responsibility for that. We must have been fertile young people because both sons were perfectly planned and came at the exact times they were we expected.

The second son was born on August 17, 1966. I remember that I took my wife to the hospital and John Jay Crawford was born about 10 minutes after we arrived. He was a long and skinny baby, and I remember looking at his nose and thinking how long it seemed to be. He had jet black hair, and it was quite long and straight. He also turned out to be a very handsome and smart son, and I was very proud of him.

We soon purchased an unfinished new home and moved into that house when it was completed, shortly before Jay was born. It was a nice split level house at 2111 Leeds Lane in the British Woods subdivision. It had three bedrooms and 2.5 baths. We paid only \$26,400 for the house in 1966. (I see that this same house sold for \$165,000 in 1996.) We had nice neighbors and lived in a beautiful part of town. I enjoyed both of my sons a great deal and was reasonably content, but my wife was not as happy. I can look back and see that the marriage had started downhill. I cannot give a specific reason for her lack of interest, and she never gave me one, but I knew that she was longing to be free again.

I began to travel a good deal in my work. When new brands would be introduced, I was usually selected to travel to sales meetings to present the advertising support part of the program. Then I would go to the field and work all across the USA with salesmen as they sold the product to dealers and wholesalers. Many times, I would fly with company officers in one of the four company corporate jets. We rode in fancy limousines and stayed in the top hotels.

I remember flying to New York on a new product introduction. My slide show and presentation to approximately 200 sales department managers went exceptionally well. On our flight home, Charlie Coe, the Assistant Sales Manager and I were talking on the company jet. After a drink or two, he said, "Jerry, don't you want to come back down the hall to the sales department?" I told him that "I would love to do that!" When I went to work the next day, The Sales Manager and Sales Promotion Manager called me in to the big office and offered me the position of "Assistant to the National Sales Promotion Manager." I accepted



the job, expressed my appreciation and started to work for my new boss, Harry E. (Chris) Christopher.

Chris was a tough manager—probably out of necessity. He was constantly under attack by the smart young guys in the marketing department. He had more on his plate than he could handle; nevertheless, I was a hard worker and potentially a good ally, so he came to like me personally as well as professionally. Chris wanted to maintain close control over everything in his department. Everyone (about eight salaried people and 15 non-exempt employees) reported directly to him. That was just his style of management, and I played it his way for several months, hoping to establish myself in his department. He had a lot of people pulling at him every minute of every day.

I came to know his fine family and to like his wife, Betty, and their four kids. It concerned me, however, that he was under great pressure at the office, and I was simply working on three or four projects that he had assigned to me. I slowly grew to dislike the organization chart and the autocratic management style that Chris seemed to follow.

After about one year on that job, I remember that the Sales Promotion group was assigned the responsibility of developing a whole new style of low profile point-of-purchase displays for supermarkets. As usual, Chris was in over his head with work and other pending projects, so he asked me to handle this one. The first thing that I needed to do was work with our New York advertising agency to get recommendations from their merchandising people then I would carry these ideas to our major display provider in Chicago for prototypes. So I made plans to meet the agency people the following day at 9 a.m. in New York City. I was sitting in their offices the next morning and to my surprise Chris, my boss, walked in and joined our meeting. I did not like the idea that he had given me the project and then came to New York to handle the job himself. We finished our business about 4 p.m. and caught a commercial jet back to Winston-Salem. Sitting next to him on the airplane, after one drink, I decided to tell him how I felt about his autocratic management style.

I approached the situation by telling him that the company was wasting a good deal of money on me as his assistant and that they should transfer me back to the field sales force. I went on to say that he did not need me—he handled every little detail anyway. I fully expected him to fire me. There was a long silence as we sat there on that airplane. It seemed like three hours, but it was probably no more than three minutes. Then he replied, "Okay, Gerry," as everyone at RJR called me, "tomorrow morning I am going to move my in-basket to your office, and you can handle everything for me. You should only bring to me those things that you cannot handle." He speculated that I would most likely not be able to take care of all of his work. I would fail and come running to him for help. I paused and then said, "Okay that sounds like a reasonable approach." We were very quiet as we sat there for the remainder of the flight. But I can tell you that I was truly worried. Maybe I should have just kept my mouth shut.

On Monday morning, Chris called a staff meeting and told everyone that “all problems, projects, complaints and mail would now come through Gerry’s office.” He told the group that he “needed time to do more planning and design work on our many promotions.” Yes, I was worried, but Chris just did not realize what a determined young man I had become. So from that time forward, I worked as hard as I had ever worked in my entire life.

The net result of all of this was that I never had to go to Chris for assistance. I handled it all and did a great job. Now he was able to sit back and manage while I took care of all the details, correspondence, personnel, and day-to-day decisions. About three months later, Chris told me that our arrangement was the best thing that had ever happened to him. He fought the big wars, and I fought the small wars and details. I was given a nice raise and made Assistant Sales Promotion Manager. Chris proved to be one of the best friends that I have ever had. I truly enjoyed working with him for the next four years (and being his friend for the next 47 years.) Cindy and I attended his funeral in 2012.

Along about this time, a manager in the personnel department at RJR stopped by my office and told me that a local college, Wake Forrest University, had decided to close down its evening school program. He explained that many of our RJR employees were enrolled in those night classes, and since I held an MBA degree, he asked me if I would be willing to help pick up the slack by teaching a business class out at Forsythe Tech, a local junior college. I agreed to do this and, quite frankly, came to enjoy it over the next two or three years.

It seemed to me that things were going pretty well at the office, but things at home were pretty cold. My wife and I did not see eye to eye on many things. I am not sure that I can exactly recall the issues back 48 years ago, but I will try to explain some general events as best I can remember. The basic complaint was that she just did not like the way things were going in our marriage. She was not happy, and it showed in her behavior towards me. We went to a marriage counselor and to a group counseling class to try and improve the situation over the next year or two. Towards the end of 1968, she specifically told me in a group session that she “did not love me and never had.” That is a pretty rough thing to deal with after eight years of marriage and two children.

The first questions people might ask are: “What were you doing to make her feel that way? Was it another woman? Was it drinking, or drugs?” The answers would be “None of the above.” Looking back, I can now see that I may have been too focused on my job and that I possibly did not pay enough attention to her. Beyond that, I cannot give an honest answer. The fact is that I did not know then (and still do not know) what could have been done to make her happy. She wound up seeing a psychiatrist, and he did not seem to help very much either. He told me that it would be best if I were to move into a separate bedroom. I remember thinking that the only times women seem to have any interest in sex was when they were trying to catch a man or when they were trying to get pregnant.

The marital relationship became a straightforward business deal—paying the bills, taking care of the kids, and going to the cleaners. She brought up the word “divorce” anytime there was disagreement. I recall one incident that involved my not taking the garbage out properly. She wound up throwing her wedding ring out the back door into the yard. I went out there and crawled around looking for it. She showed no feelings of closeness or affection toward me. I did everything I knew how to do to make things better. Believe me, I really tried. But nothing seemed to work. Things continued to go downhill. My self-confidence declined and a deep, inner sadness seemed to settle over me.

We had been going to a church counseling group to try and get some help with the marriage. The Assistant Minister at Knollwood Baptist Church, George Colgin, was the group leader. One member of the group was a guy named Bob Johnson. Years later, I read some notes or letters which led me to believe that she may have had some feelings for him. But I have no indication that she ever had an actual relationship with him or anyone else.

I was playing handball in November of 1968 at the YMCA near the Reynolds Building. Some of the younger managers would go there during lunch to get exercise. On this particular day, I was playing with a great friend, Joe Murphy. He was a fine athlete and had played football at Holy Cross. I hit a nice shot into the corner, and it seemed that there would be no way for him to return the ball. Unfortunately, when I started to turn around, I saw that Joe was going for it, and his finger was coming directly into my right eye. I went to the doctor. The doctor told me that my retina had been detached and that I would need to have an operation if I wanted to save the eye. We flew to the famous Wilmer Eye Clinic in Baltimore to get a second opinion. They advised me to go back to Winston-Salem and have Dr. Richard Weaver do the operation. They said he was a wonderful eye surgeon. We followed their advice, and I had the operation on January 20, 1969, the day of Richard Nixon's inauguration.

I stayed in the Bowman Gray School of Medicine hospital (now the Wake Forrest College of Medicine) for about two weeks. Both eyes were bandaged to prevent eye movement. The children could not come on that floor of the hospital, so my wife was only able to come to visit a time or two. I could not see because of the bandages, but I could feel the coolness in her voice. During that time, I felt so down, so alone. It took about three months before I could return to work.

That eye injury required that a “buckle” be sewn onto the back side of my eyeball. It resembled a one-inch, pencil-shaped, acrylic sponge, and it served the purpose of holding and supporting the retina in a certain place, so it could grow back together. That acrylic sponge with its stitches caused so much pain between the years 1969-87. On many occasions, those stitches would cause my eye to bleed internally. This was a problem if I drank too much, strained, or did any real physical activity. Finally on a canoe trip with Chris Christopher to Canada in 1987, the eye started bleeding externally and would not stop. I returned home and went to UAB to have the “buckle” permanently removed. There was some concern that the

retina might collapse when the supporting buckle was taken out. However, that did not happen and the pain finally went away after almost 20 years of agony.

After returning to work in 1969, I made a two-week business trip to Denver in June of that year. The lady across the street from our home on Leeds Lane had asked me to telephone her sister when I arrived in Denver to say “hello.” Those were the days of expensive long distance telephone calls and people did not often call across the USA. While in Denver, I telephoned the sister and found that she was a very nice person. She and her boyfriend asked me to dinner at their apartment. Another couple also came that night, as I recall. I could not help but notice how those two couples seemed to be so happy in their interactions. They talked and laughed and seemed to be so much in love with each other. It made me wonder how my wife and I had lost what I once thought was a great relationship.

When my work was finished in Denver, I caught the red eye special, a night flight back to Atlanta and then up to Winston-Salem. I can remember so clearly walking into the kitchen door at the back of the house with my suitcase at 7:30 or so in the morning. My wife was in the kitchen cooking breakfast for our two sons. She never walked over to say hello, nor did she even turn around to speak to me, as I remember. She just kept scrambling those eggs. I hugged the kids and carried my suitcase up the stairs to what had become my bedroom. I sat down on the bed and started taking off my shoes. As I took one shoe off something just snapped in my mind. I stood up and immediately walked back down the stairs with one shoe on and the other one in my hand. In the kitchen, I spoke directly to her. I said, “Do you still want that divorce you have always talked about?” She glared at me and said, “Yes!” I called the airline to make a reservation, and the next day, I took the three of them to the Greensboro airport for a flight to Memphis.

As I drove back home from the Greensboro airport, my mind tried to deal with the new sadness that had already started to set in. Little did I realize at the moment that this separation from wife and children would dominate my every thought for the next few years and every other thought for many additional years after that. It may be hard for others to understand, after all that has been said, but I was devastated. At first, I tried and tried to get her to come back home, but she would have no part of it. After a few weeks, her parents brought her to Winston-Salem to pick up most of the furniture in our home.

About one year later, I visited with our previous marriage counselor, George Colgin, in Athens, Georgia. He told me that nothing could have been done that would have saved the marriage. He said that she “just wanted out.” He also told me later, after I had agreed to a divorce, “it was like opening the birdcage and letting her fly away.” I do remember that Jerry and Jay became so important to me while all of this was taking place. I seemed to feel closer to them than other fathers were with children the same age. Looking back, I have concluded that they were about the only thing that I had left. They were now my only real family.

That period after she left was truly a sad time for me and especially for little Jerry. Jay was probably too young to fully understand the situation at that time. I recently watched an old two-hour family video. About one hour and one minute into the video, there is a scene where Beverly came with her mother and father to get the furniture. In that scene, I am saying good bye to the boys. Jerry is so upset to be leaving his dad, and it still brings tears into my eyes to watch that situation on screen. After all of these years, I will say for the first time that Jerry has had a few rough spots in his later life, and I now firmly believe that the starting place for those problems was him being taken away from his father in 1969.

After she left, I traveled to see them every month. It was not a matter of choice—I had to see them. I can honestly say that those little guys helped me to keep it together back then. I knew that they needed me, and, quite frankly, I needed them a lot. They helped me get through a very tough stretch in my life. There were only two periods of time when I did not get to see them each month. These times will be discussed in later chapters.

After leaving Winston-Salem, Beverly decided to go back to college and get a terminal degree which she needed to teach at the college level. She must have decided on that career after she left me because she had never mentioned anything like that earlier. She alone decided on what would be a fair economic settlement. Her terms were \$3200 to buy a new Chevrolet Malibu and monthly child support for the boys. I agreed to her terms without even asking any questions. It was necessary that I borrow the \$3200 from my dad, and it took about two years for me to repay that debt. In the years that followed, I always increased the child support payments when I would get a raise or earn more from extra work. I did that voluntarily. She never had to even bring this up.

The three of them moved to Tallahassee, Florida so she could attend Florida State University. I went to see the boys each month, and it was hard for me to handle those situations. I missed those boys so much. She appeared to be very happy down in Florida, and she never even looked back. I think that she was just so glad to get away from me. It was not too long before she found a boyfriend there. They lived together for awhile and were later married. His name was Bill, and I cannot even remember his last name. She approached me about changing Jerry and Jay's names to Bill's last name, but I would absolutely have no part of that. She knew that it was a waste of time to bring it up again.

I continued working at Reynolds for another year or so. But, frankly, my heart was not in the work. I lost interest in my job and in most other things, including food. My appetite just disappeared, and after about two months, my weight went down to 175. I did not tell anyone about my personal situation, but I suppose that the word got around. After all, most of the neighbors worked at Reynolds. And I am sure that people could see that I was pretty depressed about something. It is hard to hide that state of anxiety from people who see you every day.

It was not a good situation to be in and that is about all that can be said. Now, many years later, one can look back and see that there was a small trace of sunshine that was waiting to appear. I just could not see it at the time. My wife had left and that took a large weight off my shoulders. I no longer had to look daily into the eyes of rejection, the eyes of a wife that wanted to be in some other place. It is true that I was alone and that in itself was sad. But I had slimmed down and was 30 years old and fairly decent looking. I had a nice home and a fairly high-level executive job at Reynolds. That was a point in time when a new and unexpected chapter of my life began to unfold. I did not see it coming at first and subsequently did not know how to deal with it.

My secretary's name at RJR was Fran Haynes, and one day she came into my office to ask if she could talk with me. I said, "Of course, please have a seat." Fran said that a lady in the personnel department had called her and asked if I was single. That lady had a daughter who was divorced, and the mother was hoping that I would ask her daughter out on a date. It was a complete surprise to me because I had not thought about issues such as those for many years. I must have stumbled around with my words, but eventually I asked Fran, "Have you ever seen the daughter?" And before she could answer, my next question was "How does she look?" Fran smiled and told me she was blonde and looked great. Fran later gave me the daughter's telephone number, and after several days, I made the call. That date and the many others that followed certainly helped take my mind off of the rejection I had lived with over the past years. I soon learned that being a single, thirty-year-old man with a great job attracts attention in the divorcee market like a new fawn attracts attention on the African Serengeti.

It was true back then, and is still amazing for me to recall, how things changed so significantly in my life. It did not take long before the word leaked out that a new man was on the market. Winston-Salem was a fairly large town, and there were many divorcees and unmarried women out there, and some were very nice, quality people. They seemed to come out of the woodwork. For the most part, they were hungry to have a man around. It seems that women do not like being single and are eager to do whatever it takes to develop a decent and mutually beneficial relationship. Many of them had kids that needed a good male role model in the house. Surprisingly, over time, I discovered that single women were anxious, even eager, to get a good man in their lives. It was my good fortune to find that they loved to cook for me, clean my house, or whatever other benefits they thought I needed.

During the 14-month period that I lived in Winston-Salem as a divorced man, there were 14 women that passed through my life. Three were single women between the ages of 25 to 30 years of age. The other eleven were divorcees between 26 and 35. Two were nurses, five were secretaries, two worked in banks, three worked in factory offices and one was an administrator at the junior college. A few weeks after my conversation with Fran, there was always somewhere to go or something to do, and I cannot remember spending one single evening sitting at home by myself. But I did spend many nice evenings at home with my newly acquired friends.

The reader must understand that I was still not a totally happy camper. Staying busy and spending time with nice women, however, helped put a smile on my face, if you know what I mean. I thought at the time that I must have discovered some long lost secret. I had not hustled any of these women. I just sat back and watched them work. The fact is that they hustled me, and they showed real “enthusiasm,” something that I had not seen for many years. As a case in point, there was a little redhead who loved to ride horses. She lived on a farm with her mother, and she had a little son named Devi. We spent most of that first Thanksgiving weekend together. I remember that she served a wonderful turkey dinner. After that we lay on the floor in front of a warm fireplace and took a nap. She told me on Sunday that it was the best Thanksgiving that she could ever remember.

The junior college administrator was a tall and attractive divorcee about 33 years of age. Her name was Shirley, and she came from the outlying rural area around Winston-Salem. She was more mature than the other women that I came to know as a single man. She had a nice apartment but would often take me to her mother’s house for a good “country” home cooked meal. I have already written about my love for rainy days. Farmers also like rainy days because they normally do not work outside in the rain. They most often go in the house when it rains. There is a high correlation, many say, between rainy days and increased conception rates among the wives of farmers. Shirley understood that concept and knew that I would usually call her when it rained. She called me “Farmer Crawford.”

Winston-Salem had a Schlitz beer plant in town and two or three of my newly acquired women friends worked there. It was the company policy in those days that each employee received two free cases of 16 oz beer per week. Those gals did not drink much beer and would bring their cases of beer to my house. Six cases of “Tall-Boys” per week was a lot of beer. It just kept piling up. One wall in the basement was almost completely covered with cases of 16 oz. cans of Schlitz.

Even with my newfound friends, I still had some free time, so I went out to Forsyth Tech and took a class on interior decorating and another on arranging flowers. I also worked on one arts and crafts project in my basement. I had seen a beautiful framed document that someone had hanging in their office. It was a poem called “Desiderata.” The origin of the word is Latin and means “things wanted or needed.” I managed to borrow that large framed print and have it photographed. Then I had it printed on high quality sheets of paper in the RJR print shop. I took four of those large prints and glued them to plywood sheets, each approximately 20 inches by 30 inches. After that I painted and distressed the prints to make them look very old, and then each was coated with about 12 coats of polyurethane. Last, I framed each mounted print. That Christmas, I gave one to my parents, one to my sister Joan, I kept one, and gave the last one to my ex-wife. Over a period of 40 years, I retrieved one copy when my parents died, and Beverly seems to have lost her copy. So now I have two copies, one is reserved for Jerry and one for Jay when I pass away. One has some interesting personal notes



on the back, much like a dairy. These notes were written during a very tough period while I was in graduate school. Think about me when you read them.

Even though I found myself in an enviable situation, it was most likely a simple matter of supply and demand for companionship. Apparently, there were not enough desirable men for the large supply of women. But every man in his lifetime needs to get lucky the way that I did back then. It helped to restore my lost confidence, and it made me feel needed again. I sincerely tried to make those girls feel special, and they appreciated it beyond words. I never promised any of them anything or led them to believe that the relationship would develop further. They knew, in fact, that I had not recovered emotionally from my failed marriage and that I truly missed my children. As a matter of fact, more than one said to me, "Your ex-wife must have been one hell of a woman!" I have thought about this and have concluded that it might be better if men did not run so hard after women. It probably is best to sit back and let them come to you. That is exactly what happened to me. I even considered writing a book about what I thought was some sort of magic formula to attract women. But when I finally met the love of my life, I forgot all about those wonderful women out there. One wonderful woman is enough to last a lifetime.

It is well known that men prefer to be married and most of them get re-married soon after divorces. The literature says that men too often make the same mistake a second time. After all that I had been through, I certainly had no interest in getting into the same situation again. I gave it a great deal of thought and even made lists of things to look for in a potential marriage partner. In my first marriage, I had probably married a woman much like my mother. Both of them were "tough," "no-nonsense" women that pretty much operated on the philosophy "my way or the highway." I knew that I did not want to make that mistake again.

If I ever remarried, my number one requirement was that any potential partner must really like my two sons. Until that point, most of the women I had met liked Jerry and Jay fine, but some of them had kids of their own. For my part, I was not really drawn to their kids. There was only one woman during this period of time that even came close to what I needed. She was tall, slim, and had dark hair. She was a very classy twenty-six-year-old banker that had never been married. And she really enjoyed spending time with Jerry and Jay. But we never even talked about marriage. I knew in my heart that I had to make a career change and start a new life somewhere. I just did not want to spend the rest of my life selling cigarettes.

In late May of 1970, I remember returning to the office from lunch one day and casually stopping by the reception area to chat with the receptionists. While sitting on one of the sofas in the waiting room, I picked up a magazine from the coffee table. It was the June 12 issue of Life Magazine. On page 50 there was a story about five Americans who chose to change their careers in mid-life. It was entitled "Beginning Again in the Middle." That caught my eye. I carried that magazine back to my office and closed the door. I read the article completely two or three times. The key point made was that one must truly enjoy the work

that they do each day. Further, people can start over and have a second career if they do not like what they are doing. I thought to myself, if others can change, so can I. My next question was “what can I change to?” Several things came to mind, but the one thing that I really liked was teaching that course each semester out at Forsythe Technical Institute.

The next afternoon, I made an appointment with the College of Business dean at Wake Forrest University in Winston-Salem. I asked him about the possibility of getting a teaching position there. He told me that I would need a “union card” before I could teach at a real university. When I asked him what he meant by “union card,” he replied, “You need to get a PhD before we can consider hiring you.” I thanked him and went back to the office to think about my situation. I later made a few calls to some good doctoral schools, seeking information about their doctoral programs. I eventually applied to the University of North Carolina, Florida State University, and the University of Arkansas. UNC’s doctoral program in business was highly quantitative and that was not my great strength. As for Florida State, the boys’ mother told me in no uncertain terms that she did not want me coming to Florida.

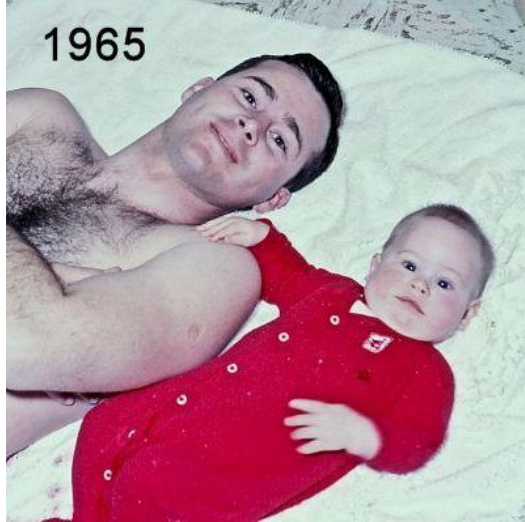
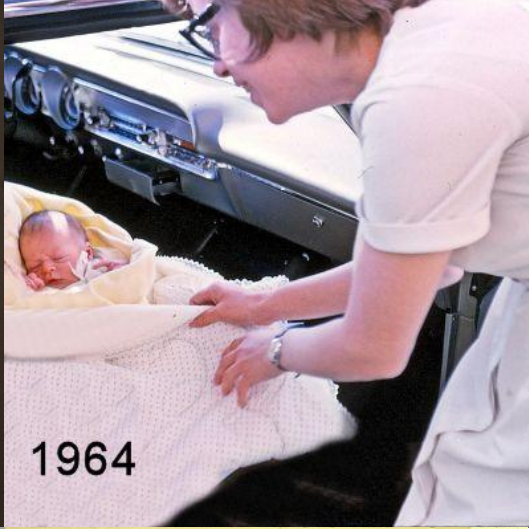
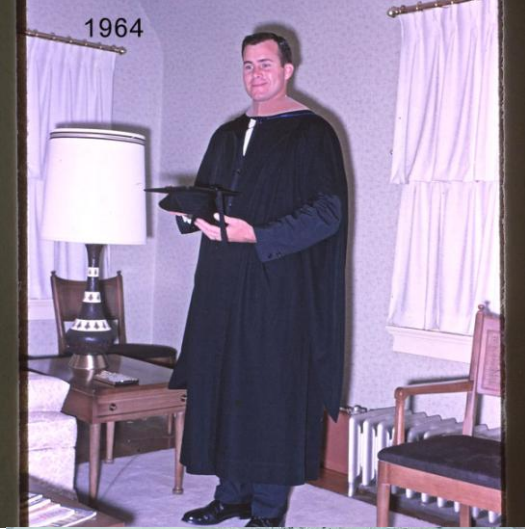
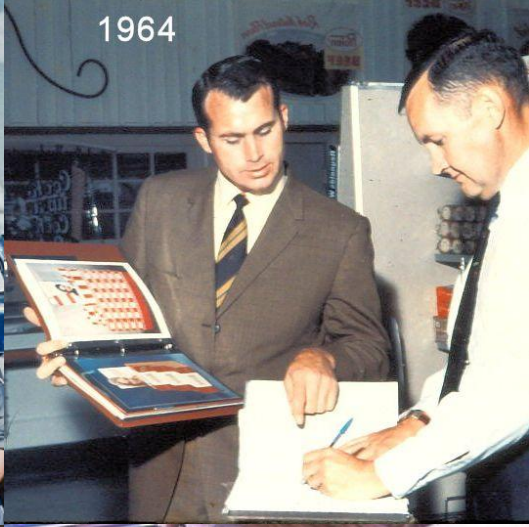
I had thought about my work situation at RJR. It was so similar to the one many men get into with their careers. After they take a job and start moving up the ladder, even if they do not like the work, they cannot leave it because they are then making too much money to walk away or even to make a change. Their wives and kids learn to live at a certain level and would have great difficulty ratcheting back. The net outcome is that a lot of men go to a job each day, one that they do not like, and they spend their entire work lives being unhappy. They are truly caught in a “corporate trap.” I somehow knew that it might now be possible because of the divorce to escape from that inevitable abyss. One good thing came out of the divorce—my wife did not soak me for every possible nickel. I paid her exactly half of our combined net worth, and she just walked away.

A nice doctoral teaching assistantship offer came from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. I went out there for a visit in early July and loved the place. I took Jerry and Jay and that attractive banker with me. She stopped by a local bank near the University and talked with them about a job. But we never discussed her findings. While there, I signed a contract to begin my doctoral studies at the University where I would also teach two classes, starting in late September. I was able to get a leave of absence from RJR in case things did not work out academically. If that happened, I might be able to return to my old job at Reynolds.

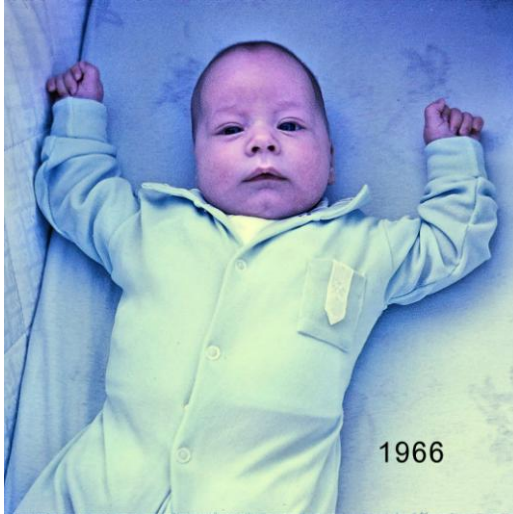
My next step was to buy a Volkswagen, sell the house and remaining furniture, and go away to college. I found and purchased a white, 67 VW Beetle with 12,000 miles on it. I paid \$900 for it and drove it home. Then I sold the house to a Greek family who owned a restaurant in Winston-Salem. I ran ads in the newspaper and sold what little furniture was left after the divorce.

I said goodbye to friends, girlfriends, and neighbors and drove away from Winston-Salem in that VW on my 31st birthday, August 31, 1970. Everything that I then owned was either in that 1967 VW or on a roof top rack. Winston-Salem sure looked good in my rear view mirror. This was my chance to start over and leave behind those empty and painful memories of RJR and a failed marriage. Something in the back of my mind quietly told me that I would never live in Winston-Salem again and that my life would eventually get better. Although I did not know it at the time, going to Arkansas would prove to be the best thing that could have ever happened to me—and to Jerry and to Jay.

(pictures follow, also see - [http://geraldcraw.net/.](http://geraldcraw.net/))







1966



1967



1968



1969



1970



1970

## Chapter 8 – Cindy Crook and the University of Arkansas

After arriving on the University of Arkansas campus in early September of 1970, I had no real idea what I was getting into and what a difficult and challenging three and one-half years lay ahead. Everything I had ever worked toward for 31 years was on the line, including my own self-respect. I had given up a good job, sold my house and car, and committed to a difficult and lengthy doctoral program that most applicants are never able to complete.

Success was my only course of action because I had nowhere to go if I failed in this undertaking. I had two sons that had to be taken care of and properly provided for, so I simply could not fail. I would later learn that the complex requirements and pressures in a PhD program are so great that most of the people who are able to finish the degree seem to develop peculiar personality glitches of one sort or another. In other words, they typically become a little weird, even though most manage to keep this hidden. And after all is said and done, I am sure that there are people who believe that I probably did not escape that inevitable fate.

It seemed like the best and most economical living arrangement was on-campus in the graduate men's dorm, Droke Hall. Another good thing was that basic housekeeping and all meals in the graduate student cafeteria were provided. This situation was more than adequate because it allowed me to spend most of my time studying. My room was sparsely furnished with a little single bed, a small desk with light, and my old AM-FM radio. Most of my time was spent in class, in my room studying, or in the library which was very close to Droke Hall. This worked out to be exactly what was needed during my first year at the University.

The College of Business doctoral program at Arkansas was a large one and was structured in such a way that PhD students typically took three classes and taught two classes each semester. The Director of Graduate Studies pretty much decided which courses each student should take and the order in which they should be taken. This was theoretically based on one's area of major concentration and academic background. The person that made all of these decisions for us was a goofy bastard named Dr. Robert C. Haring. He had enormous power over all business doctoral students, so everyone was certain to treat him with great deference. It was this man, and a few professors in one's major field of study, that completely shaped each PhD student's study plan and destiny. There was much absolute subjectivity in our performance, our relationships, and our accomplishments. This worried me and all of my classmates a lot, but I soon learned that this was typical in all advanced business programs around the country. One mistake and you were out of the program. The old axiom was certain to be followed if one ever expected to finish the degree: "Graduate students should be seen, not heard."

Dr. Haring initially decided that I should be a marketing major with minors in economics and management. Additionally, he selected two (tool) fields that had to be mastered in lieu of

foreign languages. Dr. Haring decided that I would have one field in QMS (quantative management science) and another in computers.

When school started, I was to some extent intimidated by the large classes and the fast pace of those classes. Clearly a highly competitive environment existed and my doctoral and MBA classmates were very advanced. It became evident that this undertaking would be a fast track and would likely be the biggest challenge of my life. As a matter of fact, each class started at such an advanced point and covered so much material that one could be left behind if a single class were missed. None of my doctoral classmates came from industry. They typically were college teachers with master's degrees that came back to doctoral school to get a terminal degree so that they could return to their universities and get promotions and more money. And they were not kids. Their ages ranged from 25 to 40 years. It was soon apparent that I had more practical business skills, but they were far ahead of me on quantative and theoretical issues. Most of them had already been teaching the concepts being covered in our doctoral courses, so they had the background needed for each subject and each topic. My work was cut out for me. I could not even think about failure as an option. It was reminiscent of a scene straight from the movie *An Officer and a Gentleman* when Richard Gere tells Louis Gossett, the drill sergeant, "Don't drop me! Don't you . . . I got nowhere else to go! I got nowhere else to go . . . I got nothin' else."

It did not take long to establish a relationship with a small group of classmates, and we became close friends as the weeks ticked past. There were six of us, and we took all of our classes together, studied together, and taught each other the material in our various specialty areas. We stuck together and survived in classes for more than two years. Don Wilson and Jim Scott knew the management field from one end to another. Don Bates and Bill Thompson knew economics quite well. Hayden Green and I knew marketing. We would meet almost every night to make presentations to each other and to answer questions. We kept a required low profile and never shared our knowledge or notes with others in our classes. It was a highly competitive environment, and one would have been foolish to help others because they were actually our competitors. Additional pressure was added by the rule that graduate instructors were required to maintain a grade point average of 3.75 to retain their graduate assistantships. Although all of us had National Defense Loans, we could not have survived without the \$680 monthly stipend for teaching two undergraduate classes each semester.

It only took a few weeks to realize that I was in way over my head in the graduate macro economics class. I just did not have an adequate background. I talked with friends, and they suggested that I withdraw from that advanced macro class and audit the undergraduate class before trying the doctoral class again. Dr. Haring allowed me to do that. But there was another problem. I was also struggling in the five-hour calculus class. I decided to hire a tutor to help me in calculus. That guy turned out to be another resident in my dorm, Robbie Kouri.

He helped me so much, and he turned out to be a good friend. (Cindy and I visited with him in San Antonio in 2008.)

There was another dimension to my difficult school program. It was absolutely essential that I find one long weekend each month to travel to Florida to see my sons, Jerry and Jay, who lived there with their mother. As mentioned earlier, she was in graduate school at Florida State University. Somehow I was able to plan ahead and use holiday weekends or occasionally get someone to cover my classes on Fridays or Mondays so that I could drive to Tallahassee to see those boys. I would typically leave Fayetteville at 4 p.m. on Thursday, drive 850 miles which took about 14 hours, and arrive in Tallahassee at 6 a.m. on Friday. Sometimes I would sleep at the FSU Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity house, and sometimes I would sleep in my car. But most often, I would check into a downtown, \$10, fleabag hotel and would sleep until lunchtime before driving to the boys' school to see them and visit with their teachers. After school, we would then do all of the things they enjoyed doing over the weekend. On Sunday afternoons, I would say goodbye and drive back to Fayetteville, arriving on Monday morning. If school was in session at UA, I would either attend classes or teach my classes as scheduled.

Leaving those two little boys on Sunday afternoons was among the toughest things I have ever had to do. It broke my heart each time I left, but I could not let it show as it would only confuse them and make them sad. After my visits with them, the depression was so deep that I almost could not breathe. I actually had to think about it in order to draw oxygen into my lungs. Somehow I was usually able to manage a smile until I drove away. But there were always tears in my eyes most of the way back to Arkansas. I didn't have a lot to smile about in those days and usually felt pretty empty. There is no doubt that I was clinically depressed. Those boys were my main reason to struggle, and I needed them more than they needed me.

There was one time that I will never forget. It was back when I was still with Reynolds. I had arranged a business trip down to Dothan, Alabama, to work with a salesman. After my work was finished on Friday, I then traveled about 100 miles by bus on down to Tallahassee for the weekend. On Sunday afternoon, the boys' mother took me to the local airport when it was time to leave. I kissed Jay on the forehead and said, "Goodbye, son." He always called me "Daggle." Then I kissed Jerry on the cheek, and I remember his blondish hair blowing in the breeze that day. We were standing under an outside, covered walkway, waiting to board the airplane. Jerry asked, "When are you coming back to see me, Dad?" Of course my reply was "Really soon, Son." At that point, the passengers were escorted to the steps of the airplane for boarding. I walked up the steps and took my aisle seat. I could see the two boys through an airplane window, standing with their mother. Jerry was standing there and Jay was in his mother's arms. Both boys were waving goodbye. An older lady was sitting beside me in the window seat. I was actually looking across her seat out the window and was waving to the boys. Strangely, tears began to uncontrollably stream down my face like a faucet even though



I maintained a straight face. The nice, old lady sitting next to the window asked, “Are you okay, son?” My answer was “No ma’am, not really.”

During longer school vacation periods, such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, spring break, and summer break, their mother would usually allow me to take the boys back home to Winston-Salem for a few days, and later to my parents’ house in Memphis or to school at Arkansas. My sons and I had some great times together during these extended vacation times. It was not easy taking care of both boys at the same time, so my mother would oftentimes help out. She would usually keep one boy in Memphis, and I would take the other one with me to school, usually for a week. Then I would drive back to Memphis and take the other son for a week. That allowed me to spend more time separately with each one, and this helped in getting to know them better as individuals. Their mother did not approve of my leaving one son with my own mother. I remember that she felt that they would learn undesirable things.

I continued to struggle in my five-hour calculus class. It was a big class with probably 250 to 300 students on the roll. There were sixteen business doctoral students taking that class, and we all sat on the front row in a large auditorium. My test scores were on the borderline between passing and failing. Of course, a “C” was failing in graduate school. I remember that it was down to the last week of class, and the material was so damn hard. It really bothered me that some of the freshmen or sophomores back there could actually sleep through that class and still make A’s.

The comprehensive final in that class was coming up, and there was not much hope that I could earn a “B” in that class. It was the end of the semester, a Friday as I recall, and I decided that it would be just a waste of time to attend that last class session. At the end of that class time period, I decided to walk over to the engineering building to thank Dr. John W. Keesee and to ask if he would allow me take the class again next semester. It was then that I saw my doctoral classmates coming out of the door, moving towards the business building. They were all smiling and laughing. I asked them what was going on as we passed each other. Barry Morris told me that Dr. Keesee had signed off on all of them, meaning that he had exempted them from taking the comprehensive class final—and he had given them a “Pass” letter grade in the class. Barry told me that I had better hurry to get my letter signed. So, I made an instant decision to give it a try. I walked into Dr. Keesee’s office and was prepared to apologize for missing the last class session. But before I could say a word, he said, “Crawford, here is your letter to Dr. Robert C. Haring.” I looked at it and saw “PASS.” I just could not believe it! My God, how could I be so fortunate? Anyway, I was able to gain my composure and look at Dr. Keesee and shake his hand. I told him how much I enjoyed his class. And that turned out to be one of the happiest days in my doctoral program.

With a demanding university schedule and my desire to be with the boys as often as possible, there was not much time left for meeting people or having any real social life. I did go to church on Sundays and was able to meet a few nice people there. Later in the semester, I

came to know some students from Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity. They needed a faculty advisor, and I agreed to serve in that capacity. Although I was older than they were, I still enjoyed advising them and helping them with schoolwork. I also attended some of their social functions and even served as a master of ceremonies at some events.

One Lambda Chi member, Jim Davis, was also one of my students. He told me that he was trying to maintain relationships with two girls and asked that I help him out with his situation. He more or less favored one girl and asked me to take the other girl to some fraternity functions. I will never know if he really wanted my help or if he was just trying to get me more socially involved in fraternity events. Anyway, he introduced me to a tall and attractive blonde at the university student union in early December of 1970. Her name was Cindy Crook. We talked, and she seemed nice and friendly. I told her that I would call her soon. She gave me the impression that it would make her happy if I were to call her later about a date.

With end-of-semester projects due and Christmas so close, I just did not get around to calling Cindy for three or four months. I finally called her in March or April of 1971 and asked if she would like to go out to dinner. She accepted my invitation, but when I showed up at her door, she was in pajamas and said, "Didn't you get my message?" It seems that she had been sick and had sent word by someone that she needed to cancel our date. But I had not gotten the message. Many years later, she told me "that I just looked so crestfallen standing there." She also admitted that she felt sorry for me, so she quickly said, "Come on in, and I will get dressed."

She wound up preparing a nice chicken dinner for us at her apartment. She was easy to talk with, and she had a warm personality. It seemed as though we both enjoyed the evening, so I asked her out again on the following weekend. She accepted, and we went out to a nice buffet meal at the Holiday Inn. I borrowed Jim Davis's motorcycle to take her there. She seemed to enjoy the meal and motorcycle ride. She told me that she was not bashful when it came to food. But if that were the case, it did not show on her slender and well-shaped figure. She was tall, slim, and she looked great. We later went out seven or eight additional times. On those dates, I simply lacked enough confidence to kiss her good night. She remembers that I did kiss her on the forehead a time or two when saying good night. I sincerely liked her and basically did not want to scare her off. I was 31 years old, and she was only 21—this relationship was not supposed to happen. She later told me that her friends were beginning to think that I was probably gay because I had not been more "romantic" with her.

On an upcoming date, however, she found out that I was not of that persuasion. On our ninth date, I think, we went to a nighttime Lambda Chi outdoor party. There was a big bonfire. Actually, I think it was a "farmhouse burning." An abandoned old farmhouse had been purchased for this purpose. Everyone drank beer and watched it burn. Sounds strange, doesn't it? We were sitting on a large log, and I put both arms around her to keep her warm.

As the fire roared, I remember slowly pulling Cindy Crook up close and kissing her on the lips for the first time. She seemed to approve and was pleased that I was probably straight after all.

We had some great times together and our relationship soon became exclusive. We did a lot of fun things, and we studied with each other every night. Her grades seemed to go up, and she liked being with me. I had a VW and a little pocket money to take her places. As mentioned earlier, she was pretty and she was young. I remember on a trip to my parents' home in Memphis, my father, before meeting Cindy, had advised me not to get involved with "those young college girls." And common sense also told me not to get too deeply involved with Cindy because I would only get hurt when she decided to move on. It has been said that "there is no fool like an old fool." I was careful not to put my entire heart into this relationship. I just liked being with her and wanted to enjoy it while it lasted. Every day was good, and she motivated me to work hard and do well in my schoolwork. I no longer felt so depressed.

After the spring semester of 1971, I moved out of Droke Hall and rented a small apartment just outside of Fayetteville. Early in our relationship, I told Cindy that I had been married before and that I had two small sons. At that time, Jerry was six and Jay was almost five years of age. I asked her if she would like for me to bring them to Fayetteville for a visit. She said that she would like to meet them. So early in the summer of 1971, I brought Jay over to Fayetteville for a week. He and Cindy hit it off from the first moment they met. Jerry came over the following week. Jay and Jerry were both so sweet to her, and it was easy to see that she absolutely adored both of them as time passed.

The boys wanted to go to Cindy's apartment first thing every morning. She had a nice swimming pool, and she made the sorts of foods they liked. Cindy had always loved little animals, and I guess that she just adopted these two little boys that clung to her like baby chicks sticking with a mother hen. I know in my heart that those boys were a major factor in drawing us ever closer during those early times. I have often said, "It would be difficult not to care for a person who loves your kids and treats them so well." And I surely did appreciate Cindy!

After the summer of 1971, the boys returned to Florida and apparently gave their mother a lot of grief about wanting to live with us in Fayetteville. We had all enjoyed the summer, and it was easy to understand their thinking. Besides, as boys grow older, they probably just like to be with their father and do male type things. Jerry was the one that had started expressing his strong feelings about the situation. (While writing these words, June 22, 2011, I stopped and took about two hours to read all of the letters and correspondence exchanged between their mother and myself during the period 1969 to 1974. Those letters brought back so many sad memories. Even after forty years, I had forgotten how angry and unpleasant she was toward Cindy and me.)

The boys' mother had consistently been hard to deal with since leaving Winston-Salem, but now she grew to loathe me and anything I said or did. She specifically voiced complaints about my various actions, divorce-related matters, money, and my visitation rights with the boys. Since I had not gotten any specific visitation rights after the divorce, she had absolute power over my time and activities with the kids. There was no negotiation with her about any situation. It was either do it her way or else.

So now the boys wanted to come live in Fayetteville, Arkansas, and she did not like it one bit. She became furious about the least little thing, and I could never predict what she would do next. I remember driving to Tallahassee at one point for my weekend visit with the boys, and she had left a note on the door, "Gone to the beach. Back on Monday." Cindy and I had to turn around and drive 850 miles back to Fayetteville. This sort of thing continued through the fall semester of 1972 and became even worse after the Christmas holidays.

It is interesting to note that Jerry was not causing any problems when he was with us. He was a wonderful little kid. The problems only showed up when he was with his mother and her live-in boyfriend, Bill. They may have gotten married by this time, but I am not sure about that. And there was another thing. She called me at one point after they were married to see if it was okay for Bill to adopt the boys and change their names. I told her point blank, "That is simply not going to happen."

I believe that Bill had a young son, and there were problems with different discipline systems for his son and my sons. Anyway, her continuing anger and threats were just something that I had to endure if I wanted to continue seeing the boys. However, when I received the following letter on Feb 20, my passive strategy came to a halt. That letter was the straw that broke the Camel's back. I had taken enough of her crap. I knew that I had to stand up to her.

On February 20, 1972, I received the following letter from Beverly:

*Gerald,*

*I have discussed the topic of Jerry's emotional state with you numerous times over the past two years. I have reiterated time and again that my impression is that he is a very confused and unhappy little boy. I feel that Jerry is torn between the two of us to his aggravation and distress. Each time he visits with you his period of adjustment upon returning home is longer and stormier. I have no way of knowing what precipitates his behavior or general disregard for responsibility and authority, but I must assume that it is due to a traumatic change in environment from your house to ours.*

*I feel that it is my responsibility to provide him with a stable home life with as little outside agitation as possible. You have offered no suggestions or help in alleviating the problem. You have even further compounded the situation by indoctrinating the boys with fact, fiction, and impressions which they are too young and inexperienced to handle.*

*Therefore, you may no longer visit the boys – You may not come to Tallahassee and see them, they may not go out of Tallahassee to see you, and you may not talk with them on the phone. I am seeing a professional counselor Friday at 1:00 p.m. to see what can or should be done for Jerry. I will let you know our progress. If your presence is required by the counselor, I'll let you know.*

*If you feel that I am not taking your feelings into consideration, you are right. I am only concerned about the welfare of the children and the preservation of their emotional health. You will have to manage your own if possible, but I am sure you can't manage theirs. I am sorry you have been so impossible to reason with, have ignored my letters of distress, and have used such poor judgment in regard to the appropriateness of your conversations and actions with the children. Surely you realize that this decision has been arrived at as a last resort. I never envisioned it or wanted it, but when the children's best interest is at stake, I will stop at nothing to protect and nurture them.*

*Beverly Crawford*

I went straight to a lawyer's office. I had to somehow establish reasonable, written visitation rights. We discussed the situation, and I showed him the correspondence from her. His comments were: "Well, Mr. Crawford, about all you can do is go to Florida and get a lawyer and try to fight it out in their court system. It should not take more than one year." I thanked him and immediately went to see another lawyer. I heard a similar story. Frankly, I did not have the money or time to do what they suggested. And I was not going to walk away as so many men apparently did in similar divorce situations.

I remember driving to Cindy's apartment to tell her all that had taken place. After parking the car, I was walking to her door when I saw Richard Peal, a senior law student at UA. I pulled him aside and briefly told him the story and asked him if he knew a lawyer that would take my case. He thought for a while then told me about an older lawyer named Putman. He said that he was probably an alcoholic, but was one of the best legal minds in Washington County. So I called his office and made an appointment for the next day.

When I met Mr. Putman, my first impression was that he was just another old guy and that I should not expect too much from him. He carefully listened to my whole story. Then he thought about it and finally said that he could probably help me. He said that I would need to pay him a retainer, and he would develop a plan to attack the problem. He was not cheap, but I was in great need of help, and he seemed like the right person for the job. He said to come back in one week. I agreed to do so.

In the meeting that followed he outlined a step-by-step plan. First, he said that I should continue sending child support, but do nothing and say nothing. He told me that by the time summer rolled around, the boys' mother would most likely want to take a vacation with her boyfriend and would probably need a babysitter for the boys. She would then call and tell me to come to Florida and get the boys for a visit. Whenever she called, I should act very normal and appreciative and then go down there to get them and bring them back to Washington County. Once they were in Washington County, they would be considered a ward of the state. He could then petition the courts for temporary custody. He said that resolving custody would take months and that I should enroll them in local schools. He said that I would stand a lot better chance of getting custody if they were settled and in school in Arkansas. Mr. Putman then said that his "girlfriend" was the family court judge and would probably look favorably on my situation.

He went on to say that if we were lucky, the boys' mother would get fed up with all of the legal maneuvering and come to Fayetteville to "kidnap" the boys. If that should happen, she could then be arrested in Florida (or Texas where she was moving) and be extradited to Arkansas to stand trial. The custody case would be scheduled to follow the "kidnapping" case. So assuming that she would then be a convicted felon, my chances of getting custody of the boys would be very good. That plan sounded complex and risky to me, but I was desperate to see my boys and to regain some visitation rights that she had arbitrarily taken away. After talking at length with Cindy and others about this situation, I decided to go with Mr. Putnam's plan.

Things were quiet at this point, and we spent most of our time studying. I had moved into Dr. Franklin Williams home to "housesit" while he taught in Europe during the spring semester. Cindy and I had become a couple by this time, and were quietly thinking about a future together. I had grown to care a great deal for her, and I think the feelings were mutual. But, I was still afraid that Cindy might decide that I had too much baggage to be a decent husband.

I did not ask her outright to marry me because I did not know whether or not she would accept. I just knew that I enjoyed being with her. And I knew that the boys adored her, and she loved them a lot. She did not tell me directly, but I could see it in the way she dealt with them.

It was during this sad and quiet period after the devastating letter that Cindy and I had more time together. I think that Cindy finally said, “We are going to get married aren’t we?” And I said, “Well, yes.” Maybe I was the one to say that. I am not sure which one said what. Anyway, we started planning a July 29, 1972 wedding. We hoped with all of our hearts that the boys would be in Fayetteville, so they could be part of the happy ceremony and some good times ahead.

I continued to work hard in all of my classes, and my scores continually improved. That situation with the economics class worked out fine. I audited the macro class then retook the tough graduate class with those econ majors. I made a “B,” but I was rather proud of that. I went on to audit a micro econ class and then took the graduate version with all of the econ majors. Again, I made a “B,” but that was okay. I made two “A’s” in additional econ classes. I had all “A’s” in my marketing classes and all but one A in my management classes. Now I was starting to think about passing those three PhD candidacy field comprehensive tests. After that, I would need to get a dissertation topic approved and a dissertation committee. I kept thinking that the PhD degree would mean much more than one million dollars in earnings over a lifetime of work. Moreover, Cindy deserved to be married to a “Dr. Crawford” not a “Mr. Crawford.”

As Mr. Putman had predicted, the boys’ mother called in early June to see if I wanted to pick up the boys for a couple of weeks. Following Mr. Putman’s advice, I expressed appreciation for the opportunity to see them. Cindy and I drove to Florida and picked them up. As soon as we returned to Fayetteville, Mr. Putman filed for temporary child custody, and the judge immediately approved it. I knew that future events would be difficult. But at least we could all have some great times together before the sparks started to fly.

When it came time to take them back, I told the boys’ mother that I would be there at a certain time and on a certain date; except I had no intention of showing up. I was ready when she called. The telephone was set to record the conversation. True to form, she screamed, cursed at me, and called me every name in the book, and all of it was recorded. That sort of information would surely help the judge see that she was an absolute tyrant, and perhaps better understand the sort of treatment that I routinely received from her.

The wedding went as expected, and the boys were a big part of it. I remember taking them to a department store to buy little outfits and shoes that they would wear in the ceremony. They looked terrific. It was such an exciting time for all four of us. The boys were wonderful kids,

and we had become a little family. I had never been happier, and Cindy seemed to have a lovely radiance about her as the wedding day drew closer.

The ceremony took place at a little church beside the campus, and the reception was held at the Holiday Inn. Bev Bowen was Cindy's Maid of Honor, and Don Wilson was my Best Man. Dr. Franklin Williams, my dissertation chairman, came, and I remember that he had on a gray shirt with a tie made of gray rabbit fur. I have never seen Cindy more beautiful. She was at her best, and it was a great day for all four of us. Pictures taken that day are so special, and I have looked at the one with all four of us sitting on the church altar hundreds of times over the years. Everyone was impressed with the wedding. My parents came over to Fayetteville, and they brought my sister Joan and her son, Jimbo.

Mr. and Mrs. Crook had always been so nice to me. They had made me feel at ease and comfortable from the time we first visited with them in Falls Church, Virginia. I appreciated all that they did to make sure that it was a happy wedding day for Cindy. Looking back, I know that they must have worried about their only daughter marrying this older guy with two children.

Our little family then moved into the VanMeter house for a year while he taught in Europe. It was a nice new house and was located on Crossover Road out in the country. It had about ten acres with a pond, a Shetland pony, and a border collie named "Tippy." In the fall, the boys started attending classes at Root School which was only a short distance from our house. Cindy was doing her practice teaching at a school in Farmington, Arkansas, which was only five miles away. Every day, I would wait down on the road for the boys to get off the school bus. The boys were clearly very happy, and Cindy and I were also pleased to have them and be a real family.

The boys' mother had married Bill by then, and they had moved to Lubbock, Texas. She would be teaching at Texas Tech University. I was worried that the time for her to "kidnap" the boys was likely approaching—that is, if Mr. Putman's predictions were correct. Then one morning, it happened. I received a call from the principal at their school. She and Bill had taken the boys when they stepped off the school bus at Root School one morning in late September. Jerry has since told me that he knew something was not right that day. He asked his mother several times, "Are you sure that this is okay with Dad?" It is true that we expected this to happen, but it was still heartbreaking to have your kids taken away like that. I went home that afternoon and told Cindy. She later said that this was the only time she had ever seen me cry.

I remember going to see Mr. Putman and giving him all of the facts so he could contact the Washington County prosecutor and file kidnapping charges against their mother. After a few days, the Lubbock police arrested the boys' mother down in Texas. They kept her in jail until she could post bond. Mr. Putman's secretary had to verify some details with the Lubbock



police so that extradition papers could be filed. In doing so, the secretary had spoken on the phone with a female jailer in Lubbock. That jailer told Mr. Putman's secretary that she had never before talked with such an angry, loud, and abusive woman. She said that the female prisoner had called them every curse word in the book.

As time passed, the Texas governor had not yet signed the extradition order. However, the permanent child custody case date was rapidly approaching trial on the Washington County court calendar. If the boys' mother came to Washington County to testify in the child custody case or to defend herself, she would be arrested because she was wanted on an outstanding felony warrant. She was more or less caught between the literal rock and a hard place, exactly as Mr. Putman had predicted.

As the court date drew closer, she became more aware of the fact that I was going to follow through on this matter. At the last minute, she had her sister, JoAnn, call Cindy to see if something could not be worked out between us. As always, Cindy was diplomatic and thoughtful in her discussions. We were asked what conditions would be required in order to work things out. So, with Cindy's approval, I backed off of the full custody requirement and asked for something closer to joint custody. We asked for the following things: (1) that we would get them all summer, every summer, (2) that we would get them one weekend each month, (3) that we would get them one week at Christmas—and the actual holiday week on alternating years, (4) that we would be able to call them anytime on the telephone, (5) that she would allow them to have unlimited mail privileges with us, and (5) that the boys' mother would drive to meet us halfway when picking up or dropping off the boys. So, I had Mr. Putman draw up the papers which she quickly signed. The Washington County prosecutor was rather upset with this settlement as he had invested a lot of time into the case and was well prepared for a trial.

The boys' mother treated me with a lot more respect after that. When these conditions were put into a legal document and signed, Cindy and I started going to Lubbock to see the boys as often as possible, but at least once per month. It was now only 600 miles or ten hours driving to see them. And I was no longer afraid of my ex-wife. We had legal rights and were no longer worried that she would again become arbitrary and judgmental towards me. She acknowledged that I had a legitimate need to remain a part of my sons' lives and that my rights were protected by law. If we had just put those rights into writing as I had so badly wanted to do at the time of the divorce, all of the problems may never have come along. I tried to do it when she left Winston-Salem, but she would have no part of it. And I was too discouraged and depressed at the time to stand up to her. So many times after the divorce, I can remember thinking, "Absolute power corrupts, absolutely."

The white 1967 VW had proven to be a dependable, economic mode of transportation but was now starting to wear out. In two-and-one-half years, we had driven more than 70,000 miles, going to Florida, Memphis and North Carolina. The head bolts had become

“wallowed-out” so that when the engine was cold, the heads would actually move up and down on the engine block, and one could hear a loud knocking. After the engine warmed up, the cylinder heads would expand, and the knocking would go away. I found a nice, new, little, basic, Ford Pinto, station wagon at the Ford dealership. When I took the VW to the dealer to discuss prices and trade-in, I stayed in the car and left it running while they were looking it over. They did not hear the knocking because the engine was warm. The price tag for the basic, little Pinto was about \$2150. After deducting the VW trade-in, my monthly car payment would be \$22.00, so we bought it.

There was a time when I was teaching a class at the University of Arkansas, and the departmental secretary appeared at my classroom door. I went to see what she wanted. She whispered that Cindy had been involved in a car accident. I thanked the secretary and dismissed my class. When I telephoned Cindy, she said that she was okay and that the accident was not too bad. She said that I could probably fix it with a little touch up paint. She had been at a stop sign, waiting to go, and the sun was in her eyes. To make a long story short, we had to replace the grille, hood, and both fenders. But she did not get hurt and that was the important thing.

That summer, Cindy and I took the boys to Gatlinburg for a short vacation. Cindy was driving our little, green Pinto one morning when she left the motel to get something at the store. Jerry was riding with her. In a few moments, someone knocked on our door. It was a man, and he excitedly said that my wife had been involved in a car wreck as she was exiting the motel driveway and that I should come quickly. They were okay, but Jerry had received a bump on his head. The wreck happened as Cindy was pulling out to enter the main road and someone came around the curve too fast. There was no time to stop. I was just happy that they were okay. State Farm insurance gave me a check for the full value of the car that same day. I hitch-hiked into Sevierville, Tennessee to the Ford dealer and purchased a new full-sized, Grand Torino, station wagon. I just remember that our car payments went up to \$43 per month. I also remember thinking that we needed a bigger car, one that had more sheet metal in front. It was important that Cindy have more protection if she was going to be doing a good bit of driving. (Now, forty-five years later, she has not had another accident.)

Having lived in several professors' houses while they taught in Europe, Cindy and I sure thought favorably about overseas travel, and we really hoped that someday we could go places and see things that we had both heard so much about. Additionally, President Nixon traveled to China in February of 1972, and it was extensively covered by all of the TV networks. When Nixon met with Chairman Mao Zedong and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai on television, it sharpened our interests even more. It led me to begin looking for possible overseas teaching opportunities for a soon-to-be PhD graduate.

Our lives smoothed out, and I could now focus on getting my degree and moving on with our marriage and our future. Cindy was a great wife, even though, I was not a very attentive

husband at the time. I was almost completely covered up with my schoolwork. I had become an assistant to the Graduate Studies Coordinator in the College of Business and continued to teach two classes. So I was now being paid as a full time graduate assistant and that helped with expenses. When I was not working full-time in the graduate office, I was struggling with my dissertation. My Chairman was Dr. Franklin S. Williams (we had lived in and had taken care of his house during the previous year). The other two members of my committee were Dr. C. P. Rao in Marketing and Dr. Miles Sonstegaard in Economics.

Cindy graduated from Arkansas in the spring of 1972 and was able to find a job for the following fall. She started teaching in the small town of St. Paul about twenty miles or so outside of Fayetteville. I purchased a Honda 450 motorcycle for transportation so that she could use our car to get around. It was also needed for car pooling with some other teachers. We continued to live in the VanMeter house in the fall semester of 1972 and in the spring semester of 1973. We enjoyed the quiet country life and the animals, Snowball and Tippy. We even adopted a small German shepherd dog and named him "Peanut." I made steady progress on my dissertation, and somehow, Cindy was able to "put up with me."

That Honda motorcycle was a nice machine, and I am sure that the boys remember it. I would take them for rides on it, and they truly enjoyed the experience. They both had nice little helmets and knew how to properly lean as we went around curves. But the machine that they loved the most was a go-cart that we purchased from Sears. We were always able to find a place to ride it, and they first learned how to drive on that little vehicle. We also took it up to Gramps and Pop's house where we had a nice circular track. They learned how to literally turn those curves on two wheels.

In the summer of 1973, the VanMeters returned to Fayetteville, and we moved into another house-sitting situation. This time it was for Dr. Tom McKinnon, who was going to Europe to teach for a semester. It was a very nice new house in an upscale neighborhood. I cannot remember what we did with "Peanut" during this time in the McKinnon house. But I do remember taking him with us when we drove to Lubbock each month. Cindy would go on our trips to Lubbock most of the time. Occasionally, I would go by myself. I remember when we drove to Lubbock, the boys would be so excited to see us. They would usually wait out on the curb and watch for our car. When they saw us coming, they would jump and scream and act as though it were Christmas. We would always take them something just to make them happy. We usually stayed at the Lubbock Inn which was a pretty nice motel near their house. Cindy and I would immediately buy a newspaper to see what might be happening in town over the weekend. Cindy would plan a full schedule of events, and we tried to use the entire weekend, making sure that the boys had a good time.

On one of my trips to Lubbock, I remember that the boys' mother asked me to speak to one of her college classes. It was a graduate class in marriage and family life. At first, when she started to introduce me, most of the students were reading newspapers and not really paying

close attention. She had not previously told them about our relationship. And, then at the end of my introduction, she mentioned that I was the father of her children. It took most of them a short moment or two to grasp what she had just said. I then noticed that everyone sat up and gave me their complete attention. I spoke very favorably about their professor and basically made the point that divorced men could be very good parents if given a proper opportunity. At the end of the presentation, students were given time for a few questions. Since the boys' mother and I seemed to get along very well, one student asked, "Why did you two get a divorce?" I answered by saying, "You will have to ask her about that." She did not answer that question.

It seems possible that my presentation in that Texas Tech class may have caused her to look at me differently. She may have decided that I was a pretty decent parent after all, although 45 years later, I cannot imagine her saying anything like that to me. She did later tell me that another of her men friends had told her that "your ex-husband must not be so bad." He went on to say that "apparently, the only thing he wants is to have a normal relationship with his children." That was Bob Amison, as I recall. And I guess that it was sometime during this period of time that she divorced Bill, but I am not sure about that. I do remember that she had become a lot nicer to me by this time.

At the office, I was almost finished with the dissertation, and it looked like I might be able to defend it in November of 1973. Since I was so close to the end, I had to start thinking about a job. I drew a circle around Lubbock, Texas and tried to consider schools that were within reasonable driving distance of the boys' home. So I interviewed at several schools and could have gone to work at some of them. We considered the University of Colorado, Texas Tech University, the University of Texas at Clear Lake City, and Texas Woman's University in Denton.

I had interviewed at Texas Tech on one of the weekends when I was visiting with the boys. I felt really good about getting that marketing job. Something strange happened, however, and I did not get an offer. It seems that the College of Business dean was attending a Texas Tech social function, and the boys' mother also happened to be there. She casually mentioned to him that "my ex-husband interviewed in your College of Business yesterday." I had not told the school that I had an ex-wife and two children living in Lubbock. The dean was furious and probably thought that I might be coming to Lubbock to see my children instead of taking the job on its own merits, which was probably true. Anyway, I received a very brief letter stating that "my qualifications did not fit their needs at this time." But the rejection was not that important because I really did not feel right about taking Cindy to Lubbock where an ex-wife lived.

Another great thing came along about this time. Since I more or less handled the paperwork for the Arkansas European MBA Program from the Graduate Studies Office, I carefully noted a vacancy for the January through June period of 1974. I penciled my name into the

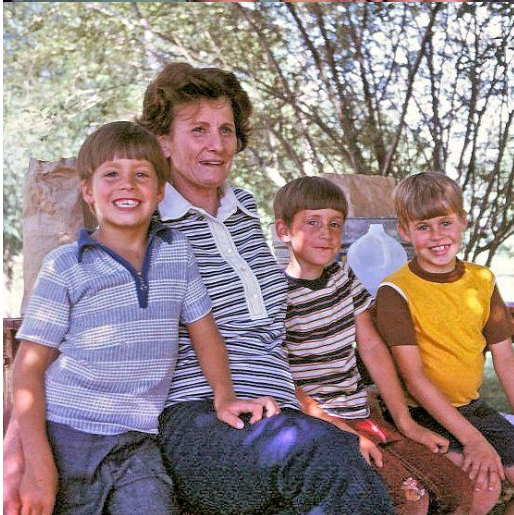
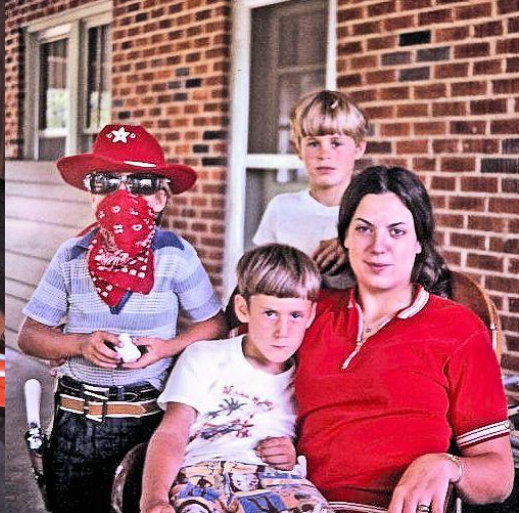
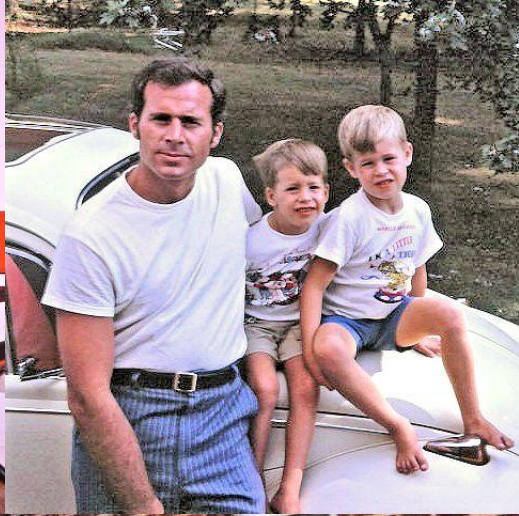
schedule, but that goofy bastard that I worked for (Robert C. Haring) opposed my going. He simply did not want to lose me in his office. It was necessary that I appeal the decision over his head. After talking with the College of Business dean and telling him why Dr. Haring did not want me to go, he hired me as a Visiting Assistant Professor and gave me permission to go to Europe. Cindy and I were so happy about this great opportunity to see the world and to work for six months in England, Greece, and Turkey.

On December 10, 1973, I was able to successfully defend my dissertation to a group of professors and guests at the University of Arkansas. There was one scary moment during the question period when Dr. Miles Sonstegaard started asking some basic questions about sample selection. Dr. Franklin Williams butted in and basically told him that he should have brought up these questions months earlier. Furthermore, he said, "the sample was logically and methodically selected and that we were not going to discuss this part of the study today." There were a few additional questions, but all of them were easily answered. After getting all of the papers signed and copies delivered to the graduate office, I felt like I was on top of the world! Now I could relax and spend more time with my beautiful wife. Now I could have a normal life—whatever that turned out to be.

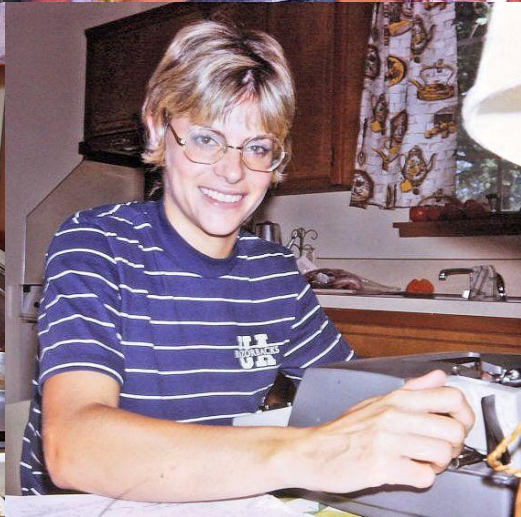
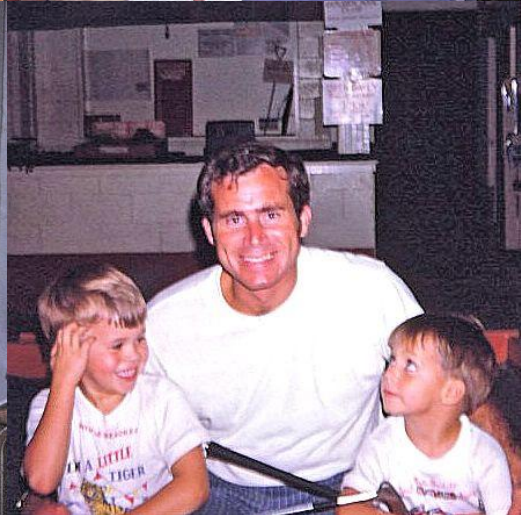
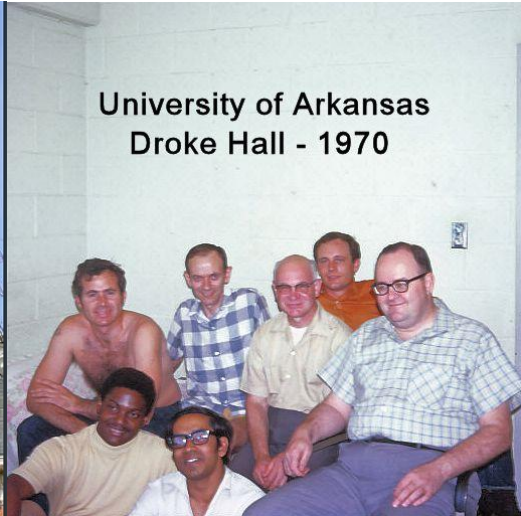
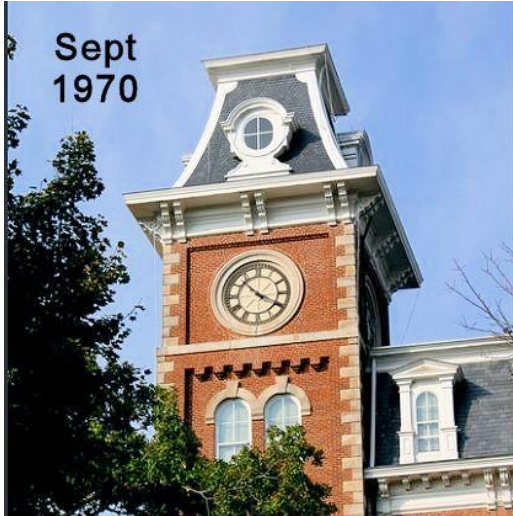
We packed up our stuff and drove to Henry, Tennessee where my parents lived. It was so exciting to know that in a few days we would be flying from Nashville, Tennessee to Washington, DC to Cindy's family home and then from Andrews Air Force Base to Mildenhall, England.

(Pictures follow also see - <http://geraldcraw.net/>)

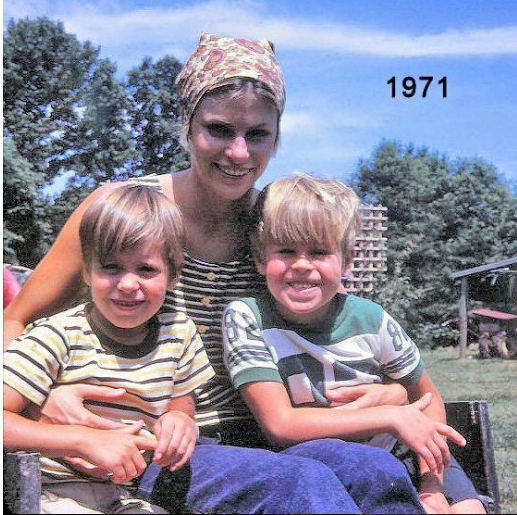
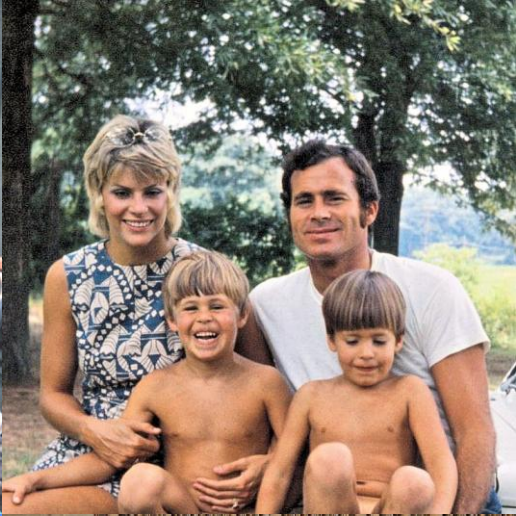








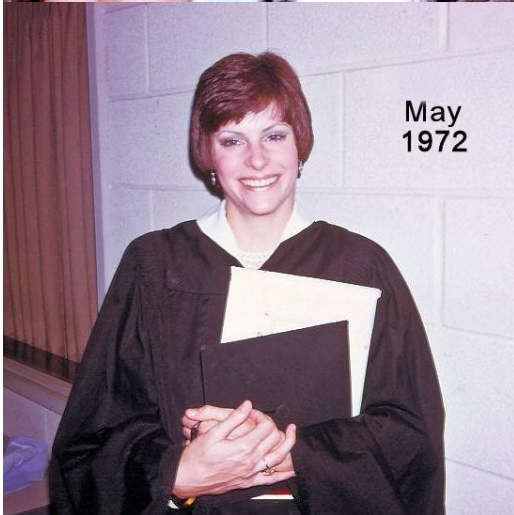
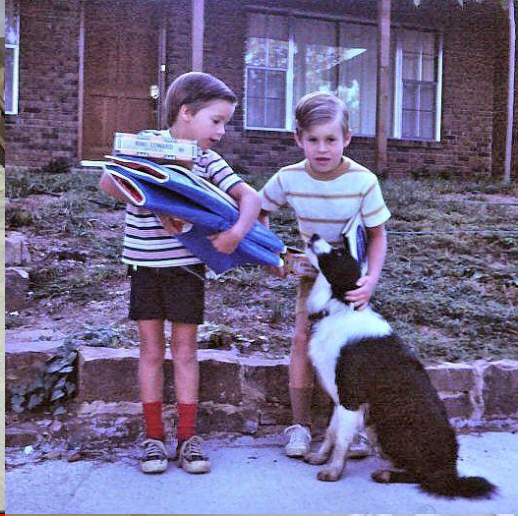
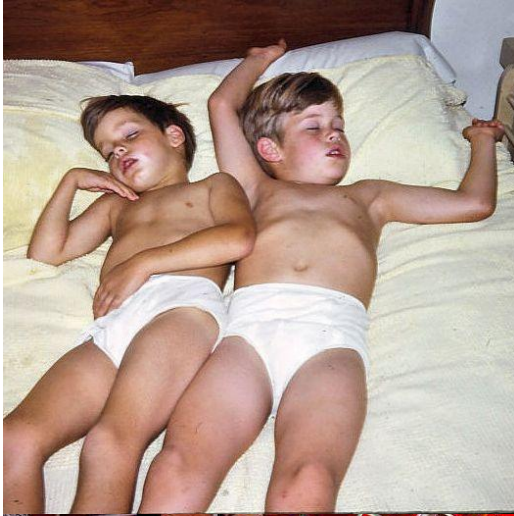
















July 29, 1972



## Chapter 9 – Europe and Texas Woman’s University

After finishing the requirements for my doctoral degree from the University of Arkansas, Cindy and I spent Christmas of 1973 moving our few worldly possessions to my parents’ house. My dad had recently retired from National Trust Life Insurance Company, and they had bought a 100-acre farm in Henry, Tennessee. They were living there in a big old farmhouse, so they had some extra room to store our stuff. We didn’t have much. One thing that we did have was a fine little German shepherd dog named Peanut. We would leave him with my parents while in Europe for six months. We would also leave our 1973, Ford Grand Torino station wagon at the farm.

As far as a teaching position for the following fall, I had interviewed with the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. No decision had yet been made as which person would be hired. I had also been interviewed by Texas Woman’s University and was scheduled for an interview at the University of Texas at Clear Lake City. But for this last interview, it snowed and all flights were cancelled, so I never went down to see them. Earlier, I had interviewed at the University of Texas, Permian Basin (UTPB) which was a new senior level university at Odessa, Texas. Cindy and I decided not to go there. It was just too much like a desert, and there were junk oil rigs lying around everywhere.

It was not easy slowing down from the very difficult work load and pressure that I had been under for the previous three-and-one-half years. Things would be different now that I had a new life and my “union card.” There were many jobs in virtually every state that we could get when we returned from our six-month European teaching trip. Cindy liked to travel, and she had always wanted to go to Europe or anywhere else, anytime. Before she met me, she had planned to get a job somewhere overseas as a teacher in the DOD schools after she graduated from Arkansas.

I had gone to Lubbock and visited with both boys and talked to their teachers about the upcoming trip. I was so afraid that the boys would forget about us. To minimize that from happening, I talked with Jerry’s teacher, Mrs. Howell, about the trip. I decided to make audio tapes overseas that would be sent to her every two weeks for Jerry’s class. She arranged to go and get Jay from Mrs. Billinger’s classroom when tapes arrived, so he could hear the messages with Jerry’s class. My plan was to make the tapes interesting and educational for second and third graders. Now that I look back, I am proud of what we were able to do. Cindy knew what kids that age liked, and we both put a lot of effort into seeing interesting places, going to local schools, and finding things that those kids would enjoy. We completed those tapes and sent them as promised. Mrs. Howell said that her class enjoyed them a lot. She could tell that I missed those boys so much, and she helped me to stay in touch with them. I was afraid that if I had sent them to their mother, Jerry and Jay might not have ever heard them. As a postscript note to this situation: when we returned to the USA, I went to see Mrs. Howell at her home to pick up the tapes, and she let me know that she and her husband

were very impressed with what we had done to stay in touch with the boys. She also told me that her husband had mentioned more than once that he wanted to meet me when we returned home. (Unfortunately, he was at work on the day that we picked up the tapes.)

After packing up and leaving the University of Arkansas, we spent a few days at the farm with my parents during the Christmas holidays. My parents then took us to the Nashville airport, and we flew to Washington, DC. That is where Mr. and Mrs. Crook lived at the time. We wanted to spend a few days with them before going away for such a long period of time. Shortly after the New Year's holiday, Mr. Crook drove us to Andrews Air Force Base to catch a military contract flight to Mildenhall Air Base in England. I remember that every seat on that giant airplane was filled and everyone had the maximum allowed amount of luggage. The reason for the big load was that everyone aboard the flight was traveling to a new permanent duty station. When the airplane took off, I remember that it lumbered down the very long runway to build up enough speed to get off the ground. And when it reached the end of the runway, it did not go up but just sort of flew straight out over the ocean until the curvature of the earth finally enabled the airplane to reach its required altitude.

This was the first trip to Europe for both of us. Once we arrived at Mildenhall, England, there was a military bus that took us on a two hour ride to Upper Heyford Air Base which seemed to be located in the middle of nowhere. It was actually between the city of Oxford and the village of Banbury. We were completely exhausted when we reached our Upper Heyford destination. We had been awake for more than 36 hours. Every time we stopped, Cindy would sit on the duffel bag that we carried and go to sleep. I remember looking at the British countryside and seeing sheep, beautiful green fields, and many small cars with funny looking license plates. When we finally reached the base, there was a military NCO and his wife that met us and drove us to our little cottage in Drayton, a suburb of Banbury. That man wanted to talk with me about his MBA courses and his class schedule and all we wanted to do was go to sleep. We were so exhausted that we felt and probably appeared to be intoxicated.

The house that we would be living in for two months was 530-years-old and quite historic. Most of the other cottages in the area were also very old. Ours was a small two story building that had once been three smaller, separate, attached buildings. I remember that the walls were made of mud bricks and were thicker at the bottom than they were at the top. The fireplace burned coal, but we never used it, even though we had a shed filled with the strange, black chunks of fuel. Neither one of us had ever used coal for heat in an open fireplace. The only real heat came from a boxy-looking, electrical-retention heater that was located along the wall in the downstairs sitting room. The heat automatically came on for about two or three hours during the early evening hours. Electric coils would heat up some bricks in the big metal box, and they would retain heat for several hours. We quickly learned that the cost for electric heat was about four times the cost in the USA. People simply had to wear more clothes, sweaters, underwear, and nightclothes to stay warm. They could not afford the

luxury of unlimited electricity and gasoline as we did in the USA. We laughed at having to get dressed before going to bed.

In those days there were only three channels on the telly, as they called their TV. Two of the channels were BBC-1 and BBC-2, both operated by the British government. And, they were typically so boring. The other channel, Independent Television (ITV), was not much better. Typical English viewers normally watched working-class soap operas, stupid talk shows, and silly comedy shows. Both of us were amazed at the amount of nudity that was shown on British TV. We would later find that Europe is much less concerned with nudity and sexual situations in their movies and TV than Americans. Topless and sometimes bottomless beaches were quite common, especially in France, Spain, and Germany.

I taught three nights each week, and I regretted having to leave Cindy at home so much. We were able to travel on the remaining four free days each week. Although we leased a little car, I needed it to get to class. She later told me stories about having to walk into town and to the movies. The car was a small Morris Minor, and it burned very little gasoline. As a matter of fact, almost all of the cars in England were tiny. The main reason, I quickly learned, was that gasoline costs were at least double those in the USA.

We traveled by train to London on several weekends so that I could teach an extra class to military officers stationed there. I taught that class in the downtown (underground) military complex that Winston Churchill and Dwight Eisenhower used to run World War II. When in London, we stayed at the Columbia Club which was the U. S. Military officers' club for urban London. It was located on Lancaster Gate, alongside Hyde Park and it was a very nice place to stay. Cindy and I grew to love the city. We would walk along Bayswater Road and view the starving artist displays and assorted crafts that were for sale on Sunday mornings. London was such an exciting place. And the people were very friendly. We would learn over time that the British people seemed to like us more than other Europeans. We came to understand and appreciate the special relationship that Americans and the British seem to have for each other.

My students at Upper Heyford were mostly Air Force pilots. One or more of them would regularly arrive late for our class after returning from flying missions. I found it difficult to imagine how a class in business could possibly be as exciting as landing an F-111 jet fighter/bomber in high wind and rain, which was so common there. Students coming in late were most often still wearing their flight suits with the tell-tale bands of sweat across the front of their flight suit where the safety belts held them in their seats. These were mature, young guys, and they all had great flying stories that were told after class in the officers' club. It was common to go there with the group after class, and I really enjoyed interacting with them. I remember that American beer was only ten cents per bottle. After a couple of rounds and a few good stories, I would then drive about thirteen miles to our little house in Drayton. When I approached Banbury, the road went downhill for about a mile and into the

village. I could see all of the working-class row houses with coal burning in their fireplaces. The result was that many, little, clearly-defined columns of smoke spiraled upwards from each house along the roadway. Sodium vapor streetlights cast a yellowish glow across the valley in which the town was located. No other cars would be on the roads at night, and it was a beautiful and peaceful scene. It was difficult to drive on the left side of the road, and I was always afraid that I would get stopped by a policeman. Getting arrested for DUI is a serious matter in England and almost always results in a person losing his or her driving privileges.

One of my students invited us to attend a big Robert Burns birthday bash on January 25, 1974. Burns was a Scottish poet and a lyricist. He is still widely regarded as the national poet of Scotland. Burns is celebrated worldwide by people with Scottish roots. Crawford is a Scottish name, so we were warmly welcomed by everyone. Bobby Burns' celebrations typically include dinner with haggis, a traditional Scottish dish, Scotch whiskey, and the recitation of Burns' poetry. He is recognized by many in Scotland as being the Greatest Scot. I learned that he was a "heavy drinking hell-raiser, and he knew how to party."

Another memorable experience occurred after class one evening. There was an Air Force Colonel in my class, and he knew that I liked airplanes and airplane stories. He was in charge of maintenance and upkeep of all forty F-111 swing wing jet fighters stationed at Upper Heyford. He waited for the classroom to clear out before asking me if I wanted to do something interesting. Of course I told him "yes." I walked with him over to one of the big hangers near the flight line. He signed us into the facility and took me to the big F-111 flight simulator. We both put on all pieces of the pilot uniform, equipment, helmet, and face mask and then we climbed into the cockpit. I was in the front seat, and he was in the back seat. Using the helmet intercom system, he talked me through starting the jet engines, taxiing to the runway, and taking off. It was so realistic, with visual, sound, and movements that must have been just like a real jet fighter.

There were eleven computers on board the airplane, and we had to use all of them to get tower clearances and to set up our mission and monitor the many airplane flight systems. It was windy and raining as we took off, and he charted our course for a sweeping circle over the "wash" which runs along the northeast coast above Cambridge. We then set up a bombing run over London. After descending at a speed exceeding 1000 MPH, we dropped the bombs on our target and climbed out at a steep angle. We then circled back and landed at Upper Heyford in the blowing wind and rain. That was such an exhausting and stressful experience. Now I fully understood why my students had those typical bands of sweat on their flight suits when they arrived late to my class after landing real F-111 jets in the actual wind and rain.

Cindy did not drive our leased Morris Minor in England because she had not taken the military driving class and passed the test. That was okay with her because she did not want to



drive on the left-hand side of the road anyway. That was my first time to drive on the “wrong side,” and I found it very challenging at first. The roads in the Oxfordshire area were all so narrow and almost universally two lanes wide. The scary part was going up a hill on what intuitively seemed like the “wrong side” of the road and worrying about someone meeting you head-on as you approached the top of the hill. Driving on the left took almost complete and total concentration. If your mind wandered for one second, most Americans would typically come to their senses and jerk the wheel back to what seemed like the “proper” side of the road. That happened to me a time or two during the two months we were in the UK, and it was frightening.

We took three European trips during this two-month period in England. One was to Zell Am Ziller in Austria for a ski week in the Alps. This was our first time to ski, and we made complete fools of ourselves on the slopes, at least I did. It was not as simple as it appeared to be. We did take skiing lessons and at the end of the week, we could ski fairly well. We stayed at a small hotel in Zell Am Ziller and enjoyed the food and sleeping in those firm European twin beds with continental quilts. At night we would be so tired that we would go to bed after dinner, usually about eight o'clock. The hotel owners were Herman and his father. Years later, we would travel back to Austria on more than one occasion and stay in the same hotel. I remember that the name of the hotel was The Neuwirt.

We took another trip; this time it was to Paris with Cindy's mother when she came over to visit with us. I remember that Mrs. Crook did not like the hovercraft ride we took from Dover to Calais. The sea was rough that day as it skimmed along at about 100 miles per hour. It was a little scary for me as well. After a three-hour train ride from Calais, I remember that we decided to visit the Arc de Triomphe upon arrival in Paris. It is located at a circular intersection of several big streets, including the famous Champs Elysees. We wanted to walk over to see the gigantic monument but had not researched the best way to get to it. There were no designated pedestrian walkways so we started trying to walk across many lanes of traffic to reach our destination. Traffic was horrible as cars zipped dangerously past. Then someone in one car shouted for us to use the underground walkways. But we loved Paris and saw all of the sights. It amazed me that Cindy could speak and read French so well.

The third trip was to Ireland for a week with American dependents that were on holiday from the military base. It was a motorcoach tour, and we were able to see the beautiful Irish countryside for the first time. We loved Dublin and Cork and all of the lovely villages between them. We grew to appreciate the struggle that the Irish people had while gaining their independence from England in 1922. We surely enjoyed the wonderful Irish people and their accents and lovely green fields and hills in springtime.

Back in the village of Drayton, we also took many driving trips to interesting places nearby such as Oxford and Stratford-upon-Avon. Our learning curve was straight up. Everything was new and different. This was a period of exploration and learning about the world outside

of our American mindset. We enjoyed noting and discussing such things as the strange “ringing” sound of the British telephones and dark draft beer served at room temperature, and foreign accents that were so typically British. There were more differences than we expected, based on what we were accustomed to seeing back home. Sadly, we saw a lot of young American people on the military bases that did not like living overseas. Cindy and I, however, thoroughly enjoyed seeing new places, meeting new people, and learning new things. We were careful to keep an open mind about everything. Britain was only the beginning of our trip, but it was turning out to be even more exciting than we ever imagined it would be.

About March 1, we packed our things and traveled in a C123 military airplane to Rhine Main Airbase near Frankfurt, Germany. It was our first time to sit on netting in the back of a cargo airplane. The short flight was noisy but uneventful. Once in Germany, we spent one or two nights in base housing before getting a commercial flight to Athens, Greece. The flight was aboard a large Olympus Airways plane. This was about the time of a major worldwide gasoline shortage, and people had simply stopped traveling. There were six passengers and six flight attendants on this giant commercial airliner.

Upon arrival in Athens, we were met by a nice guy who was the Education Officer for the Hellenikon Air Base. He took us to our apartment in Voula Beach. It was up on the second floor, and the apartment was very nice. The walls and floors were made primarily of Marble which is their local construction material. We loved the apartment and the view of the local neighborhood and the Mediterranean Sea. In those days, the Greeks liked us, prices were so cheap, and the food was fantastic. The basic religion in Greece is Greek Orthodox which is quite similar in some ways to the Catholic religion.

This was our first time to live in a significantly foreign place. England had been different but a good deal similar to the USA, and of course, they also spoke English. Greece, on the other hand, was much more Mediterranean and that meant lots of differences such as diet and lifestyle. They ate fish, feta cheese, olive oil, tough middle-eastern bread, and drank domestica wine. The Greek people were quiet people and most were smaller in stature than Americans. Most of them were relatively poor. We were there in March and April and this meant that the weather was still rather cool. We ate very often at a little restaurant located about two blocks away. It was named “Billis and Yannie's” or in English—Bill and John’s. It served local Greek food which was relatively new to us and so delicious. The prices were also very reasonable.

Another thing that we liked about this place was the American neighbor-family that lived in the apartment across the hall from us. Their names were Ernie and Bev Valutis, and they were from Indiana. He was also a professor at the base and taught counseling courses. Back home, he was a professor and psychological counselor at Taylor University. They had three great kids, Chip, Buzz, and Taffy. They owned a VW station wagon, and they took us with

them on trips fairly often. We did not have a car in Greece, but there was good local bus transportation. Downtown Athens was only a 25-minute ride on the city bus.

We once went on a long weekend drive with Bev and Ernie down to the Corinth Canal region and the beautiful and historic Peloponnese Peninsula. They were great people, and we enjoyed their friendship. After finishing their tour in Athens, they moved to upstate New York where Ernie went into full-time counseling, and his wife became a real estate agent. In about 1979, Cindy, Jerry, Jay and I drove to Prince Edward Island, Canada for a vacation. When we traveled through upstate New York, we stopped for a visit and spent a day or two with the Valutis family.

About half of my students in Athens were American Air Force pilots and officers. The other half of the class was made up of Greek nationals. All were working on MBA degrees. I enjoyed the Americans and also came to know and like the Greek students. The Greeks very regularly asked us out to eat in various local tavernas. In most foreign teaching assignments, I learned that it is common to socialize with one's students. In America, it is not generally a common practice in schools of business. I also learned firsthand that the Greeks (and most students from developing countries) normally cheat on tests and assignments. They do not think of it as cheating; instead, they consider it to be a sharing of information which is universally acceptable and widespread.

I had been alerted by the previous professor that there was a “cheating” problem among the Greeks in Athens. He told me that I should watch out for it. Well, I designed a system that I hoped would make it hard for them to cheat. First, I selected the seats for each student and made out a seating chart. In each row I seated Greek students in alternating seats with American students. In the next row, I did the same thing, except I started with an American student alternating in every other seat with a Greek student. So, every Greek student sat next to four Americans, front, back, and both sides. Then on the night of the midterm exam, I arrived at the school early and unlocked the classroom door only five minutes before the test was scheduled to start. Then I stood at the door and had every student leave everything, books, coats, pencils, papers and everything else outside of the classroom. When they came into the room, I furnished the pencils and papers. I told them that they should use the rest room before going into the classroom because there would be no rest room breaks during the one-hour exam.

I remember that the Greeks were stunned when they saw how the test was to be conducted. Some later told me that they had never taken a class or a test where they could not share information with each other. During that first test, I remember that there was a very beautiful Greek girl sitting in the front row. She appeared to be in shock. She stared straight ahead and did not write one word during the first 30 minutes. After a while, she did write a few things, but she did not make a very good overall score. I had to later have a talk with the Greek students and explain that they were getting an American degree, so they must play by

American rules. I think that most of them finally understood that the business world in Europe and in the USA expected reasonably honest behavior. Most of them started studying, and they developed more confidence. I believe that they learned that it is possible to compete and pass without "verifying" their answers with others in the class.

I remember that we did not have washers and dryers in our apartment. Cindy would always pack up our dirty clothing and take it to the base in a military backpack that she actually wore strapped onto her back. She typically rode the military bus that ran about every hour. She said that she became known as the "backpack lady" because she seemed to go to the military laundromat so often. We would also stop by the base post office every day. I remember standing in front of the post office one day reading a letter that I had received from my mother telling me that my grandmother Agent had passed away. There was nothing we could do since we were so far away.

On our days off, we would catch a city bus and go down to the center of Athens to visit famous places like the Acropolis, the Parthenon, and Constitution Square. We loved to see those beautifully restored landmarks. We would also go into the Plaka which is known as the "Neighborhood of the Gods" due to its proximity to the Acropolis and its many archaeological sites. Even in those days, Athens was heavily polluted, and I remember that the smog was so thick at times that it made one's eyes burn.

Another place we enjoyed visiting was the Athens Flea Market. There were rows and rows of shops on the narrow street, and they carried everything imaginable. The owners would stand out front and try to get people to come into the shop and buy things. In those days, everyone bargained with the store owners and shopkeepers. Things could be bought at a fraction of the posted price. But many foreigners did not know how to bargain, so they paid full price.

Quite a few friends came to see us while we lived in Athens. There was an interesting day trip that we often carried them on while living in Greece. It was a nice boat trip out to the Greek Islands. It made stops on the islands of Mikonos, Poros, and Hydra. These islands were absolutely beautiful and everyone enjoyed seeing the whitewashed houses, beautiful sand, and clear water of the Aegean Sea.

On Easter morning, Cindy and I were surprised to walk out on the balcony of our Athens apartment and view the Voula Beach residential area. We could see that every house had a plume of smoke coming up from an outside grill where lambs were being prepared for the traditional holiday meal. We later learned that Easter is the biggest holiday in Greece, even bigger than Christmas. Later that day, about dark, we joined Ernie and Bev Valutis in a procession up to St. George's Church, located on the highest point in Central Athens. There was a single-file line of people, each person holding a lighted candle, as they slowly walked around the circular mountain trail before reaching the top. It was a beautiful sight.

Before long, we started thinking about our next teaching assignment. When my classes in Athens were almost finished, we arranged to get military orders for travel to Izmir and Karamursel, Turkey. Since there were very few military airplanes flying between Greece and Turkey, we were given tickets to fly on Turkish airlines from Athens to Izmir. At this point, the reader should understand that Greece and Turkey do not get along well with each other. They have had problems for hundreds of years and will probably continue to dislike each other. When we arrived at the airport in Athens and prepared to board the aircraft, I thought it to be a little strange that the Turkish plane did not taxi up to the terminal for boarding. We had to catch a bus and go quite a distance out on the airfield to board that Turkish Air airplane. Upon entering the aircraft, we noted that most of the people were dressed in Middle Eastern clothing and there was Islamic music being played on the intercom. It made both of us a little uneasy. We had never seen this sort of airline situation before.

When the airplane took off, we thought it strange that it took off so fast and climbed out at a steep angle. I remember looking over at Cindy, and it appeared as though both of us were in recliner chairs that were tilted back so that our knees were higher than our heads. I remember taking photos out the window as we climbed above the Port of Piraeus. The same scene just kept getting smaller and smaller which would indicate that we were flying almost straight up. Cindy was concerned at this point. We certainly had never seen anything like it before in a commercial airliner. Thank goodness that Izmir was not far away. About the time the pilot leveled off, he started down at an unusually steep descent. We later learned that Turkish Airlines recruited newly discharged military jet pilots, and they gave them very little civilian training.

When we arrived at Izmir, there were other things that seemed equally as strange as the short flight we had just experienced. We had just crossed over the line between Europe and the Middle East (or Asia Minor.) There were armed guards standing around in the old, seedy terminal building. They asked us to open our suitcases for inspection. I remember that while smiling at each other, the guards removed Cindy's clothes and undergarments from her suitcase and held them up as though they were examining each article. Then they went through our entire luggage with a fine tooth comb. They even asked to see what little items were taped inside of an onyx vase that Cindy was carrying. We were later told that flights coming in from Greece were checked more closely than others. The Turkish people apparently still did not trust anyone coming from Greece. Or perhaps they just wanted to hassle anyone who had been in Greece. That reception was probably similar and related to the earlier incident involving Turkish airplanes having to park far out on the Greek airport taxiway rather than at a gate.

When all of the airport formalities were finished, we were met by a nice American lady. I believe she was the wife of the Izmir education officer. She was carrying a one-gallon, plastic milk-jug filled with water, and she explained we should not consume the hotel water in the old Buk-Efezys Hotel. She went on to explain that we should not drink untreated water

in Turkey, and she showed Cindy how to make the tap water safe for consumption. She also showed us the location of other local military installations such as the commissary and the officers' club. I remember that the city smelled like a barnyard because there was a lot of horse manure in the streets. We stayed at the Buk-Efezys Hotel where I taught some weekend classes in Izmir.

On Monday, we caught a very nice motorcoach and traveled north towards Istanbul for about six hours to the small village of Karamursel. This village was on the Sea of Marmara across from Istanbul. At one point, we changed busses in Balikesir. We were now into May, and the weather was beginning to get rather warm in Turkey.

The cross country bus-ride gave us an opportunity to see the real Turkey. We were fascinated to see rural women dressed in all black Islamic clothing while bending over working in the fields. Men did not work in the fields, apparently. It seems that they could usually be found playing dominoes and sipping "chi," or as we call it—tea, at the village pubs. Our bus arrived at the Karamursel military base where we would live for two months. Our residence was a small mobile home with a larger room that had been built on the side of the "house trailer."

Living on a small military base in the middle of Turkey was not too exciting. However, we made friends with several students and their families that were Americans. The best ones were Wayne Goodman and his wife, Maria. They had a small son and his name was Chris. Wayne was from Tulsa, Oklahoma, and he was the base MWR (Morale, Welfare, and Recreation) officer. She was from a wealthy Italian background. We had dinner with them often, and it was usually a typical American backyard barbecue which we enjoyed.

I remember that on one occasion, Wayne asked me if we wanted to go out on a boat that they owned. Of course, we said, "yes." I remember that he drove for quite a few miles, and we parked the car near Canakkale, I think. There was a Turkish man sitting in a rowboat, waiting for us, and I thought to myself, "I hope that this is not the boat he was talking about." That small man was dressed in an old sea Captain's uniform. His name was Cadri, pronounced "Cad-ree." He paddled the loaded rowboat out to a very nice yacht. And we spent the weekend riding around in the perfectly clear waters of the Aegean Sea. Cadri caught and prepared fresh seafood at every meal, and we stopped to trade fish for cheese and bread with local people on some of the very small islands. It was a wonderful and memorable trip that neither of us will ever forget.

Cindy would go to the markets in Yalova with Maria. She would bring all sorts of fresh produce home. Interestingly, it had to be washed in water that contained a few drops of Clorox to make it safe for consumption. We also shopped for and bought a good number of copper and brass items to help furnish a home that we hoped to have someday. Those sorts of things in Turkey were rather inexpensive in those days. We also traveled from Yalova on a ferry across the Sea of Marmara into Istanbul with some of my students and saw many sights



while in the historic city that was once called Constantinople. This very large metropolitan area was at one time the imperial capital of the Roman Empire and, later, the Ottoman Empire. We went to the famous Grand Bazaar and bought a beautiful Russian samovar which we have kept for almost 42 years.

Back in Karamursel, I remember another purchase that was made for Cindy. One day, I was riding my bicycle on base and stopped by the officers' club. While there, I noticed a Turkish jewelry vendor in the lobby. I visited with him a few minutes, and he showed me some beautiful jewelry that I was certain Cindy would love to have. I picked out a ring and asked him to hold it until I could go and get her to come and approve my purchase. She came back with me, and I was pleased that she absolutely loved the ring. It is the beautiful "amethyst lantern ring" that she has worn for so many years and the one that consistently gets compliments, even today.

Our overseas trip was coming to an end, and we were sad about that. But we were anxious to get back to see the boys and to start our new jobs in Denton, Texas. We flew from Istanbul to Frankfurt where we waited a few days and then caught a military flight back to Washington DC. Cindy stayed with her parents a few days, and I went on down to Nashville where my parents picked me up at the airport. Cindy flew down later, and we started preparing for our move to Denton, Texas. Our dog "Peanut" had been killed while we were away. He ran in front of a car at my parents' old home place. That made us very sad.

Once we arrived in Denton, we soon found a nice apartment fairly close to Texas Woman's University where I would be teaching. Cindy was able to find a job teaching at the Denton State School. Her degree was in special education and this qualified her to work with handicapped children at a nice facility there just outside of the city. It was a good location for both of us, and it was fairly close to the boys. Additionally, it was the best paying job offer I received at the time. I remember that it paid \$17,500 per year.

The teaching job was a little different from others that I had held. My department head was a guy named Rusty Brunson, and we never got to know him very well. He was a retired Army officer, and he kept his distance from the faculty. Another difference was in the student profile. It was different because TWU was a woman's school, and women typically did not seriously pursue business positions back in those days. So my classes were small, and I had to teach a lot of class sections. Further, most of my peers were women, and I missed the comradeship that was usually present when working in a typical university setting. There was only one guy, and he was a "strange," accounting type. One of my students was Amy Griffin, and she lived with her husband next door in our apartment building. They were nice people. He was a lawyer, and he once hired me to consult with him on a wrongful death case. That was my first consulting job after getting my PhD, and I remember it well. Cindy enjoyed spending time with Amy Griffin.

Things went along well at TWU for about six or eight weeks. Then one night, I received a call from Jay, our youngest son. I had always taught both boys our telephone number and encouraged them to call if they needed me for anything. He was only seven or eight years old at the time, and he had never called me before, so I knew it was something important. I will probably never know whether or not his mother knew about the call. Anyway, he said, “Dad, I am having some problems with my teacher, and I wondered if you could come over here and talk with her.” I assured him that I would be there the next morning when he arrived at school. It was already about 9 p.m. when he called, and the drive over there would take about seven hours, so I would only be able to sleep for two hours before leaving.

After Jay and I finished talking on the phone, I called Glenda, another TWU teacher, to see if she could take my morning class so that I could make the trip over to Lubbock. She said that she would be happy to cover it for me. So about 1 a.m. in the morning, I left for Lubbock. As expected, I arrived at Hardwick School a few moments before Jay got there. I talked with his teacher, and we easily worked out the little problem, and I do not even remember what it was all about. The main thing was to let him know that we would always be there when he needed us. He was really happy that I came over. I was so pleased that he wanted my help and that he remembered our phone number. After stopping off at Jerry’s classroom to visit with him for a few moments, I started the drive back towards Denton which was now our home.

When I arrived at the campus and walked up the steps to my office, it was about two o’clock. The department head, Rusty Brunson, saw me come in, and he asked me to join him in his office. He closed the door and chewed me out royally for not calling him the night before instead of Glenda. He told me point blank that he was the department head and that he is the one that should handle situations like this. I told him that I did not want to bother him for such a small thing. I went on to tell him that I had been a professor for a few years and that I had never seen college teachers micromanaged in this way before. That pissed him off even more. I did not say another word before he dismissed me. I knew that I would need to find another job because I was certain that he would not recommend me for a second year contract at TWU.

I went home and told Cindy what had just happened and that I must now find a new job. She was upset and later told me that she was afraid that she had married a “job-jumper.” The next morning, I went across town to North Texas State University, a big doctoral granting institution. I went to the College of Business, Graduate Studies Office where I had two or three marketing professor friends. I asked them if they knew of any openings, and they directed me to a large and well-organized job file that was kept for their own doctoral graduates. Another thought came to mind when facing the reality of changing jobs. I must now do some research and get a few publications. That is really what makes one able to move to other positions in the college-teaching ranks. So I started thinking and working that

day on some possible publication topics. This new direction turned out to be one of the best possible moves that could enhance my future opportunities and academic net worth.

In that job file at NTSU, I saw two or three good job possibilities but one almost jumped off the page at me. It was an opening for a marketing professor at the University of North Alabama. There were several of my PhD friends who had become professors there after they finished at Arkansas. One was Mike Butler who was head of the Economics Department. I called Mike, and he was excited about the possibility of my applying for the UNA position. He talked to Barry Morris, another economics professor, and Barry quickly called to encourage me to apply for the position. Both of these friends talked with Bill Stewart, head of the Marketing and Management Department, and convinced him that I was the right one for the job. Then Bill called me, and we set the date for an interview which would take place over the Thanksgiving holidays. I decided not to mention my plans to anyone at TWU.

There were several good reasons why UNA appeared to be a good move for us. First, it was only a short distance from my aging parents' home and close to the place where I grew up. Second, UNA was starting a new MBA program, and they needed me and were willing to raise my pay to get me there. And third, there were several people on staff that I knew and liked. That meant that I would not need to associate with the likes of Rusty Brunson. But there was one big negative factor. It would be 950 miles to Lubbock, Texas, and it was essential that I travel to see the boys every month.

Cindy and I talked about it and debated the merits and the problems with this possible relocation. We decided to wait to see how the interview went. Our trip to North Alabama over the holidays went very well. I truly liked the situation, and they seriously wanted us to make the move. We brought the boys along and they liked the place as much as we did. We stayed at the old Holiday Inn and were able to arrange for a sitter to take care of the boys while we were at the interviews and at a party they threw for us. Cindy and I talked it over and decided to take the job, so we gave an affirmative answer on that very weekend. It continued to worry me that we would be so far away from the boys.

Following the Christmas holidays, I went back to work at TWU and quietly taught my classes and worked on several research projects. It was interesting that Rusty Brunson completely avoided speaking to me for several months. Around March 15, a new teaching contract for the following year came to my school mailbox. It was quite a surprise that they would offer a new contract. But it did not matter, as I had already accepted a position at UNA in Florence, Alabama.

I decided that I should probably talk to the TWU Provost and explain why I could not stay at Texas Woman's University. When I told him the full story, he thanked me and said that he would look into the situation. I walked back to my office. But on the way, I met Glenda, and she was headed towards the provost's office. Later I noticed that other members of the

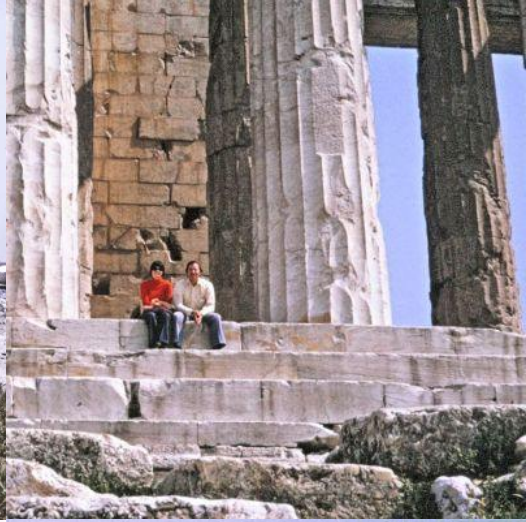
department were walking briskly in the direction of the main administration building. As it turns out, all of the others in my office had been treated in similar ways by Rusty Brunson, and they all told their stories to the provost. Rusty Brunson was dismissed as department head within the week. The Provost asked me if I was interested in the department head position. I told him, “no,” but I did help him find a replacement for Brunson.

I continued to work on two or three research projects while teaching my classes. As soon as the semester was finished at TWU in early May of 1974, Cindy and I rented a truck and moved our belongings to Florence, Alabama. The boys were with us, and we were all looking forward to spending a nice summer in our new hometown. And it turned out to be a great summer together.

(Pictures follow also see - <http://geraldcraw.net/>)









## Chapter 10 - Moving to Florence and Getting the Boys

When Cindy and I arrived in Florence, Alabama in May of 1975, we found a nice two bedroom apartment in Florendale Apartments. At that time, Helton Drive was basically a four lane gravel road that was being upgraded to become a main artery through the city. It was so dusty. The boys came with us to Florence, so that first summer was a busy one. We were very much involved in getting to know our new town and making new friends. Cindy was the true “soccer mom” that summer. She spent most of each day hauling the boys to and from swim class or baseball practice. She was also quite busy applying for teaching jobs with all of the local school systems. My new job was teaching three classes at UNA and trying to do a little research and writing.

Jerry was ten years of age, and Jay was almost nine during that first summer. Our apartment seemed pretty small by the time it was over. As a matter of fact, I started looking for a house while Cindy was visiting with her parents who had moved to Arkansas by this time. Mr. Crook had retired, and they were living temporarily in the old Crook farmhouse up in Pangburn. When Cindy returned to Florence, we continued searching for a house but could not find what we wanted. After she landed a job working at the mental health center, we decided that it would be financially possible to build a home that we liked. Eventually, we located a lot in Creekwood subdivision and a good builder, Ronald Warren. A contract was signed with him to build a nice 2000 square foot brick home at 113 E. Sandusky Way. We agreed to pay \$46,500 for the house and our payments were \$248 per month. I remember doing all sorts of calculations to determine whether or not we could really afford that house payment.

The boys turned out to be really good swimmers and won several ribbons at the Royal Avenue Recreation Center. I remember that they worked very hard to improve their swimming skills. They also played baseball, but neither of them really cared much for that activity. They made friends around the apartment complex and also spent time with Barry Morris’s boys. We made an effort to go to the farm regularly in order for my parents to see them while they were with us that summer. We tried our best to keep them entertained so that they would not feel bored. It was important for them to enjoy their time with us. We tried so hard, and I truly think they enjoyed being with us in Florence.

As the summer came to an end, the boys went back to Lubbock, and I think that Beverly had married another guy by this time. His name was Dennis, and he was a lawyer or a politician as I recall. We later learned that he was also a heavy drinker, according to Beverly. I remember that he did not get along very well with the boys. I cannot remember whether or not Jerry was still giving his mother a hard time. Cindy and I continued going to Lubbock on every possible occasion. Jerry was now in the fifth grade, and Jay was in the fourth grade.

It was in November when the Florence School System called Cindy about a possible teaching position at Brandon School. She was interviewed and subsequently hired as a special education teacher. We anxiously watched the ongoing construction of our new house and were very thrilled with the idea of having a place of our own. I borrowed \$5000 from my dad for the down payment, and we closed the deal and moved in during the Christmas holidays of 1975. It was so nice to have a quiet place and privacy that an apartment just could not offer. Creekwood subdivision in those days was considered to be an upscale neighborhood. The new two-car garage meant that we did not need to worry about the weather or about people stealing things from our car. Cindy now had a good job and needed transportation to get to her work. We soon bought a new 1976 Ford Pinto for about \$3600. This was the first time in our married lives that we actually owned two cars.

I wish that Cindy and I could have had a little daughter back then. Girls don't leave home the way boys do. But the main reason is that Cindy would have been such a fantastic mother. She told me that we already have two boys and that is enough responsibility. But I think the underlying reason was that she still saw herself as a long, stringy kid who did not have a happy childhood. She just did not want a daughter to go through that. She did not see the beautiful person that she turned out to be. When I hear the country music song "She don't know she is beautiful" by Allan Jackson, I always think about Cindy.

My work at the university was going well. I liked my classes and the students were very enjoyable. They were generally hard working, first-generation college students. The College of Business faculty was nice to me on the surface but generally somewhat aloof. I had earned a PhD and very few faculty members had terminal degrees in those days. So I guess that some were a little jealous about the degree and the fact that my salary was a good deal higher than theirs. Three faculty members without terminal degrees left the school and others kept me at arm's distance that first year until they saw that I was no threat to them. My department head was Bill Stewart, and he did not have his PhD. Perhaps my situation encouraged him to go back to school and finish his doctorate from the University of Mississippi.

Bill Stewart turned out to be one of the best friends that I have ever had in my entire life. For more than 30 years, we worked on projects together and traveled to more than 23 countries at one time or another. He continues to be one of the funniest people that I have ever known. And, 36 years later, in November of 2011, he hired me to teach on-line classes for him at the Mississippi University for Women.

The UNA president that hired me in 1975 was Robert M. Guillot, a political hack and insurance salesman from Birmingham. He was George Wallace's campaign manager and as a reward, the governor appointed Guillot to the UNA presidency. For some reason, he liked me back then and felt that I was one of his "boys." Maybe it was because I had worked for so many years as a salesman and sales manager. It is true that I did a lot of his bidding on

faculty issues in those days. That was probably another reason that the faculty kept me at arm's length. That first year he appointed me as Chairman of the Athletic Committee. Back then, I was his biggest supporter. I had joined UNA as an assistant professor with a promise that, if I did a good job, I would be promoted to associate professor at the end of my first year. Guillot liked my work, so he promoted me. I continued to work on research projects and do consulting jobs. Somehow there was time to write and publish several academic research projects and write cases that later appeared in college textbooks.

We looked ahead to the following summer when the boys would be with us in our new home. When they came, each one had their own room and plenty of stuff to keep them busy. Cindy and the boys continued to get along with each other so well. They just enjoyed being together. There were no "stepmother" problems here, and I never even heard that word used by her or by them. The boys continued with swimming teams and other planned activities. We bought a nice ski boat and both boys learned to ski. We took it out often, and they had many, many days of fun on that boat over the following years.

The boys made friends with some of the kids in our neighborhood. The summer of 1976 turned out to be the best time ever for all of us. I carried them to UNA as often as possible. Occasionally, they were allowed to sit in the back of my classes. They were very quiet and did not cause any distraction. Another thing that they liked was using those old computer card punching machines. Both boys enjoyed exploring the university and all of its attractions. They loved being in Florence, and there were never any significant problems that I can remember.

When it was time for their school in Lubbock to start, we were again sad to see them go back to their mother. There were indications that they did not care much for Dennis, Beverly's new husband. However, I did not hear about any major problems. Along about November, we received a telephone call from Beverly. She asked me if we "would like to have Jerry come live with us, and Jay later in May when school was out." I could not believe what she had just said! I nervously stammered and blurted out, "Of course we would love to have him." It was such a happy shock. But then I had a few seconds to absorb what she had just said, so I added, "I must go and check with Cindy first, but I am sure that she will say yes." So, I turned to Cindy and excitedly asked if it was okay, and she said, "Of course." I thought it would be a good idea for her to talk directly with Beverly, so I handed the telephone to her. Cindy overheard Jay in the background saying in a sad little voice, "But I want to go too." So Cindy asked Beverly, gently, if Jay could come at the same time with Jerry. There was a pause and then Beverly said, "Okay." I do not know exactly what else was said, but I felt so badly that I had not thought to ask for Jay and Jerry to come together. I probably was not thinking clearly because of the shock of that telephone call. I certainly wanted both of them and had dreamed about the day when they could come to live with us. That was one of the happiest days in my life, and I will never forget it as long as I live.

We knew that the boys liked it here and that they were not very happy in Lubbock, especially Jerry. Beverly also told me that she wanted to try and work out her situation with Dennis. I knew that some people might not understand why a mother would give up her children, and others would probably give her a hard time about letting the boys go to live with their dad. I believe that she was thinking about their best interests and not her own situation. Years later, I would learn that Beverly would not have let the boys come live with me if Cindy had not been a major factor in the equation. At least that is what she told me in 2011. Beverly seems to have always had a lot of respect for Cindy. In my opinion, it was and continues to be well deserved. Cindy should get an enormous amount of credit when one considers how well the boys have grown up. How many women would gladly accept, and even take great pleasure in, the monumental responsibility of raising two little boys that she did not bring into the world? As noted earlier, I had wanted the two of us to have our own child. On more than one occasion, her reply was "I have two now and that is about all that I can handle."

During the Christmas holidays of 1976, we met Beverly somewhere around Texarkana, Arkansas. She brought a large U-Haul trailer that was filled with their stuff. We hooked it to our station wagon and pulled it back to Alabama. The boys seemed to adjust quickly, and I know they were happy. We tried to follow a system that would be fair to them and to us. Cindy was the authority when dealing with household chores such as cleaning up their rooms, manners at the dinner table, and after school activities. And we tried to always be consistent in matters of schoolwork, expectations, and discipline. I always backed her up 100 percent. There were only a few little situations in the very beginning that had to be worked out, but Cindy and I always presented a unified front, and it seemed to have worked. They elected not to butt heads with the two of us.

We had a very special dog named Ruff that was given to us by Dr. Culver Ellis. The boys liked Ruff, but sometimes they wanted to do things without Ruff tagging along. Ruff seemed to attach himself to Jerry. He would complain that "Ruff keeps getting into my things, and he won't leave me alone." I had a talk with Jerry and told him that Ruff was lonesome and just wanted to be with someone he liked. I told Jerry that if he would invest a little time with Ruff, he would have the best friend anyone could ever have. Well, Jerry did that and the two of them became truly inseparable. Ruff looked up to Jerry, and they were always together with one exception. In the mornings when Jerry was still in bed, Jay would eat his cereal and then he would tap his spoon against the glass cereal bowl a few times. That was Ruff's signal to come get any leftover milk in Jay's bowl. Then he would lick Jay's hand. It was as if he was trying to say "thanks" before heading back to Jerry's bedroom.

Jerry was in the sixth grade that first year, and Jay was in the fifth grade at Forest Hills School. The boys knew that we wanted them to be happy and for them to do well in their new environment. They came through with good grades, and we told them that we were so very proud of them. Jerry's classmates called him "professor" because he was so smart, and he probably acted like a professor. Jay was a happy-go-lucky kid that got into a few scrapes

with other kids from time to time. Jerry often took care of Jay when he would get into trouble. The tough kids knew that they had to whip both of them if they messed with Jay. He was able to get away with more stuff than others who did not have a big brother. And Cindy did not want anyone mistreating those boys either. I recall an incident one day on the school bus when a big, fat, black girl threw Jay down and sat on his head. He came home all upset and told Cindy what had happened. She quickly loaded him into the car, and they followed the school bus. I guess they were waiting for the fat girl to get off. But she apparently hid under the seat and did not get off until the bus arrived back at the school. They had cooled down by then, so they just came on back home.

Jerry had always wanted to be a scientist or a doctor, so we now started taking his interests seriously, and we made sure that both of them had everything needed to advance their goals. I remember ordering a computer for Jerry. This is about the time that personal computers were just reaching the market. Jerry was the first one in town to have a personal computer. Jay was never quite sure what he wanted to do, but he continued to bring home good grades, so we did not worry. I just did not want either of them going into business or becoming a salesman like their father and grandfather. I was determined to help them because I knew that they could do better than we had done.

We always had dinner at a certain time, and Cindy expected us to sit down together and talk with each other as a family. It was hard for me to understand how Cindy was able to work all day, clean house, prepare meals from scratch, and be a great wife. She was a great mother to the boys and a wonderful wife, and I will always appreciate her hard work.

There was only one time that I saw Cindy upset with one of the boys. Jay had shot some kid with a BB gun, and his mother had called Cindy. She was so upset that she sent Jay to his room and called me at school. I came home and took Jay down to those people's house so that he could apologize.

Jerry never cared much for athletics other than swimming. He was a great swimmer when he was younger. He also enjoyed riding his bicycle, and he rode a lot with a friend named John. Sometimes they would go on rides as long as 50 or 60 miles. Jerry built up his legs and torso to the point that he looked very athletic and fit. And he liked to explore the area around Creekwood subdivision. His big interest was reading, so he could usually be found in his room reading on a wide range of topics. This was fine most of the time except when Cindy and I wanted to spend time together, alone. I remember telling Jerry to go outside and do things. I told him that fresh air was good for him. I do not know if he ever figured out why I sent him outdoors, especially on Sunday afternoons after church.

Jay, on the other hand, was an athletic kid. He liked to play football, basketball in the neighborhood, or swim. Cindy and I had always tried to discourage both boys from playing rough sports such football when they were in school. I knew what organized football can do

to a person. I still have several problems that were caused by old football injuries. And we did not care about the macho mentality that usually goes along with participation in contact sports. The boys seemed to go along with us on this subject, that is, until Jay entered the eleventh grade. More will be written about that later.

Jerry had a few misunderstandings with teachers and principals while he was in school. Readers will remember from earlier chapters that they were certainly not as bad as their father's many school problems. Jerry got into trouble at school for such things as throwing a paper wad that accidentally hit his "gifted" teacher. I never thought much of her anyway. There was another time when he copied test questions from the science teacher's answer manual and gave copies to fellow students. And there was another situation in which Jerry made some sort of explosive device in the science lab.

Jay had several friends in the neighborhood. One of them was Mike Canaday. Mike was always very nice and polite to us. But he was from a rough family and seemed to always stay in trouble. Cindy and I preferred that Jay not spend too much time around Mike. I talked to Jay about it a time or two but he always had good logical points of view that supported their relationship. One of his arguments went something like this: "But Dad, maybe I can have a good influence on him."

One evening after dinner, Jay told us that he was going down to Mike's house for a swim in their pool. About eight o'clock, I took our dog Ruff for a walk, and I decided to walk past Mike's house. I walked into their side yard and peered over the pool fence. Jay was on the diving board with a cigar in his mouth, and I think he was nude. Mike's sister was standing at the other end of the pool. I shouted over the fence for him to come home "now." I think that was about the last time I saw them together. After that incident, Jay could only keep company with Mike at our house, which became more infrequent as time passed. Poor Mike, he went on to have so many problems while growing up.

Another problem kept coming up in Jerry's classes over the years. He wanted to read novels or whatever in his classes while the teachers were teaching. Even though he made excellent grades, teachers do not like this sort of behavior. It is disrespectful and sets a bad example for other students who do not have the sort of brainpower needed to read and listen to a chemistry lecture at the same time. Cindy had several parent-teacher conferences about this habit of his. In spite of all these situations, which were not all that bad, in my opinion, Jerry made good grades in school. He also started working at Chick-fil-A. He earned all his own spending money, and he always smelled like fried chicken when he came home from work. There were no questions about him being a hard worker, and everyone always liked him at Chick-fil-A and later at the hospital or wherever he worked.

Jay seemed to "go with the flow" while he was in school. He later ran around with some good kids in school, and I think this helped him stay out of trouble. There was a situation at



Forest Hills School where some of his classmates claimed that he had stolen an arrowhead the teacher had passed around. Jay said that he had arrowheads at home and that he did not have any reason to steal it. Mr. Parker, the school principal, called me about it. I told Mr. Parker that Jay had never lied to us before. Also, we made it clear that we would support whatever discipline that he felt was appropriate. After interrogation by Mr. Parker, the boys who accused Jay finally admitted that one of them had dropped the arrowhead behind a radiator and had wrongfully blamed our son.

Jerry read all of the time, and we encouraged that behavior. He knew a lot about many things, and Jay had to study some in school to keep up with his brother. But Jay was also a fast learner. They were well-rounded and well-mannered boys, and we were proud of their behavior and their many accomplishments.

I vividly remember the time when I truly realized what great potential they both possessed. Jerry was probably in the eighth grade, and Jay was in the seventh grade. They casually brought home little printed pieces of paper that showed scores on some major achievement tests that they had taken in school. Both boys had just thrown them on the kitchen table with the day's mail. I did not know what those pieces of paper were so I looked over them and then it hit me like a ton of bricks. Both had achievement scores in the higher 90<sup>th</sup> percentile on every subject. It was then that I realized that they could do anything. At that point, Cindy and I started paying closer attention to their academic work and performance, hoping to keep them on track to someday achieve big things. We slowly started expecting more and more from them. Now, many years later, I wonder if I did not expect too much from them, particularly Jerry.

There was a time, about 9 o'clock one Sunday night, when Jay announced that he had a term paper due the next day. I asked him why he waited so late to get started on it. He gave me his explanation. He said that he had only contracted for a "B" and therefore did not need to put a disproportionate amount of time on the assignment. My first question was "Why did you contract for a B?" I told him that we tried our best to be "A" parents and that we expected him to try and be an "A" student. Then I told him that "We didn't want B's around here; we want A's." I learned later, in 2011, that Jay remembered that encounter and that it may have made an impact on him.

We taught the boys how to smile and shake hands and to make eye contact when they were introduced to others. We also tried to teach them to be courteous and to practice the art of being good listeners and good conversationalists. We taught them to say "yes sir" and "yes ma'am" rather than "yeah" and "nah." Cindy also stressed the importance of being positive and the importance of thanking people when they do nice things for you. I always expected them to thank Cindy at the end of each and every meal. And they were so good about doing that. Compared to other kids, Jay and Jerry stood out from the crowd—they were special and others came to recognize it.

It was during this period of time that Cindy and I noticed that our boys were different from most of our friends' kids. We noted that most kids do not seem to rise above mediocrity. This was true with several other families that we knew. Most parents simply did not have high expectations and were not consistent. And most parents, in my opinion, simply give their kids everything and asked for nothing in return. A good example of this was my good friend, Jim Burney. He was a great guy, and we did so many things together. Jim and Patsy Burney had a son named Darwin. I always thought that he was a little bit spoiled. His parents catered to his each and every whim. He dropped out of college his first semester. Soon after that, my relationship with Jim cooled off, and I asked his wife if I had done something to offend him. Jim called me and explained that he was just jealous of the way our sons were turning out. It was true that we were very proud of them and perhaps I talked too much about their many accomplishments. I started making a conscious effort not to tell people so much about them. And I still try to do that today.

I remember when Jerry was probably 13 or so, the two of us had been secretly going to the paved driver's education course down on Cox Creek Boulevard. I had been trying to teach him how to drive a car. We didn't tell Jay because he might feel left out, and I also wanted it to be a surprise for Cindy. After five or six visits there, Jerry had learned quickly. He could handle my straight shift Pinto and could parallel park about as well as anyone. Shortly after that, the boys' mother came to Florence to see them, so I thought it would be fun for Jerry to take her for a ride around the driving course. Without telling anyone where we were going, I loaded the boys into the Pinto and asked Cindy and Beverly to follow us to the driving range. When we reached it, I got out of the Pinto and invited Jerry to take his mother for a ride. He smiled and confidently drove her around the range several times, and he was very proud of himself. His mother was impressed, and Jay simply could not understand how Jerry actually knew how to drive a car. When the ride was finished, I casually asked Jay if he was ready to take her for a spin. Jay nervously said, "I do not know if I can do it or not but I am ready to try." Then we told him that Jerry had been practicing for weeks and that I now would teach him how to drive. He was pleased and somewhat relieved.

When Jay turned sixteen, after he had learned to drive, he decided that we should give him a Porsche. He said that all of his friends had cars and that he deserved one because he made good grades and did not do drugs. We told him that we could not afford that sort of thing. And we tried our best to keep straight faces about this while advising him to get a job and make some money so that he could buy things for himself. We promised to help him by matching his saved dollars, so he could buy a car at a later time. The next day he went out and found a job at the roller skating rink. He kept that job for three or four years. That skating experience, I suspect, later helped him to become a very accomplished snow skier.

I can remember one time when Jay got into a little trouble. He told us that he was going out with some of the guys that he worked with at the skating rink. I somehow sensed that there would be a problem so I waited up for him to come home. When that small pickup truck

pulled into the driveway at about 2 o'clock in the morning, I peeked out of the window and saw two guys helping Jay walk while they brought him to the door. This was Jay's first and only time to ever come home drunk. I thanked those boys for bringing him home and then I walked him straight out the back door to our garage. I opened up one of the overhead garage doors to get some fresh air. Then I unfolded a recliner type lawn chair and told him that he would need to sleep here. I explained that we did not want him throwing up in the house. It was cool outside and dark, so I suggested that we walk down our street and back to help him sober up. After one trip with him, I told him to keep walking until he felt better. Then I went to bed. I know that he will never forget that experience.

By this time, both boys were attending Bradshaw High School. Jerry had finished his freshman year, and Jay was preparing to enter the ninth grade. Jerry worked at Chick-fil-A at the Mall, and Jay worked at the Skate Center near the Mall. Both boys were earning some pocket money and more importantly, they were learning how to work and be successful.

We had a 1986 VW Rabbit Diesel car, and they were allowed to use it for dates and other important events. We did not just give them a car as so many parents did in those days. One reason was that a car was quite expensive. The main reason was that we did not feel that they should be given expensive things like that without earning money and paying for some of it themselves. Another reason was that having a car and being free to go wherever and whenever they wanted to go seemed to be a bad idea, an invitation for potential danger and trouble. This is the way Cindy and I were raised, and it just seemed like the right thing to do.

It was during this period of time that we had a disagreement. The conversation was with the boys about them doing various chores. Maybe it was about having a car. I cannot remember the specific details, but they did not agree with the outcome of our talk. Jay was not happy, but he did not openly complain. Jerry, however, clearly did not like the decision we had made. He told me that we were not being fair. I did not have time for a long discussion at that moment because I had to go to work. Jerry told me that he did not agree with the way we were handling the situation. I recall telling him that "this is the best way that I know to handle the problem." I went on to say "when you have children, you can do it your way. But, for now, this is the way I think is best." In conclusion, I asked them to please go along with me on our decision. They cooperated, but it caused me to wonder if we were doing the right thing. Maybe it would have been better to do it their way. Someday they would have children and then would see how hard it is to bring them up and keep everyone happy.

There was one funny situation involving a girl at Bradshaw. Her name was Carol Parrish. Cindy remembers that both boys had thoughts about asking her out but were hesitant because she was a very popular cheerleader. Finally, Jay told Jerry that if he was not going to ask her out, then he (Jay) was going to try. She accepted Jay's invitation, and it sort of shocked Jerry. On the night of the date, they had fun but went home early. She was a Church of Christ member and could not go to dances. Later that evening, Jay took some other gal to the

homecoming dance. I do remember that both boys depended on Cindy for advice about girlfriends and dating. Both of the boys were handsome and had no problems finding girlfriends. Their only problem was one that all young men seem to have—not having enough self-confidence to ask the good looking ones out on dates. Jerry, later, had two girlfriends as I recall. I do not know which one came first, Judy or Lee. I think it might have been Lee, because he was still involved with Judy at the end of his sophomore year.

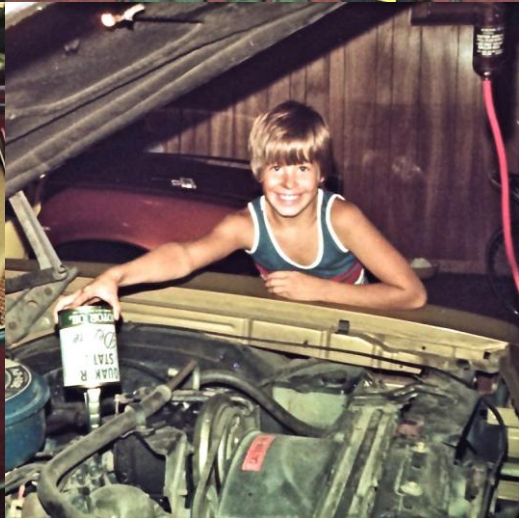
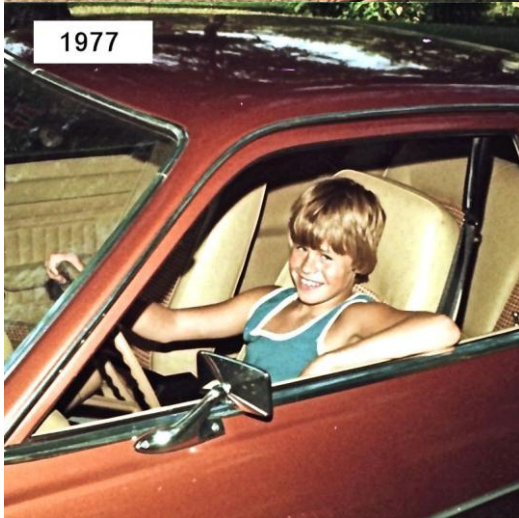
The boys went to Cleveland, Mississippi for a few weeks during the early summer of 1981. I think that their mother was there with them for that period of time. And they may have gone to summer school that year. I cannot remember specific reasons, but they seemed to have enjoyed it. After coming home, it was now time to start thinking about the coming school year, and it would be a truly memorable one. It would take place in Europe!

(Pictures follow also see - <http://geraldcraw.net/>)

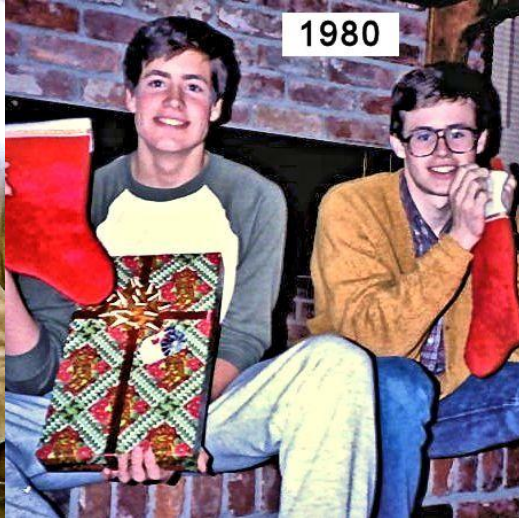
1976



1977









## Chapter 11 – Our Year in Europe (1981-1982 School Year)

One very special and unforgettable period of time enjoyed by our family was the year that we spent together in Europe. This memorable experience began at an academic conference in Atlanta, Georgia in March of 1981. I had written a research paper, and it had been accepted at the last minute by the American Marketing Association. I remember arriving in Atlanta and making my presentation. Afterwards, I was sitting in the bar with several friends having a drink. I had not made my hotel reservation and was concerned that it might be hard to get one at such a late date. One of my friends, Mike Butler, I think, told me that his friend, Don Hinds, had a double room and probably would not mind if I stayed in the room with him. I met Don and he said that I was welcome to stay in his room.

After meeting Don Hinds, we talked in the bar, and I learned that he was in charge of their newly acquired military MBA program at Troy State University. He mentioned that someone had told him that I was once the administrator when the program was operated by the University of Arkansas. He asked me several questions, and I was happy to tell him what I knew. During our time together, he asked me if I would like to go back to Europe and teach for a year. I told him that I was very interested but probably could not get a leave of absence from UNA. There had been another UNA professor, earlier, that had asked to go overseas for a year, and he had been turned down by President Robert Guillot. That professor resigned from UNA and went overseas anyway. His name was Ed Merkel, and he was a fine UNA professor.

When I returned to Florence after the Atlanta conference, it was hard to get the possibility of a European trip out of my mind. Cindy and I agreed that it would be the trip of a lifetime for the boys. After giving it more thought, I decided to give it a try. The next steps were to develop a strategy, figure out the details, and then make an appointment with the UNA president. I had to have his approval or the plan would not work. When I decided to approach him with my plan, we met in his office. I viewed our meeting as a sales presentation.

I first went over all of the projects that I had successfully handled for him during the previous six years, one at a time. With each one I would ask “Do you remember that one?” At the end of my list, I said, “And now, Dr. Guillot, I need your help on something that is very important to me and to my family.” I went on to tell him that “it might even save money for the University.” Further, I told him “it would make me a better teacher.” He then asked “For God’s sake, what is it?” I asked him for a leave of absence so that I could teach in Europe for a year. He said okay at that point, and I thanked him and asked if I could have Nancy, his secretary, draw up a short note for his approval. He called her into his office, and I left with that signed note. Later, he tried to back out of our deal but couldn’t because of his signed document. He was never friendly with me after we returned from our trip. He became a big problem for the school as he grew older and more arbitrary. As a matter of fact, I later helped

lead a movement among the faculty calling for a vote of confidence on President Guillot. He lost and resigned the presidency.

My pay for the year overseas would only be \$12,000 which was about half of what I normally made. Additionally, Cindy would not be working over there so that income would be lost. We really did not have any savings at that point, so it was going to be financially difficult. So this was the financial plan I developed. Basically, we would rent out our house, sell the new Oldsmobile, and cash-in all of my life insurance policies. One good point worth mentioning was that we would not need to pay any income taxes if we stayed out of the USA for 330 days. Once we got overseas, everything would be closely budgeted. I signed the contract with Troy State University, and we started working on the many, many details of the trip.

Our academic schedule called for three months in each of four locations in different countries: Zaragoza, Spain; Athens, Greece; Mildenhall, England and Kaiserslautern, Germany. The boys would complete their school year in military DOD schools in Spain, England and at ACS, an international private school in Greece. Jerry would be in his junior year and Jay would complete his sophomore year while overseas. All of us were so excited about living in foreign countries for such a long time. That is something very few people ever get to do. While we were there, that year, the boys made 24 audio tapes that were sent to their mother. I wanted her to know that the boys were safe and that they were enjoying the trip. I still have those tapes and occasionally listen to them. Those were some wonderful memories.

We left from Muscle Shoals on August 22, 1981 and flew to New York and on to Madrid, Spain. We changed planes there and traveled on up to Zaragoza. We were met by a lady from the Air Force education office at the base. She carried us to our new apartment so we could drop off our luggage. It was on the ninth floor of a big apartment complex in the city and she then took us to dinner at a nearby tavern. I remember that the food was good, but the tavern experience was something that the boys had never seen. I remember that there were several cats running around in that tavern. It was called "El Gato."

After the meal was finished at about eleven o'clock, she asked us if we knew how to get back to the apartment, and we told her "yes." After she left, there was a big problem. Our key did not fit the front door, and we could not get into the building. We fooled around with that situation for at least an hour before realizing that we were at the wrong building. There were three big tall apartment buildings that all looked the same. We finally got in bed after missing one full night's sleep on the airplane and half of another night trying to get into the apartment in Zaragoza.

Our apartment *portero* was named Enrique, and he was such a great guy. He could not speak English and frequently laughed at our terrible Spanish language skills. He helped us in so many ways. There was an incident with my ham radio antenna and another one with the grill

out on our ninth floor balcony. Then there was another time when Jay had a kitchen explosion while trying to light the flash hot water heater. Enrique helped us negotiate with the other people in the apartment who spoke no English. But, of course, he did not speak English either. We supplied him with free, black market cigarettes from the military base.

The apartment was not like any we had ever seen before. The décor was so typically Spanish. It had red flock wallpaper and very few of the electrical sockets worked. We also had a flash water heater, a propane cook stove, and strange blinds over the outside windows and doors to keep the sand out when the high winds blew. Zaragoza is actually on the edge of the desert, and it is hot and dry. There were no English speaking people in our building or even in that part of town. Cindy and the boys really learned a great deal of Spanish while we were there.

On this trip, Jay decided to change his name. He had been reading some book. I think it was the Preppy Handbook. He never told us that he was changing his name. Anyway, one day on the base, one of my adult students asked me if I knew a new kid by the name of Skip Crawford. I told him that I did not know him. Then two other people asked me if I knew Skip Crawford, and I told them that I did not know anyone with that name. Then a day or so later, I was talking with a student at the base and saw Jay at a distance. The guy I was talking with asked me if that was my son, and I said, “yes.” Then he said, “Skip is a nice boy.” Then I realized that I did have a son named “Skip.” For a year his name was Skip, and after we returned to Florence, he went back to Jay.

While in Zaragoza, we were able to take a lot of good sightseeing trips to nearby places. We went on a long weekend trip to the small country of Andorra which is in the Pyrenees Mountains on the border between France and Spain. That was a place none of us will ever forget. On another long weekend trip, we took a bus down to Barcelona and the suburban village of Sitges, also known as the “Spanish Riviera.” It was a fine trip, and the boys found the topless beaches very interesting. Cindy and I made another nice trip to Pamplona, San Sebastian and Pau in Southern France with Bob and Diana Cupp. In San Sebastian, we stayed in a very famous castle, Parador De Hondarribia San Sebastian. It was the place where Christopher Columbus stayed while asking Queen Isabella to support his exploratory trip to the new world. The boys stayed at the military base and played golf while we were traveling with the Cupps.

There was a time when a tough Spanish boy in Jerry’s class started picking on him at the DOD school. He harassed Jerry for no good reason, and they may have even gotten into a scuffle or two. Jerry never knew about it, but one day when I was at the school, I saw this kid. I quietly whispered in his ear that I would beat his ass if he ever touched my son again. He gave me his word that he would not bother him again.

There was another interesting situation that occurred at the DOD school. One of the boys’ teachers believed in the idea of Communism, so I offered to debate him in front of his

classes. He took me up on it, and I think I may have won that debate. I cannot remember, but I am sure the boys would remember. They were very proud of their father. I do remember that part of it.

When our time was finished at Zaragoza, we said goodbye to Enrique and caught a commercial flight down to Madrid and another one over to Rome. We spent a few days in Rome on a mini-vacation. While there, we saw all of the sights, the Coliseum, Amphitheatre, the Vatican, Trevi Fountain, Hadrian's Castle, and the Catacombs. The streets of Rome are so colorful and interesting. One can see almost anything—from street people to movie stars. The mornings smelled of rich dark espresso coffee and fresh baked pastry rolls. The evening sounds included wine glasses clinking-together and being filled with red wine from the nearby vineyards at local sidewalk cafes.

There was one funny incident that happened at the Bramante Hotel, our little two story hotel in Rome. We were up late one night, seeing the sights, so we had wanted to sleep late the following morning. There was some guy that pulled his car into the alley just below our room at about six in the morning and proceeded to play his car stereo very loudly while he waited for someone. I got up and looked for something to throw out of my window at his car. The car was almost straight down, so he would not be able to see who threw the object. Jerry, Jay, and Cindy were all now awake, but they did not know that I had already found a nice new bar of soap to throw. I let it go with all of my strength, and it made a loud thump when it hit the roof of his fancy car. I moved back behind the curtain so that I could see him but he could not see me. He jumped out of that car and was mad as hell! But after looking around, he finally crawled back in and turned his damn stereo off.

We left Rome from Leonardo da Vinci Airport and flew to Athens, Greece. I remember that we arrived at the Athens airport and then caught a taxi. For some reason, we stopped in Glyfada, a small community near our apartment. Jerry looked around at all of the signs in Greek and said, "They must have a lot of fraternities around here." I thought that was so funny. Then we went on to our apartment in Voula Beach and were very pleased with our new living quarters. It was about two blocks from the Mediterranean Sea and about five blocks from the Officers' Club. Cindy and I had lived in that same suburban Athens neighborhood about eight years earlier, and we had loved the place. So we knew that the boys would love it also.

This is about the time that Jerry quit writing to his girlfriend in the USA. I think her name was Judy. In Greece, he found other girls that he liked. One was a beautiful Middle Eastern girl, and I think her father was the Saudi ambassador to Greece. Jerry enjoyed learning about different cultures. There was one memorable evening when he was invited to her house for a birthday party, I think. A chauffeured, Mercedes limo picked him up. He said the house was pretty fancy and that they had a bowling alley in the basement.

While living in Athens, there were several American guests that came to see us. We all were happy to see my sister Joan and her family. The boys enjoyed spending time with Jimbo. It was near Christmas, and I remember that we had a little dried-out Christmas tree that we brought from the base. It wasn't much, but we decorated it, and it served our needs. Christmas is not such a big event for Greek people, and Christmas trees are not readily available to them. Easter is the big holiday with the predominance of their Greek Orthodox religion.

There was a time when Cindy and Jay took the Pritchett's out on a full-day cruise to the Greek Islands. As mentioned earlier, money was scarce while we were overseas. On the cruise ship, Cindy was buying lunch for herself and Jay, and she didn't really have enough money. Water was one dollar per bottle and beer was only 25 cents per bottle. So, she bought two bottles of beer and told Jay that he had better not tell anyone. He never told anyone that I know about. Of course, there was no legal drinking age in Europe, anyway.

Both boys had a good time at the International School in Greece. It was a quality school with a fine reputation. I remember that we gave Jay a nice combination radio and tape player for Christmas. When school resumed after the holidays, he said that he was going to take it to school, and I told him that it might get stolen. Well, he took it to school anyway and sure enough, it got stolen. I hoped that he would learn that people will get your stuff—because they will. I think we got another one for him later when we traveled on to Germany. Both boys spent a good part of their free time in Athens at the Officers' Club, playing those video games. They also spent a lot of time reading and that was good.

When it was time to leave Athens, we knew that our travel year was about half over at this point and that was a little sad. This time we were moving to Mildenhall and Lakenheath, England. We were able to get a ride in a visiting general's C47 airplane. It had been nicely remodeled, and we enjoyed the trip, even though it was slow compared to modern jets. Once we got to England, we bought a small, used, Ford Pinto, station wagon for \$850 from an American who was leaving that base. We drove that thing everywhere. The boys rode the school bus to and from school which was located on the base in Lakenheath. I remember that Air Force jets took off and landed each day from an airstrip right next to their school. The teachers learned to stop whatever they were saying or doing for a few seconds and then resume as soon as the jet fighters passed overhead.

We actually lived in the village of Isleham which was only 20 minutes or so by car to Mildenhall and 30 minutes or so to Lakenheath where the boys attended school. Our house was a little, two-story, single family home and was very adequate for our purposes. Outside there was a small barnyard with goats and maybe a donkey and some chickens. The village had a combination post office and convenience store, a garage, and a pub. There was a big, old church with a cemetery and a historic priory located across the street. To reach Isleham, it was necessary to drive across the fen which was a low lying, flat, inland delta area. Local

farmers grew wonderful vegetable and flower crops there. It was 13 miles from Cambridge where we regularly went sightseeing and shopping.

There was a TV in our house that we watched occasionally in the evenings. I remember that on certain nights each week a program would be shown on TV that was a little embarrassing for us to watch when the boys were sitting in the room with us. It was a working class soap opera entitled "A Different Kind of Loving." The leading actress always found some excuse to take off her top and bra at least once during the program. And the conversation was also a little too risqué for parents and kids to watch together. So when that program came on TV, the boys or their parents would usually leave the room.

Something memorable happened while we were at Isleham, and it was on National TV all day, every day, for months. There was an Argentine Military General named Galtieri who was the senior member of the military junta in power in Argentina at the time. He needed more public support, so he decided to invade the Falklands, a small group of islands about 300 miles east from the lower mainland coast of Argentina. Britain had considered the Falklands to be a part of their empire since 1833, but Argentina had some vague previous claim to the place they called "The Malvinas." Galtieri thought he would just invade, and the British would not send troops 8000 miles to retake the land. He was wrong. The British kicked their butts and retook their land. Galtieri was sent to prison and died in 2003.

We took a wonderful motorcoach trip to Scotland while living at Isleham. We signed up for the tour through the base Morale, Welfare, and Recreation office, so all of the travelers on the trip were Americans. The tour began after we caught a fast train from London to Carlisle. Then we boarded a fancy motorcoach that carried us all around Southern and Central Scotland, the Loch Ness area, and Fort William. We stayed several nights in a hotel located in the small village of Dalmally. Jerry and Jay met some girls and spent a good bit of time with them in the local area. On this trip, I learned more about the history of the Crawford name. Interestingly, the Crawford Clan was centered in the Dalmally regional area. I met several Crawford people there.

There was one other big week-long trip that we enjoyed. It was also a motorcoach tour, this time to Ireland. We caught the tour bus at Mildenhall with thirty or so American military people and drove to Liverpool. Then we crossed the Irish Sea to Dublin on a big ferry boat. We spent time in Dublin, Kilkenny, Waterford, Cork, Killarney, and Limerick. The boys kissed the Blarney Stone at Cork, and we stayed in an old castle in Limerick.

We traveled to other areas and did more than our share of sightseeing while in England. We once drove over to the east coast on the North Sea. There we watched fishermen bring their large cod fish ashore. That day, we went to a small restaurant nearby and ate fish and chips. Fish and chips turned out to be our favorite food, as I remember. One night each week, the



fish and chips wagon would come to Isleham, and we would buy fish and french fries wrapped in newspapers.

London was also a favorite place to sightsee, and we went there as often as possible. We saw the play *Grease* (or was it *Jesus Christ Superstar*?). Later, while in London, we went to see the movie *Reds*. The boys were amazed when it was time for an intermission; ushers came around and sold biscuits (cookies) and alcoholic drinks to people. And people were allowed to smoke in their seats. I am sure that has all changed by now. We would also go to Speaker's Corner and watch so many goofy people get up on their soap box and talk about all sorts of crazy things. We also enjoyed going to Harrods Department store which at one time was the most famous department store in the world. We also enjoyed riding the Tube in London and going to Hyde Park. London in those days was so civilized. Unfortunately, London has changed over the years and now seems to be made up of Indians, Pakistanis, Africans, and other assorted developing country expatriates.

When our three months were concluded in England, the boys actually finished up their school year. I remember waiting for them outside of their school at Lakenheath with everything packed up in our little, light blue, Ford Pinto, station wagon. It was now time to drive to Kaiserslautern, Germany for my final classes before returning to America. We drove to the city of Harwich, England on the North Sea to catch a ferry and cross 128 miles of water to Hook Van Holland in the Netherlands. It was an overnight ferry, so we all slept in a small cabin aboard the large ferry ship. Early the next morning, we went to our car to exit the ship. I remember driving off the ramp and into the left hand lane of a narrow road. But the Dutch people do not drive on the left, so Cindy and the boys shouted "get over" when they saw a car coming straight ahead. I had gotten so accustomed to driving on the "wrong side" of the road that I had to start thinking differently or have an accident. That Pinto had the steering wheel on the right hand side because it was British, so when I drove on the European mainland, the driver is on the right hand side of the car looking into the ditch, like American post office delivery vehicles.

I did not plan adequately for this trip to Germany. We did not have any Dutch money or any German money. And there was another problem, I had hoped to make it to K-Town on one tank of gas but that turned out to be 514 miles. Credit cards were not used as widely back then. The Dutch did take our American dollars for food along the expressway, but the big service stations in Germany would not take it. Finally, we were on empty, and I found a small gas station. The man did us a favor and took our American money. We could then get to K-town before dark.

Our apartment in Germany was actually in Einsiedlerhof which was down from Vogelweh on the main road named Kaiserstrasse. It was a second floor apartment located over a store of some kind, maybe a small grocery store. The living quarters were larger and nicer than our three previous places. We also had some visitors while we were in Kaiserslautern. We carried

them sightseeing all around Southwestern Germany in that little Pinto. And there were some wonderful woods behind our apartment. We would walk for hours in the deep, evergreen forests. One unique activity that the boys enjoyed was riding in our car along Kaiserstrasse towards the shopping center at Vogelweh and watching the prostitutes all lined up pretending to be hitchhikers wanting a ride. I think Jerry, or maybe it was Jay, who wanted to take a photograph of them as we drove past. When he leaned out the window with his camera to take a photo of a “hitch-hiking” prostitute, she smiled and gave him the finger.

There was another difficult situation that I had to deal with while we were in Germany. I applied to get a base sticker on the car but learned that the car had to be inspected by the German Civilian Auto Inspection Bureau. Upon taking it to the inspection station, I found that it had to have emergency flashers before they would issue an inspection sticker. This car was made before flashers were required on all cars. After pricing a flasher system, it appeared to cost more than the car was worth. But I did remember each step in the inspection process, and it seemed possible to get around the system. I decided to give it a second try. During the second actual inspection, when the inspection man was standing in front of the car, he asked me to turn on my right blinker, then the left blinker, then the flashers. When he was behind me, he asked me to go through the same procedure, except he had me additionally tap the brakes so he could check the brake lights. So now, on that second attempt, when the man was in the front, I had to manually turn my parking lights on then off with perfect timing in order to simulate flashers. And in the back, I had to manually press my brakes with perfect timing to simulate flashers. It worked! I got a sticker, and we were able to get on the base, and more importantly, we could sell the car when it was time to go home.

One night each week, I taught a class up in the mountains at Hahn Airbase about 90 miles from where we lived. On one occasion, Jerry went with me to Hahn. On our way back home about 10 at night, the old Pinto station wagon developed a problem. It heated up and blew out a water hose. When it happened, we could not see to try and repair the problem, so Jerry and I just decided to park the car under a bridge and sleep in it.

The next morning, we looked under the hood and confirmed the overheating problem. We then started walking, hoping to find a service station or some place we could buy a water hose, a pair of pliers, and a screwdriver. As we walked along the road beside a tall chain link fence, Jerry said, “Dad, look at that fence.” There was a hole in it. It looked like it might be a US Military base. So we walked through the vine covered hole in the fence and sure enough, there was a large US Military base hidden away. We found the mess hall and had breakfast then asked one of the NCO’s about a water hose. He said, “Sure, we have plenty of them. Just go around the building, and you will see quite a few old scrap cars. Just cut off what you need.” We borrowed some tools and made the repair and were on our way home in a short time. Since that time, I have researched and found that the base was called Baumholder, and it is currently an infantry brigade base.

We also had several USA visitors while in Germany. Juanita and Ben Dunn spent a few days with us, and we showed them around. At the end of their visit, I remember dropping them off in Bernkastel-Kues up in the mountains. It was such a beautiful place. That was the time when I sat down with Jay for lunch, and we enjoyed our first beer together. There was no legal drinking age in Europe, and he thought he was all grown up, I am sure.

Cindy and I were a little concerned that the boys would get bored while we were in Germany. They were out of school but could not work because they were not military dependents. So we started trying to think about something they could do to stay busy and something that they might really enjoy. I believe that I was the one that noticed an announcement on one of the bulletin boards at the dependent school where I taught at Vogelweh. It told all about a "Project Bold" program offered by the DOD school system. It was similar to the famous Outward Bound program in that it was an outdoor education program built around survival training and confidence building.

The Project Bold program was exclusively for overseas DOD students. The training took place at Hinterbrand Lodge in the mountains of Southern Germany. It sounded really exciting, so we talked with the boys about it, and they seemed very interested. After they did some research of their own and thought about it, they seemed anxious to participate. We had to get several required items for them, including some expensive wool hiking pants. Since our little Pinto was about worn out, we rented a nice Alfa Romeo car from the base and took them to Berchtesgaden, near Hitler's Eagles Nest, and they checked in for the three or four-week program. It is not easy to see your two sons go off on a challenging trip like that in a foreign country. But we knew that we had to let them grow up and be on their own someday. They had train tickets for their return to Kaiserslautern, and there was only one required train change, as I remember.

Lonnie and Julie Crook also came to see us in Kaiserslautern. They stayed with us a few days then caught a train to Salzburg where we later met them after dropping the boys off at Berchtesgaden. The four of us toured Austria and Switzerland for a week or more and had a terrific time. Cindy was so happy to see Lonnie and his wife and to spend time with them. We saw them off in Lucerne. We said goodbye on the famous foot bridge across Lake Lucerne in the center of the city. Cindy was sad to see them leave for the USA. She really missed seeing her family for such a long time.

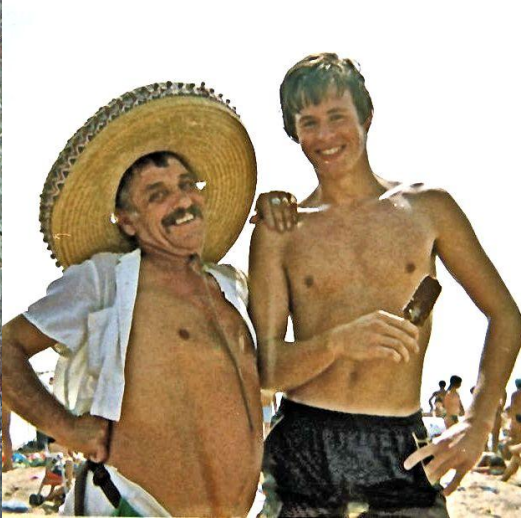
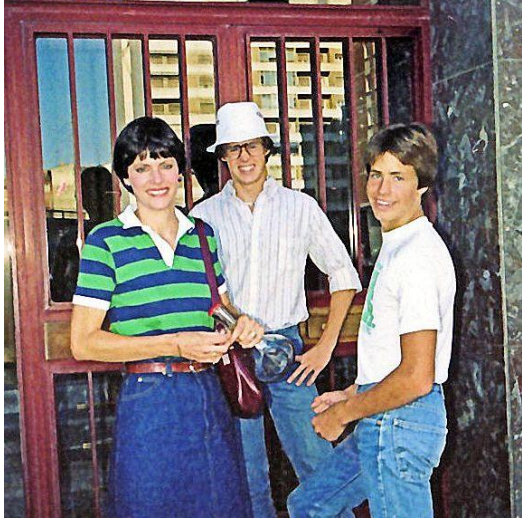
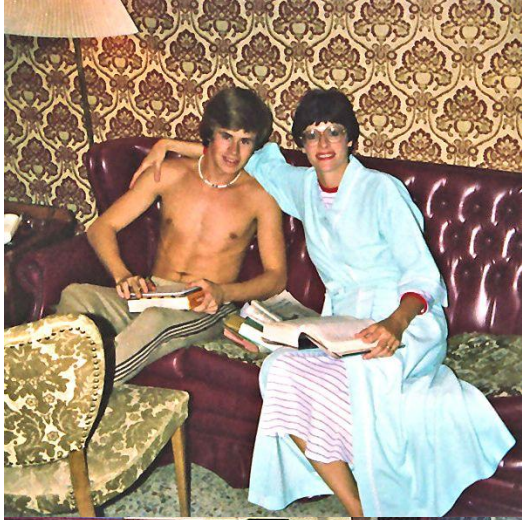
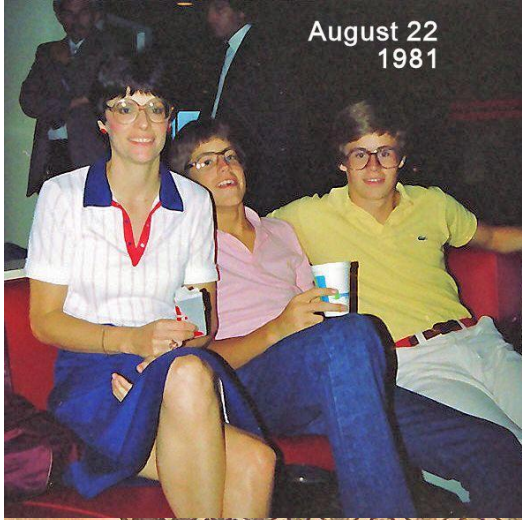
When the boys returned to our place in Kaiserslautern, their faces were so brown from being outdoors the whole time. And they had a lot of good stories. We heard some tall tales that would have caused us to worry had we known what they were doing. But it was a good program, and they enjoyed it a lot. Now it was time to start thinking about packing up and flying back to Florence, Alabama.

The movers came to pack and ship our household goods back to Alabama. So we had to get by with very basic travel items the week before we were scheduled to depart. I was able to sell the little blue pinto to a nice incoming staff sergeant for \$600. All four of us caught a military charter bus early one morning. I arranged to leave the car in the officers' club parking lot with the key under the floor mat. The bus carried us to Frankfurt where we spent two or three days awaiting a flight home. I think that is where Jay got his new and larger boom-box.

After we finally flew from the Rhine-Mine Airbase, all of us were so excited about getting home. The boys' mother met them at the Memphis airport when we arrived. Following that, we then flew on a little commuter plane to Florence. As we drove through town, I remember thinking how wide our streets seemed to be and how low the buildings were compared to the European cities. Keith Absher met us at the airport. When we arrived at the house, there was a big sign in our yard that said "Welcome Home Cindy, Gerald, Jerry, and Jay."

Our trip to Europe had been one of the most exciting and rewarding experiences of our lives. Cindy and I will never forget those good times. We hoped that the boys would also remember them.

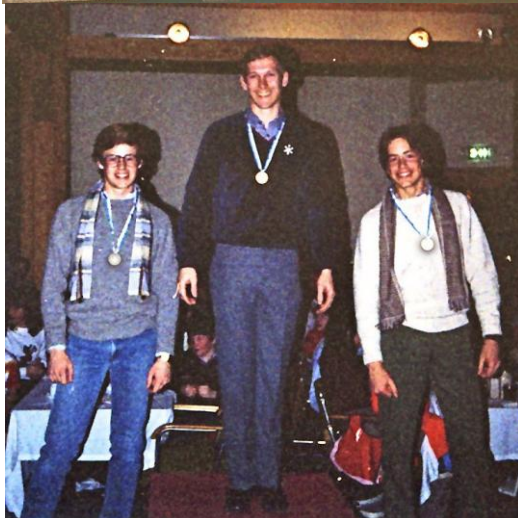
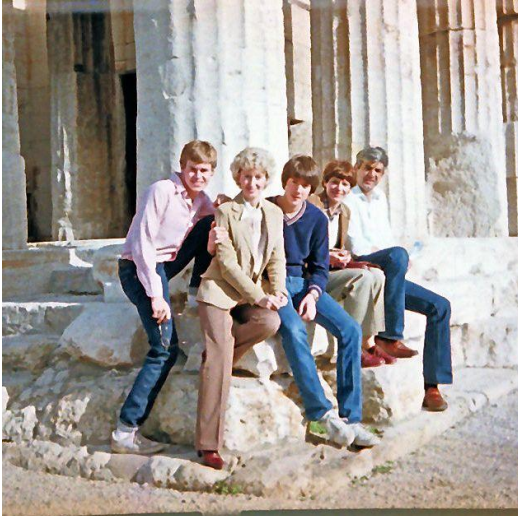
(Pictures follow also see - <http://geraldcraw.net/>)



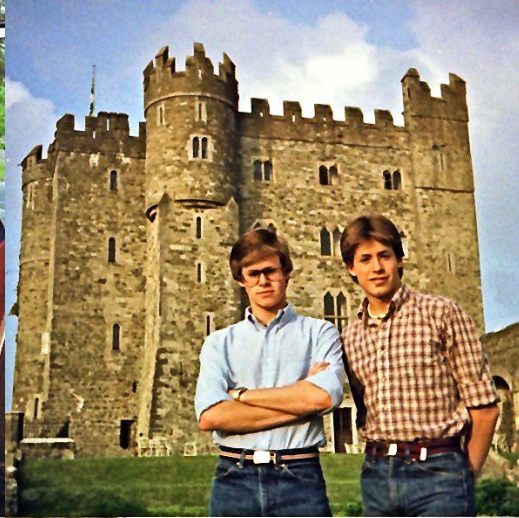




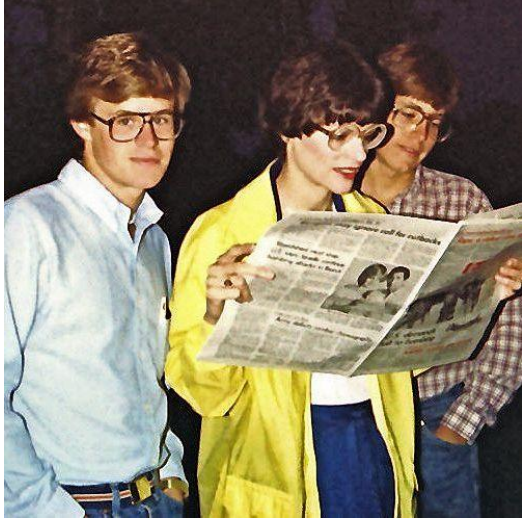
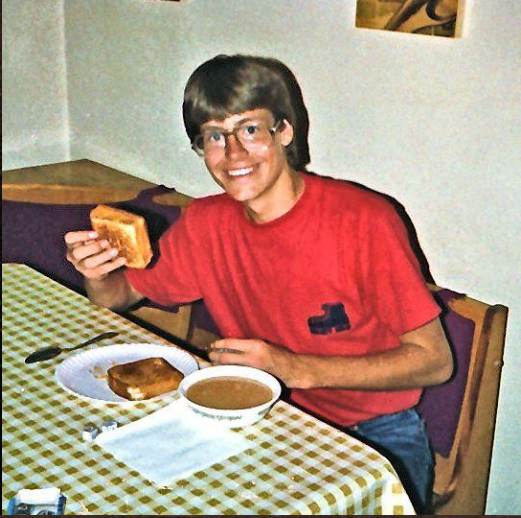
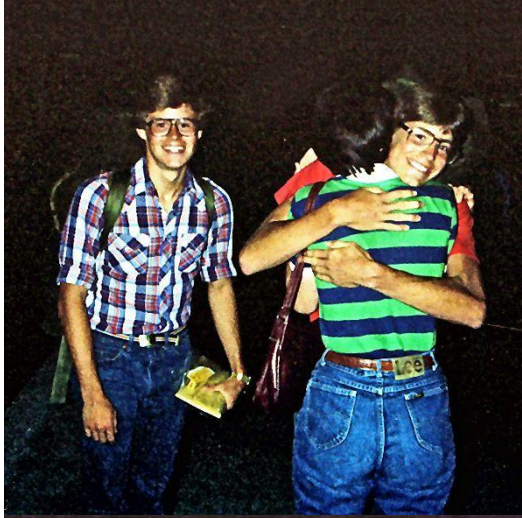
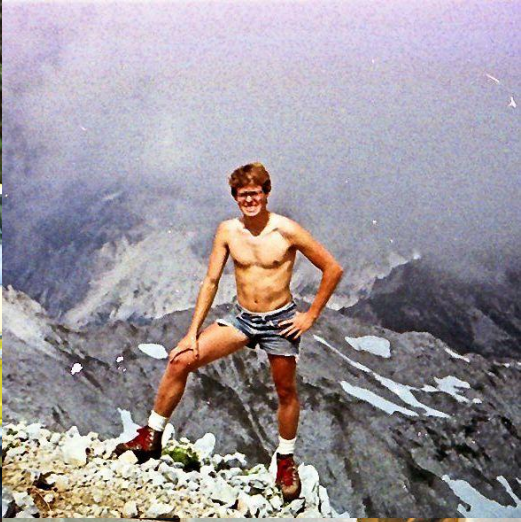














## Chapter 12 – Jerry and Jay Go to College

When we returned from our year in Europe, Jerry was 17 and ready to begin his senior year at Bradshaw High School. Jay was almost 16 and all set to start his junior year. Both of them were becoming young men so quickly. Jerry returned to his part-time job at Chick-Fil-A at the mall, and Jay returned to his skating job at the Skate Center. Cindy went back to her job teaching at Forest Hills School, and I went back to my job at UNA. Our year overseas had taught us so much. We seemed to appreciate our home and friends more than ever. There was a story in the Bradshaw school newspaper about the boys' overseas year. The bottom line was that they realized how fortunate we all are to live in America.

Jerry continued to enjoy his science courses and still wanted to become a doctor someday. He had taken one or more classes at UNA and was successful in them. We never discussed where he would go to college. Cindy and I more or less assumed that he would go to UNA. There were advantages in doing that for him and for us. He knew all about the school and most of the teachers. For us, he would get a much lower tuition because of my faculty status. And upon return from our year in Europe, we had no savings to cover his tuition at a large and upscale university. If he had expressed any interest in going to a particular school, other than UNA, we would have found the money to send him there.

Jay decided that he wanted to play football at Bradshaw, so he started practice with the other players just prior to the beginning of the school year. It was noted earlier that we had tried to discourage both boys from participation in contact sports. But he was almost grown at this point and had a right to make decisions such as this for himself. Since he was a junior and had never played this tough sport before, I worried that he would get hurt. Jay was at a real disadvantage. His friends on the team had already been playing for two years and had learned good techniques and endurance. We did not let him know how much we worried about his decision to play. After the first practice, he came home bruised and sore. The second day was even worse. And the third day, he was in real pain. As best I can remember, that was the day that he turned in his equipment. Cindy and I were so relieved.

Jay had friends at Bradshaw, and I believe they may have had a healthy influence on him. One was Heath Trousdale who turned out to be a successful lawyer in Florence. Another one was Andrew Edwards who turned out to be a very fine construction engineer. The third one was Andrew Kennedy, and I think he became an Air Force officer and pilot. Jay has stayed in touch with these great guys over the years.

There is one memorable school experience that we recall. Jay had been dating Lisa Gregory for awhile when she told him that a former boyfriend was coming to town, and she needed to spend some time with him. That bothered Jay, so he came home and told Cindy about it. Cindy thought about his situation and then asked him if he really wanted to make Lisa "come running back." He said, "Yes!" Her advice for Jay was to get a date with the best looking and

most popular girl at Bradshaw and take her to the football game and then take her to the hangout where Lisa would likely go with the out-of-town ex-boyfriend. Jay, amazingly, liked her plan and set about to get a date with Tracy McDowell, the cheerleader captain. They had a great time at the game and later at Pizza Hut, the local hangout. When Lisa came running back, Jay gained a lot of respect for Cindy's knowledge about women and about dating strategy.

Sometime during the early part of Jay's junior year, the guidance counselor, Mrs. Nickey Graham, talked with him about applying to one of the military academies after high school graduation. He came home, and we talked about it. He did some research and decided that he might really like to do it. He soon learned about the complicated entry requirements and asked for my help in getting the proper recommendations from U.S. congressmen and senators. We looked at all of the requirements to qualify and tests that would need to be taken. I agreed to help him apply to all three institutions, the Air Force Academy, Annapolis, and West Point, in that order.

Jay and Jerry both have an odd medical condition called "proteinuria." We found that 17 percent of the population will test positive for this condition, but only 2 percent of that group will have serious urinary tract disorders. He did several things to try and lower his ensuing proteinuria test scores, but they did not seem to change. It was interesting that the Air Force Academy and Annapolis had strict medical requirements in this regard and this eliminated Jay from further consideration. West Point, however, did not have such a strict medical requirement on this particular test. The focus now turned to gaining acceptance into the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, New York.

He applied for and received an invitation to attend a summer prospective cadet workshop at the Academy. After his trip, between his junior and senior years at Bradshaw, he became very focused on getting into the USMA. Now he had to get really serious about the application process. One remaining task was getting needed recommendations from senators and congressmen. Jay wrote to our local U.S. Congressman, Ronnie Flippo, from Florence and U.S. Senator Jeremiah Denton from Mobile.

At that time, I had a close relationship with the mayor of Florence, Holly Allen. The mayor and U. S. Congressman Flippo were also close friends. I asked Holly to speak with the congressman about Jay's possible recommendation. When he did, Ronnie Flippo told him that those slots at the academies were "primarily reserved for minorities." He said that this was one way of "breaking the chain of poverty." That smacked so clearly of reverse discrimination and "political correctness" that it made me furious. I then became more determined than ever to help Jay find a way to get into West Point.

It occurred to me that Jay had a grandmother, Mrs. Wolfe, who was part Cherokee Indian. Mrs. Wolfe was sort of darker skinned and was proud of her Indian heritage. Jay had always



had a slightly darker complexion than others in our immediate family. He was clearly part Indian based on his grandmother's heritage. Why couldn't Jay declare himself to be Cherokee Indian? That would theoretically put him in a minority category and increase his chances of getting into West Point. And that is what I did. The application process was long and complicated with many forms to be filled out. I am not even sure Jay recognized that I had checked the "Native American" box on his main application form before he signed and mailed it off. I do not know whether or not it made a difference in his application being accepted, but I suspect that it may have. We will never know.

There was another memorable occasion that Jay and I both recall. I read and studied all about the physical tests that potential applicants must take. As Jay's family "coach," I had him practice everything including the required basketball throw from a kneeling position. On the day his test was administered at UNA, we watched as other applicants struggled to throw the ball the full length of a basketball court while on their knees. When it was Jay's turn, he easily threw the ball so that it bounced off the top of the gym wall. Everyone turned to look at him with great astonishment.

I must also report that Jay had received some seriously good recommendations from other important people. The truly outstanding one was submitted by Cindy's father, a career naval officer. I believe it led U.S. Senator Jeremiah Denton, a retired Navy Admiral, to give our son his key recommendation and the appointment needed to get into West Point. And Jay received a letter of early acceptance to the Academy. Less than 20 percent of the plebe class would receive notice of an early appointment, as I recall. We were so proud of him and for his achievement. Many fine magazines have acknowledged USMA's record of success. *Forbes* pronounced West Point as the best public college or university in America for undergraduate education. I also remember that *U.S. News and World Report* called USMA the best public liberal arts college in America. I thanked Cindy's father many times for his wonderfully written letter of recommendation.

Back at Bradshaw, Jay decided to run for president of his senior class, and he asked for my ideas. I helped him a little with his campaign. He wore an orange shirt with "Elect Jay" stenciled across the front. He also handed out handbills with the slogan "Make the Most of Our Senior Year." I think that he taped a sucker to each one. Sadly, he lost the race by a few votes. Keith Ellard, a football player at Bradshaw won that election. Jay easily handled his loss and afterwards seemed to focus more on his studies and social life. I think he joined the cross country team at that point, but it may have been later. It is interesting to note that Keith Ellard was not much of a class president, in my opinion. As a matter of fact, he went on to attend UNA and major in business. He started in one of my classes on two consecutive semesters. He was flunking the class both times and unexpectedly dropped each of them. I am not sure that he finished college, but I did hear that he later became an insurance salesman in a nearby town.

Jerry graduated from Bradshaw and started to UNA. He moved into campus housing and “dug” into his studies. He made some really good grades that would be needed to get into medical school. He would come by my office occasionally to see me, and I enjoyed visiting with him. He even took a class or two from me, primarily for the purpose of raising his GPA even higher, I believe.

I had given Jerry a key to my office, and he studied there and used my computer fairly often. He took some computer classes and was said to be the smartest student in those classes. He helped teach others in the class how to complete the tough outside assignments. I noticed that he regularly tutored the good looking girls. It amazed me to see those girls so taken with him and impressed with his skills. I often saw very nice looking girls hanging on his arm in Keller Hall. And on at least one occasion, I opened my office door to see him teaching some gal a different set of skills on the top of my desk. Of course, I closed the door quickly. Jerry was always a remarkable teacher and would have made a superb college professor.

Jay finished his senior year and graduated from Bradshaw High School. He had a few weeks at home before going off to the Academy. He was most likely planning to sleep late and party every night. Cindy and I worried that “idle hands are the devil’s workshop.” So I came up with a plan to keep him busy every day until he was safely in the hands of the U.S. Military. I asked him to paint our house, and we made it sound important. And since we worked every day, we simply did not have the time to do it. He reluctantly agreed to paint the brick with a sealing agent that would keep the brick from chipping off in the winter. (And that really did solve the chipping problem.)

Jay survived his painting project at home and managed to finish it well before his report date at West Point on Monday, July 2, 1984. He also managed to stay out of trouble in the evenings when he was with friends. Cindy and I always believed that Jay was a good looking, fun loving kid and was literally "a party ready to happen." I am not sure that he would have been as successful in college if he had gone to a civilian school. But it is hard to speculate about those sorts of things.

When it came time for Jay to leave for college, Cindy, Jay, and I drove to the Washington, DC metro area, where her brother Lonnie lived with his family. We spent the night with them before Jay and I continued on up to Newburg, New York the next morning. This was the place he would hopefully spend the next four years. Cindy did not accompany us on this last leg of the trip because she did not want to be a “blubbering, basket case” when saying goodbye to Jay.

Well, I will never forget the day we walked into the football stadium where hundreds of other future cadets and their families also waited. They finally called Jay’s name, and we briefly hugged each other before he walked down those stadium steps. The only things that he was allowed to take with him were a bible and a photograph of his family. The clothes he was

wearing that day were later mailed back to his home. I remember watching that young man walk down those steps and thinking that his life was about to undergo a dramatic change.

On the six-hour drive back to Washington, I wiped tears from my eyes a good part of the time. We would not see him again until Christmas. And the Jay we once knew would never return. He came home a different and grown up young man!

Jerry was watching all of this activity, and I know that he probably felt a little left out. As a matter of fact, he started asking many questions about why he had not gotten to go to a big school like some of his classmates. He wanted to know why he had to go to UNA. I tried to explain that he had never expressed any interest in going to a big school like Columbia or Duke. I also explained that we did not have money for those places and that Jay had gotten a scholarship. We made it clear, however, that if he continued to do good work at UNA, we would find the money and pay for any school that he selected for his junior and senior years. I hoped Jerry understood that Jay was the one who had come up with the idea to go to West Point. All we did was help him to gain acceptance there.

Jerry seemingly moved on and did not let Jay's USMA accomplishment bother him too much. Actually, he was doing very well at UNA. He finished his first two years in college with flying colors. His grades were excellent, and he seemed to be on the road to achieving his goal of getting into medical school. All of his teachers liked him, and he made many friends at the University. Most of the people at UNA knew that Jerry was my son. Sometimes this probably helped him, and sometimes it might have kept him from doing things that he wanted to do. He certainly made friends and built a fine classroom reputation for himself.

As the summer of 1986 approached, Jerry wanted to get a job other than Chick-fil-A and make more money. I told him that if he wanted to get into medical school, the best type of job to get was at the hospital. The experience would look good on a resume, and it would give him a taste of what it is like to work in the medical field. He agreed with my suggestion. It was fortunate that the Assistant Administrator at ECM Hospital was in one of my graduate classes at the University at the time. His name was Barry Collins. I asked him what my son needed to do to get a job at ECM, and he told me. As a matter of fact, he helped set up an appointment for Jerry with the personnel department. Jerry got the job and was assigned to the medical records department. That event may have been a tipping point in our relationship. I know that things seemed to change after he got that job. Part of it may have been related to the fact that he was growing up and simply did not need my help any longer.

I had kept in touch over the years with my former boss at RJR, Harry Christopher. We had made several fishing trips together to Leech Lake in Northern Minnesota. We first started going there in 1967 with a group of business associates. During spring break of 1986, Chris and I decided to go back there on a ten-day camping and fishing trip. After driving to the International Boundary Waters Wilderness Area between Minnesota and Ontario, Canada,

we canoed about 25 miles up and into the primitive woodlands and wetlands area. We did not see another human for the last 20 or so miles. About dark, we stopped along the side of a lake and put up our tent. We woke up the next morning to find that snow had covered the area, and it continued to snow.

Everything was totally wet, and it was impossible to build a fire. We had planned to catch fish and cook them. Good fishermen "live off of the land" rather than packing-in a lot of food. The snow went on for three days. The only thing we had to eat and drink was a box of corn flakes and a half-gallon of Canadian Hunter whiskey. Temperatures had fallen to near freezing, and our clothes were completely wet. We had hoped to wait out the bad weather but finally decided to get back in that canoe and head south, down the small river towards the truck.

There were several places on the return trip where it was necessary to portage the heavy canoe and equipment from one lake to another. It was at one of these points that my right eye began to bleed externally. The blood continued to gradually run down my cheek. The retina had been damaged years earlier and had been repaired. A "buckle" had been used to hold the retina in its proper position. The internal stitches were now coming loose and that buckle was working its way out of my eye. We made it back to the truck after an exhausting day. When I returned home, the eye foundation hospital at UAB surgically removed the buckle that had given me so much trouble over a period of 17 years.

It was about this time that Cindy and I enjoyed social relationships with a group of people in Florence. The central figure in that circle of friends was a teacher in the school system with Cindy. Her name was Beverly Whitten. She was fairly recently divorced from Richard Whitten, one of my former students at UNA. She later met and married E. B. Hamner, a divorced manager of a disabled workers' association in Muscle Shoals. Cindy's relationship with Beverly Hamner seemed to grow over time. We partied with them and four or five other couples almost every weekend for two or three years. We even traveled with the Hamners during the summers to Bermuda one year and to Europe another year. It was during this time that I regularly played golf with E.B. Hamner, Charles Crow, David Faulkner, Tom Pebworth, and Rick Thompson.

Cindy and Beverly Hamner did many things together, including some modeling for Parisian Department Stores. It seemed that they were together every day. I never really cared much for Beverly Hamner but just went along with their activities because Cindy seemed to enjoy their friendship. Beverly Hamner did not have the same personality traits that Cindy had, and I grew more concerned that Cindy would pick up some of her undesirable qualities. To be completely honest, Beverly Hamner was a true "social climber." It became a problem for me, and I began to complain about us spending too much time with them. Her reply was that I drank too much when we partied with the group. Her solution to the problem was to get her own apartment.

Cindy and I retained our close relationship and even spent weekends together. There is one thing that I learned from my first divorce—do not tell a woman what she should and should not do or beg her to come back. It was best to accept Cindy's plan with no regrets. I just went on with my business and acted like it never bothered me. It was about one year later that she decided to come back home. I never heard any more about Beverly Hamner and was told that she later divorced E. B. Hamner and moved to Birmingham.

Jay managed to find the “toughness” needed to do well in his classes and survive at West Point. One of his freshmen roommates was having problems and decided to drop out of school. He asked Jay, “What are you going to do?” Jay told him, “This place is about the same as it is at home, so I might as well stay here.” Survival in itself is a major accomplishment and many plebe cadets do not make it through their initial year.

We always encouraged Jay to major in something he could use after he finished at the Academy and served his five years in the Army. He majored in chemistry and took a lot of hard classes. He never made up his mind about a career until he started his junior year. Actually, he may have known what he wanted to do but never discussed it with his family. He finally told us and his advisors that he wanted to enter the pre-med program and become an Army doctor. At first they told him that "the mission of West Point is combat arms and our job is to kill the enemy." Apparently they discourage pre-med as a major because there are so many smart cadets at West Point and about half of them could get into medical school if they opened those doors. But Jay was persistent and later in his junior year, they admitted him into their pre-med program.

Jerry worked at ECM hospital all summer following his sophomore year at UNA. When college classes resumed in the fall, he decided to stay at UNA and work part-time at the hospital rather than transferring to Auburn or Alabama. During the fall semester, I remember calling his room on several occasions. His roommate would always answer the telephone and tell me that he was not there, but he would have Jerry call me. A few moments after that, I would usually get a return call from Jerry. I always thought that it seemed unusual to hear from him so soon. Later in the semester, we learned that Jerry was living off campus with his girlfriend, the one he had met while working at ECM hospital. The roommate would apparently call Jerry and then Jerry would call me. It would have been easier on my pocketbook if Jerry had told me about his arrangement, and I would not have needed to pay for that dorm room and his meal ticket.

Cindy and I never met Jerry's girlfriend until he was hospitalized in connection with hernia repair surgery. When we went to see him in the hospital, there was this strange girl in Jerry's hospital room, holding his hand after his operation. She either did not like us, or she was a very shy person.

After Jerry's junior year at UNA, he decided to transfer to Auburn for his last year. He told me later that it was his strategy to "get away from his girlfriend." If that were true, it apparently did not work. She soon joined him down there, as I remember. Maybe it was just on weekends. Jerry lived in a trailer that he rented with Michael Osborne, a friend from Florence. I do not know what went on down there. We were not really a very big part of his life while he was at Auburn.

Jerry's grades went down while he was at Auburn. He complained that his classes were too big and that foreign graduate students taught most of his classes. He had difficulty understanding their foreign accents. When he would go to see his teachers, they were never in their offices. Jerry seemed to adopt a lowered confidence level as his grades declined, and I think that he grew to feel that he probably would not be able to get into medical school.

I do remember that we had given Jerry the 1986 VW Rabbit. We received a telephone call one day that there had been an auto accident. Jerry was a little banged-up but was okay. The Rabbit was totaled when Jerry crashed into the back of someone at a stop light. I took the 1982 Toyota Station Wagon down to him. We crawled over a junkyard fence to retrieve Jay's fancy stereo radio from the wrecked VW. State Farm insurance agreed to pay me only \$125 for that very nice little car. I started looking for a new insurance company that very day.

When Jerry finished at Auburn, Cindy, Jay, and I went to his graduation. We were all so proud of him. I remember that Jay was a junior at West Point, and he wore his class "A" cadet uniform to the Auburn graduation. At that point, Jerry had received a couple of turn downs from medical schools. A few days later, Jerry returned to Florence. He was with his girlfriend. She stayed in the car, and he came into the house and told us that he had enlisted in the Army for five years and that he and his girlfriend were getting married. What a sad day that was for us. I asked him why he joined the Army, and he said, "I am tired of everyone telling me what to do."

He told us that it would be six months before he could even report for basic training and that he would need to stay with us for that period of time. I told him that he needed to find a job and get his own apartment. And I told him that we did not have room for all of his stuff. He drove away, and I felt badly for the way that I had handled the situation. Later in the day, he came by the house to see me, but I pretended to be sleeping. I just could not handle any more disappointment that day. He then left a note written with a pen on a small piece of cardboard box. This is what the note said:



“I came by, you were asleep. I wanted to give you this info, but really I just wanted to hug you and make you realize (1) I love you more than any human can love another, (2) I think you have been the all-time best dad. (No bullshit, okay?) And (3) I’m sorry I didn’t follow your plan. I know that it is what you think is best, and you do what you do out of pure love for your boy. I probably should wake you up and tell you this stuff, but when I tell you, you don’t understand or believe me. I am sorry for hurting you because you are the one person I never want to hurt. (Really and Truly.) Hang in there, Father, and have a little faith... Our love for each other will overcome this temporary crap someday. I will keep in touch anyway. Your loving son.”

It would appear that all of his dreams about being a doctor, and our high hopes for him, just went down the drain. Trying to decide what caused this change in his behavior did not help. Anyway, he went ahead and married his girlfriend. And I will never in my life understand why he did that. She was not our kind of people. Jerry was a nice looking and smart young man. He could have done so much better. He later told me that he “felt sorry for her.” Cindy went to a bridal shower, but there was no real wedding, just a civil ceremony, I think.

As a footnote to the above chain of events, Jerry received a surprise letter of acceptance in July from the University of Alabama School of Medicine. Apparently there had been a last minute cancellation, and Jerry was selected because he was the next one on the list. He had to write them a letter of non-acceptance. I know that this last minute medical school acceptance caused him a lot of afterthought. However, it was too late for regrets. The course had been set.

We did not see Jerry for several months. I guess that he lived in that little country store building in Haleyville with his girlfriend's parents. Actually, I do not know where he lived. Our friends would see him around town and tell us about it. I was always so eager to hear about what he was doing, and we wondered if he was okay. I was sad that our relationship had suffered during this period of time. He finally went off to his basic military training, we were told.

About six or eight weeks later, our telephone rang. It was Jerry, and he spoke with Cindy. He told her that he needed my help in "getting out of the military." He asked that I contact a congressman or someone to “pull some strings” and get him out because he could not take it any longer. I did not have a lot of sympathy for his sad predicament. Cindy told me that I must go down there and find out what was going on. She said he sounded desperate, and if something happened to him, I would never forgive myself. So I called down there and made

an appointment with his commanding officer. The next day I drove down to Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia.

I arrived on the base and went into the building to speak with his commanding officer, a very nice, young, West Point trained officer. He explained the present predicament and told about some of the situations that Jerry had created while in basic training. It turns out that Jerry felt that most of the training was “stupid” and geared to the lowest common denominator. He said that he had never been treated so badly in his life. He resented it and did not hesitate to tell everyone about it. He even wrote to the Secretary of the Army.

The young officer said that Jerry was probably the smartest person in the whole group and that he had a strong influence on the others. Jerry had stirred the others up in his group so much that they were about ready to have a rebellion. In another situation, a group photograph was taken of his unit, probably 75-80 soldiers, and Jerry is standing there at attention with his weapon and there was a serious look on his face. If one looks closely, it can be seen that Jerry has his middle finger sticking out while the other digits hold the weapon in the proper position. No one would notice unless they looked very closely.

The young officer then sent word outside and asked that Jerry come in and present his side of the story. He came into the office, and I was shocked at his appearance. He was thin and looked exhausted. Jerry had a very close crew hair cut and was wearing those black horn rimmed army-issue glasses. Jerry was quite upset and almost in tears. He explained to us that all he could think about was going AWOL—up the hill, across the pasture and over the fence. He asked me to help him get out of the Army. I had to explain that I had nothing to do with him getting into the Army and that I did not sign those papers. I told them that I believed in a person doing what he agreed to do. I explained that it was not my place to help him get out of the Army. I could tell that the young officer appreciated my trying to see both sides of the story with an open mind.

At that point, the officer explained that Jerry clearly had so much potential and that he could be an officer if he would clean up his act. The young Captain said that if Jerry would “work with him,” he would help him get into Officers’ Candidate School. Jerry looked at him and said, “You would help me do that?” And the Captain said, “Yes, and you have my word on it.” The expression on Jerry’s face at first showed a look of surprise, then a look of disbelief, then a look of appreciation. We all shook hands on that agreement, and I told the wise young Captain, “I appreciate what you have promised to do to help my son.” Jerry seemed to relax, and I could see the determination in his eyes. Jerry and I walked outside, and we hugged before I drove away. I really did not know what to expect next.

In a few weeks, Cindy and I received an invitation to Jerry’s basic military graduation services at Ft. Benning. After we arrived, we took our seats in the bleachers beside a very large parade field. Many groups of soldiers were marching in unison and moving around out

on the parade grounds. Jerry's new wife was with us, and we were all talking to each other before the ceremonies started. Cindy said, "Is that Jerry's voice I hear out there?" We listened and by golly—it was Jerry! We finally spotted him out on the busy parade grounds. He was marching and leading a very large group of soldiers around for the audience to observe. They did look sharp and Jerry was clearly in command. And there was another thing I noticed. Jerry was wearing two stripes instead of the one stripe that is traditionally awarded at the completion of basic training. Jerry kept his promise to shape up, and a short few weeks later, he was accepted into the Army's Officer Candidate Program.

In the meantime, Jay was a graduating senior at West Point. He had some great experiences to remember and had done some interesting school-related things during his summers. One summer was spent at a chemical weapons base in Maryland. Another summer was spent jumping out of airplanes. His last summer was spent working in an Army hospital in Hawaii. Jay graduated from West Point in late May of 1988. I remember that the graduation speaker was George H. W. Bush, Ronald Reagan's Vice President, and Jay was commissioned as a second lieutenant by the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, Warren Burger.

Jay's mother came to the graduation at West Point. Cindy and I were pleased to be there. I had managed to get airplane tickets for Jerry and his wife to fly to LaGuardia Airport where I met them and brought them to Newburg which is about 50 miles from New York City. The graduation services were held at an open stadium where it rained all through the ceremony. I remember that George Bush gave his speech, standing in the heavy rain while several thousand guests sat there in the downpour. His opening comment was "I have never sweated this much since the Democratic National Convention."

After graduation, Jay and one of his cadet friends followed us back to Florence in his black Oldsmobile Cutlass. He had been accepted to several medical schools, but he was still hoping to get accepted at Vanderbilt. For now, however, it was nice to have him at home. He had almost three months to rest up and get ready for another tough four years of study.

There was one humorous incident that happened to Jay shortly after he arrived back home. He was required to go over to Redstone Arsenal at Huntsville for the purpose of getting a discharge from the Army. They did not want him filling a military officer's slot for four years while he was in medical school. Of course, after that he would be sworn back into the Army. So for his trip to Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, he dressed in his nice, new, second lieutenant's uniform. Upon arrival at the administration building, he walked inside to see about his paperwork. He routinely heard someone inside of the building say "Barracks...Attention...hut!" Jay then did what he had been doing for four years; he backed up to the wall and snapped to attention. This is what is done when an officer enters the room. He stood there briefly before a nice black guy leaned over and whispered into his ear, "Sir, that is for you. You are the officer." With a slight feeling of embarrassment, Jay gave the "at ease" command.

There was another story that happened about this time, and it is worth remembering. Jay went up to Ohio, I think, to buy a little, red, sports car and drive it home. On his way back through Nashville, he decided to stop at Vanderbilt University to see if there had been any progress on his application to their medical school. Dr. Virgil LeQuire was the main admissions officer at that time. Jay asked his secretary if he could get in to see him. She sent Jay in to meet Dr. LeQuire for the first time.

Several years later Dr. LeQuire told me what occurred in that initial interview. He said that Jay came into his office with a good handshake and good eye contact. Jay was so handsome and respectful and that he was very impressed with his manners and his enthusiasm. Dr. LeQuire said that he had not been addressed as "Sir" that many times since he was an officer in the U.S. Navy. He immediately liked this sincere young man even though his grades were not quite as high as some of the other pending applicants from Harvard, Yale and Columbia. But it just so happened that on that particular day, there had been a cancellation, and this left one unfilled vacancy in the rapidly closing class of 1992. Dr. LeQuire asked Jay, "If you were to be offered a spot at Vanderbilt today, would you take it?" Jay, without hesitation, said, "Yes, sir." Dr. LeQuire stood up and extended his hand as he said "Congratulations." Jay came home with the great news about his acceptance at Vanderbilt's School of Medicine.

Jerry was in Officers' Candidate School about this time. That was tough duty. Not many can get into OCS and even fewer get out of OCS. But Jerry was one of those who had real determination. During this period, he became stronger and bigger. We remember receiving an invitation to his graduation. It was at Ft. Benning, Georgia, as I remember. Jay came down for the ceremony and presented Jerry with his commission. Jerry looked so sharp in his military uniform. Shortly after graduation, he was sent to Ft. Knox in Kentucky to learn how to be a tank commander. He later was transferred to Tacoma, Washington to serve in a tank unit. He had been in the military about two or three years at this point, and he and his wife had a little girl, Hannah. Jerry was beginning to see that there was not much future for him in the military. He had apparently started thinking about where he would go and what he would do when finished his tour in the Army.

Jay had started medical school in late August of 1988. We went to Nashville with him to help find an apartment and to help him get situated as close to the school as possible. Jay picked out a nice place which was about two blocks from the Vanderbilt campus. His apartment needed a lot of work, however. So Cindy and I helped him paint it and furnish it. He had his Olds Cutlass, and he was a happy young man. After all of the regimentation of West Point, Jay felt that the world was now his to enjoy. He met some nice guys and proceeded to work at about 80 percent of his capacity. The other 20 percent of his time was spent drinking beer down at SATCO with Stubby, Ted, and some other friends. But Jay may have underestimated his competition. Most of them were from some of the best undergraduate schools in the whole country. And their grade point averages were embarrassingly high.

His first semester grades were good overall but there was a “C” in his medical ethics class. Jay was thinking that a “B” average was all that was needed to stay on track. But somehow the rules had recently changed or were in the process of changing. That situation caused him a good deal of grief. I could not explain all that went on, but it resulted in Jay having to repeat his entire freshman year. Many people expected him to drop out of school and not return to Vanderbilt. That problem caused him to lose part of his Army scholarship and to be one year behind all of his classmates. It became an embarrassing situation for him. The only good thing that came out of it, in my opinion, was his new “all business, take no prisoners” attitude. No more fooling around and no more marginal grades. Jay told me that he was now more determined than ever to graduate from Vanderbilt.

We had given Jay a personalized license plate with "VANDY 92" on it. When Jay was forced to repeat his freshman year, someone taped a piece of paper over the 92 and changed it to read 93. Jay told me that he suspected that this was done by a fellow student he had earlier admonished about being late for tests. It seems that the test being given could not begin until this guy showed up. Jay thought this was highly disrespectful, so after the test was over, Jay shoved him up against the wall and told him how he felt.

Jay moved into a house with two other guys and a gal. All of them were at the top of their class. They probably helped Jay to better understand the amount of work he must do, and they also helped him better focus on his schoolwork. Additionally, the friendship with “Stubby” proved to be truly fortunate and a lasting, serendipitous connection. The net result of the “C” situation was that it now turned him into a driven man—determined to make top grades and to graduate with an M.D. from Vanderbilt.

A wonderful turn of events came about for Jerry in 1992. While working at the Army hospital in Tacoma, he somehow managed to study hard and retake the MCAT exam so that he could make another run at medical school. When he went for his interview at UAB, they told him that they had never admitted anyone who had previously turned them down. Of course, he had not really turned them down; he had decided to join the Army instead. He miraculously was accepted a second time at UAB. How he was able to pull it off is beyond me, but I know that he has the power to do almost anything that he sets his mind to do. I recall that he wrote an excellent essay which was part of his application process. Additionally, I remember that Jay was able to get Dr. LeQuire at Vanderbilt to extend an invitation to Jerry to attend Vanderbilt. But Jerry decided to go to UAB. Money was a factor, and Vanderbilt was a very expensive private institution. UAB was a fine public medical school.

Jerry got out of the Army in 1993 and moved his family to Birmingham, Alabama to start his medical studies at UAB. I think they had another baby, Clint, about this time. I had always tried to discourage both boys from riding motorcycles when they were growing up. So Jerry bought a motor scooter and rode it to his school each day. About two months after he started

classes, he had a pretty bad motorcycle wreck on a rainy day. One of his legs was broken and the bone splintered up into the knee joint. He was fortunate that a fine orthopedic surgeon at UAB repaired it. He missed a few classes but managed to use crutches to get to class. They told him that he would have a hard time with it when he gets older.

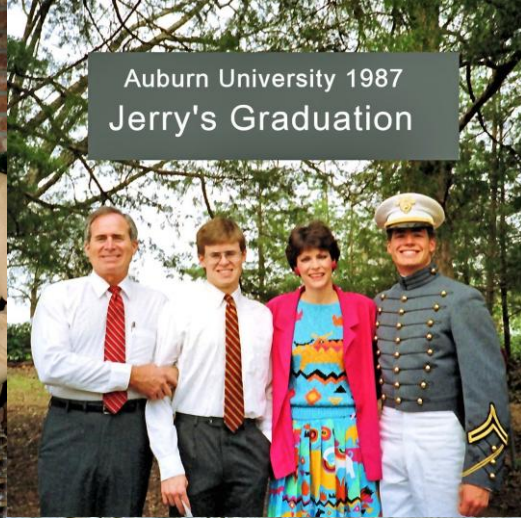
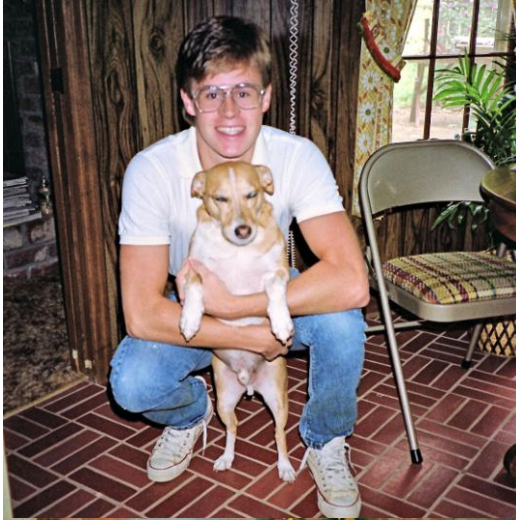
We were so proud of both boys. It is a rare thing that parents are able to say that both of their children were smart and driven enough to get into medical school. And what's more, we can say that both of them managed to graduate with flying colors in the years that followed.

(Pictures follow also see - <http://geraldcraw.net/>)

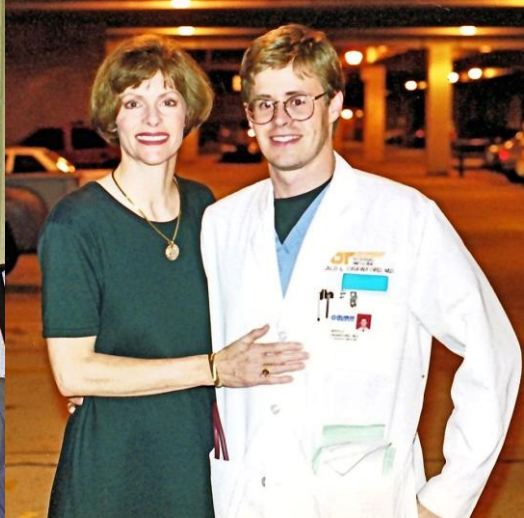














### **Chapter 13 – The Empty Nest Years (1989-2008)**

Jerry and Jay were grown and almost on their own at this point. We had spent most of our time in earlier years making sure they were safe and in good hands. There came a time, however, when Cindy and I felt somewhat sad not to have them around. I cannot remember the exact year, but the incident was one that will stick in our minds forever. It was Christmas, and Jerry was married and living in Tacoma. Jay was in medical school at Vanderbilt, but he decided to go to Argentina with his classmate, Stubby. That was our first Christmas to not have one or both of them around. It was so quiet and not at all like past happy holidays. I guess that other parents go through that sort of thing when their kids leave home. It was not much fun for us.

Cindy was working as a teacher in the Florence School System. She was still at Forrest Hills School, I believe. The school system would soon be reorganized, and all fifth grade classes at Forrest Hills would move to Hibbett School. She had earned her Ed. S. degree and was at the top of her pay scale as a fifth grade teacher. What's more, she was recognized as one of the best teachers in the whole Florence City School System. Cindy's great strength was her ability to get along with everyone. Parents, administrators, and other teachers all held her in the highest regard. She loved her students, and they adored her. And I must say again that she was a peacemaker in her school and in our family. She knew how to solve problems and how to bring about compromises. She knew how to help people resolve differences without becoming angry.

When the school system reorganized in 1989, Cindy became a teacher and fifth grade team leader at Hibbett School. I did not care for her new teaching environment. There were many more blacks there and the percentage of them continued to increase as the white parents pulled their kids out of public schools and enrolled them in private schools. The black boys were more numerous, older, bigger, and more intimidating than at Forest Hills School. There was one bad situation written about in our local newspaper. It happened in the nearby town of Moulton where a black boy came back into his classroom after school one day and killed his female teacher. I looked forward to the day when Cindy could get out of that Hibbett situation.

My work at UNA continued to revolve around teaching classes, working on research projects for publications, and doing as much travel as I could manage to get funded. I had been using mainframe computers in the classroom since my time at the University of Arkansas. In about 1989, however, desktop or personal computer usage started going up dramatically. We had already purchased a personal computer for use at home. I remember telling Cindy that I must start learning to use personal computers in the classroom or fall behind. So I took a computer class from a fellow faculty member, Claude Hale. That class changed my classroom teaching approach. I started using computers more and was asked to put together the first online class

offered at UNA. After that, about half of my work time was spent in front of a computer. That trend continued over the next 20 years.

While at Vanderbilt, Jay had met and started dating a lovely undergraduate student. They were together during his third and fourth year of medical school. In 1993, he talked to me and said that he wanted to marry Staci Moran. It was his last semester, and he hoped to get a residency in orthopedic surgery at Duke University. He asked me if I had any advice for him. The only thing I suggested was that he wait a few short weeks until he had received his M.D. degree before getting married. I have seen so many divorces among professional people where the wife was given full credit for “putting their husband through medical school.” They normally get a lot of money for doing that I have been told. And he listened to me. The wedding was in Knoxville, and I remember that Staci and Jay looked great on this very special occasion.

Staci’s parents spared neither effort nor expense in planning and executing a lovely wedding ceremony for the attractive couple. Everyone was there, Jerry Duncan, Lonnie and Wes Crook, Jerry Crawford, and many more. Cindy and I hosted a nice rehearsal dinner. Jay’s mother was there, and she was a co-host of the event. I recall sitting between Cindy and Beverly at the “head table.” It became my job to start the evening program and to make introductions. After a nice glass of wine, I stood and introduced those seated at my table to the entire group of about 100 or more guests. Having an ex-wife and a present wife sitting together may have seemed a bit awkward for some in attendance. To get around that, my first words were “Tonight I want to start off by introducing two of the best wives that I have ever had.” That got a huge laugh. After breaking the ice with my comment, people seemed to relax and enjoy themselves. Cindy and I both remember that Jay introduced the people sitting at his table and then made some heartfelt comments about his future wife and her fine family. He was almost overcome with emotion as he spoke, and I remember that several people had to wipe a few tears from their eyes, including the two of us.

I also remember that there was another potentially sticky situation at the actual wedding. It dealt with who would sit in the row normally reserved for the groom’s mother. If the groom’s parents are divorced, it is traditional for the parent who raised the groom to sit in the front row with his/her spouse. The other parent and his/her spouse traditionally sit in the third row. Cindy did not like the idea that she might be sitting in the third row. She had actually played the major role in Jay’s life for the past 15 years and felt that it was her place to sit with me on the front row. And I am sure that Beverly did not care to take a back seat at this big event either. So it was agreed that they would share the honor of being properly recognized. Both would sit on the front row with me. Cindy and I sent the newlyweds on a nice honeymoon trip to the British Virgin Islands.

Jay was required to serve several years in the Army as repayment for the sizeable investment that had been made toward his undergraduate and medical school education. Upon



graduation from Vanderbilt, he and Staci moved to El Paso, Texas for one year to do a medical internship. He then worked one or two years in Atlanta as a general medical officer. It was during that time that Jay applied for and received a civilian residency at Duke University. He was the only doctor in the entire Army to get a civilian residency deferment that year. He and Staci then moved to Duke University in Durham, N.C.

Staci's parents are rather affluent people and were able to do many things for their own son, Lou, and for their daughter, Staci. She is close to both parents, but especially to her mother. The Morans visited with the newly married couple in North Carolina regularly. I recall that they paid off the remaining medical school loan that Jay still had hanging around. We felt that Jay was fortunate, indeed, to marry into such a fine family.

Staci maintained a close relationship with her parents, and there were so many activities going on with them that I felt that we may have simply lost a son. There was this uneasy feeling in my stomach that Jay just did not need us anymore. I guess that feelings such as these are fairly normal when a son gets married. What is the old saying? "A son is a son until he takes a wife. A daughter is a daughter for the rest of your life." But that problem seemed to have disappeared over time.

With Jerry, money was scarce, and he borrowed quite a bit of money over his four-year period at UAB. We tried to help out some by giving them a nice 1992 Honda which provided safe and dependable transportation. He still had a 1982 Toyota station wagon that we had given him when he was at Auburn. In addition, we sent several hundred dollars per month to them for the four years he was in medical school. I remember thinking that Jerry should know that the money from us each month would always be there, no matter what came along. I did not want him thinking that he had to behave a certain way or we "might stop sending the money." He needed assurance that the money would always be there. So, I typed up an agreement promising to pay him a fixed amount each month until his graduation. I then had it notarized and sent to him. In case something happened to us that document would also provide a valid claim on our estate.

I remember that Jerry's wife was highly critical of the document I sent. She said that it was completely unnecessary and that was not the way families operate. She said "a family just does what they can to help and that is the way it should be." She certainly did not know much about business or about debt or about the relationships in the Crawford family.

Jay enjoyed his medical residency at Duke, and he was quite successful in their program. There were some world class medical professors at Duke, and Jay was on the way to becoming a fine orthopedic surgeon. Their first son was born, and they named him Jay Berryman Crawford. His middle name was my own father's middle name. Staci was a great mother and a fine wife. She was a good purchasing agent for the family, and she shopped efficiently and saved money. They had a nice house near the hospital. Jay worked in the ER

at local hospitals fairly often to make extra income. He earned a good bit of money in his residency so that did not seem to be a major concern for them.

Jerry made good progress at UAB. If he ever made a low grade, we did not know about it. They struggled to get by financially and soon had a third child, Grant. Jerry and his family would come by our house occasionally, and it was always good to see them. His wife continued to be rather “standoffish” with us. Although we tried our best to get along with her, there were divergent feelings on quite a few topics. Our differences may have been rooted in cultural and social dissimilarities.

Cindy and I had always tried to teach our boys good manners. They said “Yes ma'am” and “Yes sir” to adults. When Jerry's wife brought their kids to our house, they would come in and never say hello, never make eye contact, or shake your hand. They would not take their shoes off at the door, but instead would get on the furniture with their shoes. They said, “yea” and “nah” when spoken to and did not know how to say “thank you” or “please.” And they would ask for and be given snacks immediately before mealtime. If they ever ate anything, it was pizza or macaroni and cheese, things they were routinely served at their home. When they finished eating, they got up from the table and took off. What is more, they never washed their hands, and their mother would say nothing to them about it. As an observation, it seemed that they could not wait to get their hands on the walls of our new house after meals. After they left each time, I always had to go around and try to wash the walls and other surfaces they had touched. On a few occasions, I had to get out the paint can and try to cover up greasy handprints that would not wash off.

We spent so much time with Jerry and Jay when they were growing up. We did it because we enjoyed being with them. I always tried to take them to fun and educational places at every opportunity. Cindy and I both tried to set a good example for them to follow. Our boys did not watch undesirable movies, stay up at all hours of the night, or have too much given to them without earning it. They did not wear shoes in the house, eat too many sweets, or waste large blocks of time. And we expected good grades from them. Jay and Staci seem to have followed those same childrearing practices. They provided their kids with a fine environment in which they could grow up happy and well-adjusted.

Jerry graduated from UAB Medical School in 1997 and was selected for a two-year internal medicine residency at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. He and his wife bought a house there and settled down for a period of time. Jerry soon started “moonlighting” in the ER at Haleyville, Alabama. He made good money doing this, but a great deal of his time was spent working or driving. It was more than three hours driving time to Haleyville, Alabama.

This was a period when Jerry started having marriage problems. His wife told Cindy about some of their difficulties. In my opinion, she literally sat around and drank Pepsi Colas all of the time. She did not have a job and did not want one. She was lazy, ate pizza, and watched

TV during the day. She bought a lot of stuff on credit and put them deeper and deeper into debt. I never understood why Jerry did not manage his own money. Allowing a wife to handle money, particularly one who earned nothing and lacked experience handling money, seemed strange to me. I guess that she thought she had married a rich doctor and was entitled to live well?

In his residency, Jerry made friends with an Asian doctor who was a nephrologist. That is how he came to select nephrology as his medical specialty. That doctor also helped Jerry to get a fine two-year nephrology fellowship at Vanderbilt University. So, after he finished at UT Chattanooga, he and his family bought a house outside of Nashville, Tennessee. They had not yet sold the one in Chattanooga.

Jay was doing well in his five-year orthopedic surgery residency at Duke. He and Staci had a second son and they named him Bo. And JB was growing up so fast. Jay seemed to enjoy the pediatric sub-specialty within the field of orthopedics. He applied for and received a one-year fellowship in pediatric orthopedics there at Duke. After that, they moved to San Antonio, Texas, where he would work for six or seven years as a military physician. That service was necessary to fully repay the Army's remaining investment in him.

They had a lovely home in San Antonio. While living there, they had a nice surprise addition to their family, a beautiful, new baby girl. Her name was Molly. Jay managed to keep a low profile with the military authorities, and this allowed him to work with a private medical practice on his days and weekends off. He seemed to make a ton of money. They lived well and appeared to get along with each other. Their two boys were in quality public schools and they both made excellent grades.

Cindy and I continued to work hard every day trying to pay the bills and to move ahead in our careers. In addition to my full time teaching work, I managed to do a lot of outside consulting and research. The money was useful and the research data generally allowed me to publish journal articles, cases, and monographs. In those days, I usually worked many hours per day. The publishing enabled me to apply for and get an Eminent Scholar Chair in the College of Business. I kept that going for four years before gradually slowing down and taking it a little easier. Between 1975 and 2000 I was able to research and write several international business articles and have them accepted in foreign journals and at international conferences. In my earlier teaching days, topics for publications were often related to recent consulting jobs. These ranged from banking practices to growing mushrooms. Later topics focused on using computers in the classroom and on teaching classes in developing and transitioning countries.

It was fortunate that I started writing business cases for use by professors in college classrooms. I had experienced so many great industry situations back at R. J. Reynolds, and I learned how to write and package them as cases in textbooks and for sale by case clearing

houses. Because of this good fortune, I was invited to join the World Association for Case Research and Application, a prestigious case writing organization. This led to many overseas trips to present my work. One day in about 1990, Hans Klien, the president of WACRA called me and asked if I wanted to teach a one-month business class in Lithuania. I said, "of course" and later made three or four additional trips to a university in Panevezys, Lithuania. I learned so much from those wonderful Lithuanian people. That Baltic country had very recently broken away from the USSR and businesspeople there knew almost nothing about doing business in the world of capitalism or about the modern business world.

That experience led to another three-year overseas teaching program in Baku, Azerbaijan. This country had also broken away from the USSR and needed business training. This was a more primitive situation and these people were Muslims. I learned a great deal from them, but the living and teaching conditions there were very challenging. I made several four week trips there and one trip that lasted an entire semester.

After that I was asked to teach in Taipei, Taiwan. This turned out to be a dream assignment. Students were eager to learn, and they showed great respect for their professors and for other class members. I think that I taught five times in Taiwan. There was a time when Cindy asked me why I liked Taiwan so much. I told her that everyone treated me like a rock star. All students stood up when the professor entered the room, and they listened intently to all class lectures. No one fooled with their cell phone or looked out of the window. Various groups within each class literally fought for the privilege of taking me to dinner.

The Taiwan program led to additional assignments in Shanghai, China and then to classes in Beijing, China. I also later taught classes at a big university in Wuhan, China. I can say that these were some of the most enjoyable times in my entire teaching career. Between foreign assignments, when I returned to the UNA classroom, it was often rather disappointing to teach American students because many of them did not really want to be there. I continued teaching some overseas classes for more than a year past my retirement in 2007.

Before retirement, I remember that one male student in a graduate class at UNA made a comment that I will never forget. He said, "Dr. Crawford, why don't you just give us our A's and let us go home." I told that fat, son-of-a bitch that he had no business in that class and that he was just wasting his time and my time. That same student had earlier asked for my written recommendation to the University of Alabama doctoral program. After his classroom comment, he did not get into their program.

Cindy and I had always loved dogs from the time we lived in the Van Meter house in Fayetteville, Arkansas. While there, we had Peanut, a nice, little, German shepherd mix. He was killed by a car while staying at my parents' house when we were overseas in 1974. Then there was our very special "Ruff." He was given to us as a puppy by Dr. Ellis. Jerry and Jay loved him so much. He was really smart and truly a wonderful dog. He died of kidney failure

in 1988. Then there was "Chester," a powerful boxer, and "Lucy," a small mixed-breed female. Along about that same time, we had sweet "Bubba," our first dachshund. Then there was "Dixie." She was a fine border collie that we acquired from a Creekwood neighbor. She was my special girl and lived to be 16 years old. She died of cancer, and I still miss her. After that we found "Mouse," another dachshund, in Red Bay, Alabama. "Mouse" is now five and has become Cindy's special buddy. After "Dixie" passed away, I wanted to find a little female dog that liked me the way that "Dixie" had done over the years. We located "Minnie" on the internet. Cindy and I drove up to Minor Hill, Tennessee to get her. She is a little doll, and we are literally inseparable. She is two at the present time and will be my last puppy as I am not getting any younger.

Between 1975 and 1995, our College of Business Dean was my friend, Bill Stewart. He and I would gather data and the two of us would write research papers. That research frequently involved papers being presented at conferences. Since most of my research involved international topics, he and I were able to go overseas together and present our material. It was a good working relationship. I would do most of the writing, and he would handle the funding for both of us. We traveled to a great number of interesting places together. I will never forget our experiences in Eastern Europe, before the Iron Curtain was lifted, travel to Muslim countries, and travel to places like Iceland, Finland, Slovakia, Hungary, Turkey and more.

Bill Stewart retired from UNA in 1995, but another good friend, Mike Butler, replaced him as the College of Business dean. I continued to produce publications and work overseas quite a bit during this period. Unfortunately, after five years at UNA, Mike took another job as dean at a school in Texas. Kerry Gatlin became the new UNA Dean, and this is where things started going downhill for me. Kerry had much lower standards than his predecessors. He hired less qualified faculty, and he seemed to resent those who were producers. He got rid of several quality faculty members over time. I remember that one of his first steps was to change the policy on allocating UNA travel money. He decided to divide up available funds equally between all faculty members, regardless of production. In the past, those who had written papers and had them accepted at conferences received travel funds. So, that is when I stopped working overtime and never published anything else until I retired in 2008. He continued, however, to allow me to teach overseas. I suspect that he was glad that I was over there and not "in his hair" at the home campus.

In early 1999, Cindy and I decided to move out of Creekwood subdivision, the neighborhood where we had lived for almost 26 years. What was once an upscale, white collar neighborhood was rapidly becoming a blue collar area. There was an increasing number of barking dogs and more street traffic. Home owners were starting to park their cars on the grass in front of their houses. New next-door neighbors with many kids promised to be a noisy affair. Now that the boys were grown-up and off on their own, we could afford a nicer home. Cindy collected many ideas from magazines, and she found a lady draftsman that

could help design our house. All I asked for in the new place was an office and two garage stalls for my truck, tools, and a lawn tractor with implements.

I had been making a good deal of extra money teaching in foreign assignments. In 1999, I spent the spring semester in Baku, Azerbaijan, teaching classes at Western University. Cindy worked on the plans for our new house while I was away. When I came home for spring break, she showed me the blueprints, and I was very impressed. We proceeded to find a builder and to make plans to sell our old house. When I later returned home for the summer, we put the Sandusky house on the market. It sold to the first people who came through to look at it. We then had to find a temporary place to live.

Wade Gilchrist, our builder, started work on the new house. It would be located on a five-acre tract we had owned for three years and was located in a wooded area past St. Florian, out in the county. For temporary living quarters, we found a small rental house out past Cloverdale. It was a very comfortable place to live for about seven months. Most of our furniture was placed in storage. While the new home was going up, I spent time at the building site every day, and Cindy would join me after her school was out. That close attention resulted in getting a house that matched our expectations. There were no surprises, although we did go \$45,000 over the agreed upon price. Work on the house continued through January of 2001. I remember moving into the house in late February and using natural gas and a very limited electrical connection before the inspector could get there to approve the electrical job. We both loved the big, new house. It turned out to be much more beautiful than I could have possibly imagined when completely furnished.

Jerry was apparently quite successful in his nephrology fellowship at Vanderbilt Medical School in Nashville. He got along with everyone and seemed to be learning all about his new medical specialty. He was well into his second year when a series of events took place that almost cost him his life. I happened to be outside of the USA at the time. It is hard for me to recount those horrific events. I was 38 hours from home, in the middle of a former Russian country when I received the e-mail message below. We were not yet in our new house but were still living in the little rental house at the time.

I was teaching in Baku, Azerbaijan, on February 6, 2001 when I opened and read the following e-mail message:



Gerald:

*I am in Nashville. Jerry is in Vanderbilt hospital. He is alive and stable with all his doctor buddies with him. He is alert and responds to me when I talk to him, but he can't talk because he has some tubes down his throat. Paula's father shot him, and the bullet went down through his abdomen, doing some damage to the liver, and they had to remove half of his kidney. He is in intensive care. Jay is flying here in the morning, and his mother will be here later in the morning. I called Jimbo, and he is coming. I am here with Ellen, and I didn't want to deal with Paula's family alone, and I knew Jimbo would be strong. Paula is not here, and I hope she doesn't come. Dr. Lewis called me, and she has stayed with him the whole time, and he is getting excellent care. I will be here with him the whole time. I have my cell phone with me, but I will check the e-mail every hour since you will probably have better luck getting me this way. Remember, my cell phone number is 256-710-2432. The trauma unit # is 615-343-1100, and you could get me through that number. They can track me down if you can't get me on my cell. But I will be checking e-mail frequently.*

*They seem very pleased with the way his surgery went, and there were no surprises. I don't know what else to do, except I will try to call you later at the University or at the hotel. I got some numbers from Mike Butler. Hope to hear from you right away.*

*Love, Cindy*

I caught the first flight out of Baku to Frankfurt and then to Atlanta and on to Huntsville. I arrived in Nashville and was able to see Jerry in the intensive care unit. He had tubes and wires going into all parts of his body. When he was later released from Vanderbilt Hospital, we brought him to Florence, and he stayed with us in the little house while he recovered.

Jerry's first visitor was a nurse from the Haleyville Hospital where he moonlighted on weekends. Her name was Krista, and it was interesting to see them interact with each other. It appeared to be more than a simple, friendly relationship, and we started putting two and two together. Now I could see why J.T. Norris might want to shoot Jerry. That was pretty much the end of his marriage to Paula. He had so many problems at this point. He had no money and no place to live. I remember that he sometimes slept in his car in the Vanderbilt parking deck. How he went back and finished his fellowship is beyond me.

It was assumed that Paula's father would go to jail for attempted murder. The prosecutor asked Jerry if he was having an affair (with Krista) and Jerry said, "no." Paula's version of the story disputed Jerry's statements. The prosecutor told Jerry that if he testified, all of the facts would come out at the trial. Jerry told me that a trial could damage his reputation, and a doctor's reputation is very fragile. So J.T. Norris walked away without any jail time.

In a few months, Jerry and Krista were married in Coby Hall at the University of North Alabama. It was a very nice wedding and many friends and family members came to the ceremony. Jerry's mother and her sister, Juanita, came to the wedding. The reception was held at a restaurant on North Main Street. Jerry and Krista looked great that night. There was one interesting thing that happened at the reception. Jerry's three kids were there, of course. They walked outside on the sidewalk at some point in the evening. Paula, the first wife, had evidently been circling the restaurant in her car. Her three kids were shouting to their mother, and it just turned into an embarrassing side show.

Anyway, Jerry and Krista went on their honeymoon, and Jerry started looking for a nephrology position after he finished at Vanderbilt. He took a job in Columbus, Mississippi. Krista was an improvement over his first wife, and she seemed to make Jerry happy. That was the most important thing to us. Krista had been married two times before, and she did not have any children from previous marriages. She was into her early 30's and did not waste any time getting pregnant. Emma was born before they left Columbus. She was a lovely child and has turned out to be very smart and such a sweet young lady.

I think they stayed in Columbus about one year before moving back to the Shoals area. Jerry just did not like working with Jack, the owner of the nephrology practice. He was apparently difficult to work with at times. And surprisingly, he was not even a board certified nephrologist. Jerry took an ER job at the Russellville, Alabama hospital. They leased a nice apartment in Muscle Shoals for a year and later bought a lovely home in a very nice Florence neighborhood.

Jay finished his military duty in San Antonio and on Monday, March 31, 2008, I received the following e-mail message from him: Subject - *"I am now a civilian"*

*Well, today was the day that I had been looking toward since about 1984. I went to Fort Sam this morning, did some exit paperwork, got my Honorable Discharge, changed into civilian clothes in the bathroom, and hit the door running. I am now a free man, for the first time ever. The first 18 years of my life was spent answering to parents, and the last 24 years to the Army. Now at almost the age of 42, I answer only to Staci, and I do it only because I want to answer to her. Of course, unlike the Army, Staci gives much and asks little, and without her, life would be much, much worse instead of much, much better.*

*Somehow I got through the whole Army deal with a great education, high value job skills, a dream job, a beautiful and smart family, lots of money in the bank and basically perfect health. In 24 years of Army entanglement, during the time when the US was involved in numerous serious conflicts where soldiers got killed, including Panama, Persian Gulf 1, Bosnia, Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan, I only got deployed three times: once to Fort Rucker, Alabama, for two weeks (1995,) once to Ft. Polk, Louisiana for two weeks (2003,) and once to Bavaria, Germany for three months (2004.) As far as I know, no one got shot or blown up in any of those three places during the time I was there. I think a few rednecks got*

*hurt while harassing livestock (coincidentally in both Alabama and in Louisiana) and there were a few wrecks on the Autobahn – and those were the worst injuries to happen in the areas where I was deployed.*

*I have no idea how it worked out like it did but, I am grateful for it. What are the odds that it would work out that way if I were to do it all over again? I have been on the bubble to get sent somewhere awful every day for at least the last 7300 days, and somehow that bad day never came. But, it came at least once and generally several times, for every single other person that I started out with in the Army. That must be some kind of record. There is no way that this could have happened exclusively by chance. I must have been doing something all along to guide things in the direction they went, and I must not have ever pissed anyone off enough to give them cause to intentionally screw up my life. It is hard to believe, especially since I have never spent one single day sick, lame, or otherwise “non-deployable.” I mean, isn’t the whole purpose of the Army to send soldiers to war? How did I do that? It’s not a rhetorical question – I really do not know the answer.*

*Well, I am going downstairs for dinner. Staci has made some great smelling stir fry and later we are going to have a chocolate cake she made that says “Happy Freedom, March 31, 2008.” For the first time in my adult life, I will go to bed tonight with NO WORRY that tomorrow I will get sent somewhere awful for an indefinite period of time. I can grow my hair long if I want to (I do not,) get as fat as I want to (I do not,) or do any other legal things that I want to do without asking permission or getting in trouble. I am reminded of the following excerpt from “Run with the Horsemen” by Ferrol Sams:*

*“Listening at an early age to stories of the grandparents and also to reminiscences of the more ancient blacks, the boy had puzzled over the vanished condition of slavery. For the life of him he could see only superficial differences in the former and present systems. Once he mustered the temerity to ask Aunt Lou, who had yellow eyes and white braids. She was also reputed to have Indian blood, a condition which licensed her frank speech and short temper.*

*‘Co’s e we better off, boy. Watcher talkin’ bout? We free now. Watcher talkin bout what free mean? Hit mean we do what we wanta. Hit mean we go where we wanta. Hit mean we kin leave anytime we git ready, do we pay out and kin we find another place to stay. I ax my maw the same question when I was a little gal. Co’s e we better off. Git outta here!’ Since Aunt Lou and her husband had lived on the place for over twenty years and her father in law had belonged to the grandmother’s father, the boy was still puzzled. He finally decided that freedom meant you could move off the land to Cincinnati or Detroit and that it might be desirable to blacks but was unthinkable for whites.”*

*The point is that even though things won’t seem to change very much on the surface, they will be completely different down deep in the subconscious where all of a person’s thoughts and beliefs reside. As Martin Luther King said “Free at last, free at last, I thank God that I am free at last.”*

Jay and Staci moved to Knoxville and rented a nice condo. He accepted a position with the Knoxville Orthopedic Group. He had done a good deal of research on KOG and had even employed a lawyer specialist to negotiate his contract with that group. KOG has 26 orthopedic physicians and is highly respected in Tennessee and surrounding states. It turned out to be a dream job, and he soon started making a pile of money. More importantly, he loved the work. He now makes rounds and frequently operates on Saturdays and Sundays. I think he works too hard. But that is just my opinion, and I have never told him that.

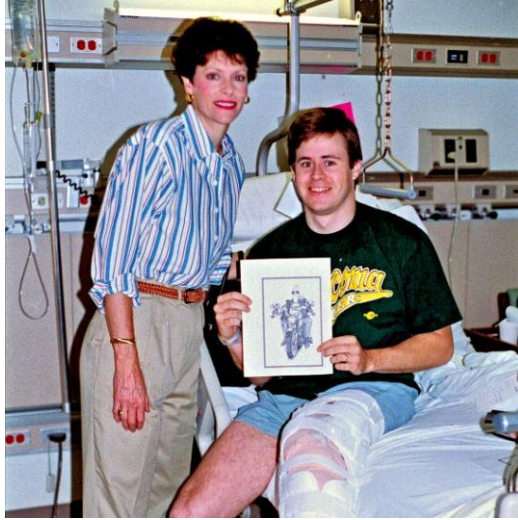
They built a beautiful home in an exclusive section of Knoxville. He had finally earned the right to get that Porsche he had asked us about when he was in high school. Actually, he had to negotiate the current deal with Staci as she did not completely agree that he should have a \$75,000 Porsche. So, he got an \$80,000 BMW instead, and she got an \$80,000 GMC Suburban.

We visited with them in Knoxville regularly, and I can say that they have such a beautiful family. Staci is so down to earth. She is a fantastic mother who works 24 hours per day to make sure that those kids are brought up properly. Those kids are so well-behaved, and she teaches them wonderful manners. JB finished at Webb School in 2015 and was a National Merit Scholar. He is now 19 and a freshman at Northwestern University. Bo is almost 18 and will be a senior at Webb next year. He wants to be an orthopedic surgeon like his dad. Molly is 11 and is the most beautiful and well-mannered child that anyone could ever have. Few families have prettier or smarter kids. All of them are in the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile in school. When they go places together on airplanes, people always tell Jay and Staci that they have the most beautiful and well-mannered children they have ever seen.

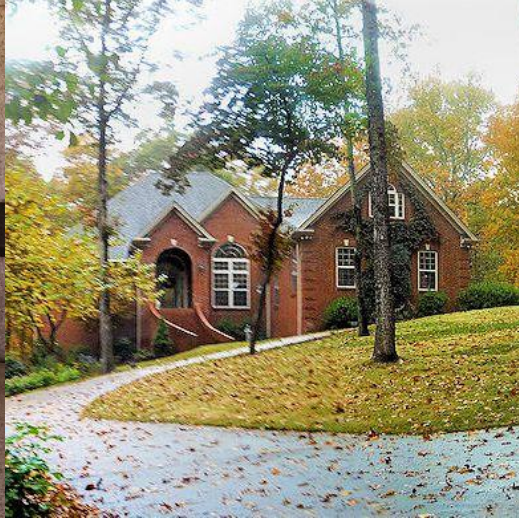
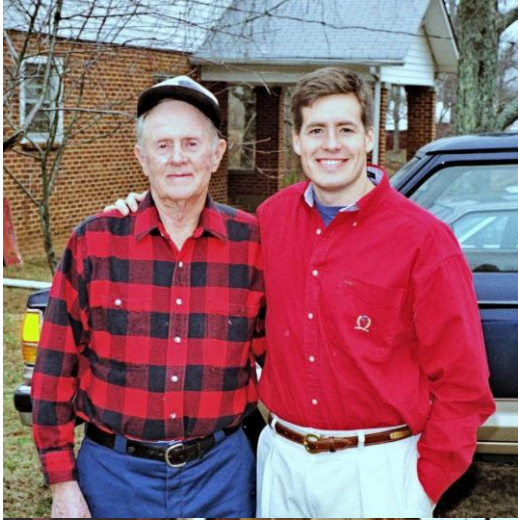
Jerry and Krista had a good marriage for several years. Jerry's mother came to live with them for a while. She told me that Krista was very self-absorbed and difficult to deal with. It was obvious that Jerry was not happy in Florence, so he found another ER job in Gulf Shores, Alabama. They sold their house and moved down there. We especially miss seeing Emma. She is a smart and lovely granddaughter.

My father and sister, Snooky, had passed away in 2005, and my mother passed away in 2007. I retired from UNA in 2007 but continued to teach overseas part-time for an additional year. Cindy retired from the Florence School System in May of 2008. During this two-year period, we traveled quite a bit. Some of our main international destinations included Greece, Santorini Island, New Zealand, Fiji, the Cook Islands, and Sicily. Following that, we researched and purchased a nice Tiffin Motorhome. Our first major trip in it was for 41 days to Alaska. This seemed to be the perfect way to see America, and we could take our dogs with us. In 2008, we used the motorhome to see New England, the Canadian Maritime Provinces, Newfoundland, and Labrador.

(Photos follow, also see - <http://geraldcraw.net/>)









## Chapter 14 – That Wonderful Thing Called "Retirement"

It was July 1, 2007, when I officially retired from UNA. Cindy was making plans to retire in less than a year. At almost 68 years of age, the fire was just not there any longer. It had become a chore to get up every morning and go to work. Things certainly were not the same as when I first started adjunct teaching at the junior college back in 1966. The main difference was that students no longer seemed "hungry" for a college education. There were still a few serious students, of course, but not very many in my classes. Most of them seemed to have grown up as part of the "Everyone Gets a Trophy Generation."

There were other factors, too, that made my job less desirable. At the top of that list were management changes in the College of Business. The main focus of the new dean, Kerry Gatlin, had become student evaluations instead of quality teaching. He gave everyone all A's, and I guess that he expected all of us to do the same. He liked to hire people without terminal degrees, people that would not threaten him. He managed to get rid of several top producers which actually made it impossible to become AACSB accredited. Another reason to get out was that my DROP account had reached its five-year limit. This was a program that put a good deal of extra money in my 401-K account for each of the last five years. All I had to do was delay my retirement for that five-year period. But the time for retirement had arrived.

Everyone needs to know about this potentially wonderful thing called retirement. It can be a very happy time if a few steps are taken in anticipation of the big event. As for me, I now enjoy doing what I want to do rather than what others expect me to do. At this point in my life, whose business is it, anyhow, other than Cindy, if I choose to read or play on the computer, until 4 AM, or sleep until noon? I can sing along to those wonderful tunes of the 50s, 60s, & 70s, and if I, at the same time, wish to shed a tear over some sad memory, I can do so. Sure, over the years, my heart has been broken. How can your heart not break, when you lose a loved one, or when a child suffers, or even when somebody's beloved pet gets hit by a car? But broken hearts can give us strength and understanding and compassion. A heart never broken is pristine and sterile and will never know the joy of being imperfect.

I can now walk on the beach, in a swim suit stretched over a bulging body and dive into the waves with abandon if I choose to do so, despite the pitying glances from younger folks. They, too, will get old. I know I am becoming forgetful. But there again, some of life probably needs to be forgotten. And eventually, I will remember the important things anyway. So I am blessed to have lived long enough to have my hair turning gray and to have my youthful laughs be forever etched into deep grooves on my face. So many folks never laugh, and so many have died before their hair could turn silver. As you get older, it is easier to be positive. You care less about what other people think. I don't question myself anymore. I've even earned the right to be wrong. To answer the question: yes, I like being old and retired. It has set me free. I like the person I have become. I am not going to live forever, but while I am still here, I will not waste time lamenting what could have been or worrying about what the future holds.

That is enough deep thinking. Actually, most of those words came from somewhere, but I cannot remember where. What have Cindy and I been doing since our retirement? There has been a lot of travel, some volunteer, and church work, some yard and housework, time spent on my memoirs, and a lot of nice naps with my dogs in the afternoons. One thing that has not been discussed in previous chapters is religion. Well, that is one topic with us that has evolved over the years. I have gone from being a Southern Baptist to a Unitarian Universalist.

As a child, I was taught to go to church with my parents, read the Bible, and do a lot of praying. That seemed to work fine for me over the years. I enjoyed the Baptist fellowship, church music, and activities. Those religious beliefs helped me survive some hard times following a divorce and being away from my children at the age of 30. While at the University of Arkansas, I attended a Methodist church. After moving to Florence, Cindy and I spent several years at Westminster Presbyterian Church. Looking back, I suspect that the primary motivation for changing churches was not the differing religious ideas as much as it was simple convenience. After the boys grew up and went off to college, Cindy and I stopped going to church.

In about 1998, Cindy started going to a small church in Florence, the Universal Unitarian Congregation of the Shoals. She made some good friends there. They did not view religion the same way that most other religious people see it. The UU's were socially liberal but very accepting of one another and the inherent worth and dignity of every person. They did not endorse ideas such as "going to hell" if members did not follow a strict set of rules. I started attending church with her in 2004 and can say that I have truly enjoyed the services, friendships, and experiences.

How about travel activities? We have always loved to travel. Readers will recall that my first teaching job out of graduate school was overseas. After that, I managed to make one or two work related trips to other countries every year, sometimes as many as three or four trips in a single year. The resulting frequent flyer tickets piled up and were used for personal holidays to many faraway places. After retirement, travel opportunities increased, mainly because we were no longer tied to a schedule. Beginning with our retirement, travel during spring break in 2007 involved a vacation to Athens, Greece and to magnificent Santorini Island. That was our first time to see Greece since we lived there in 1982 with Jerry and Jay. Athens is different now. It became a part of the European Union and their money is no longer Greek Drachmas. Things are more expensive and people are more cosmopolitan. They are now always in a rush and, sadly, most around Athens seem to speak English.

Santorini Island, however, is still more akin to the old Greece we knew. It is off the beaten path and things are slower, like they were back in 1974 and 1982. It is located about 120 miles by air from the Greek mainland and is the largest island in a small, circular archipelago which bears the same name and is the remnant of a 3,600-year-old volcanic caldera. We sat on our balcony with a glass of wine and looked down toward the deep blue water and noted the pieces of land jutting up through the surface in a circular pattern. This was at one time the top walls of a massive volcano. I would guess that the circular remnants of this now water-filled volcano measures approximately five miles in diameter.

We were at Santorini in May, which is the beginning of the tourist season, so I cannot say what it is like when thousands of visitors arrive later in the summer. But it was certainly a beautiful place, and one we will never forget. All of the whitewashed buildings sitting atop steep hillsides overlooking deep, clear blue waters of the Aegean Sea were stunning. The local people there were very nice to us, and we enjoyed meeting them as we traveled around the island in our little rental car. We particularly enjoyed the Greek food that we have come to love in past years.

Following my official retirement in 2007, Cindy and I spent all of July and part of August in New Zealand with Ron and Joy Rogers of Cleveland, Tennessee, friends for more than fifty years. That was the most beautiful place that I have ever seen. One could not look in any direction without seeing spectacular mountains, beautiful rivers or oceans, and natural beauty. Moreover, the people were so kind, gentle, and helpful. If I ever had to leave the USA, that is the place I could call home. It reminded me of how America was back in the 1950's.

On our way to New Zealand, we stopped for about three days on the island of Fiji. That was also a fine place, but it was fairly poor and depended entirely on tourism. The beaches were nice, and the people were friendly. Most of the local inhabitants were dark-skinned Polynesian people. I would not care to live there. On the way home from New Zealand, we stopped and spent about three days in Rarotonga, the main island of the Cook Islands archipelago. That was a fun place. We rented a van and drove about 30 miles around the island. We rested up, ate good food, and saw a great floor show at a local restaurant.

After our return to Alabama, I then traveled to Taipei, Taiwan to teach for a month. I had taught several times in Taiwan and can say that it was always such a pleasure going there. The students were smart, and they were serious about getting a college MBA. In general, teachers are given immense respect by students across Asia, but especially so in Taiwan. Taiwanese people have more personal class than mainland Chinese people. And the Taiwanese have more money than the people in China. The shopping is better there, and the tourism is more highly developed. I can say, however, that mainland China is making amazing progress and will economically overtake Taiwan in a few short years. This worries the Taiwanese because mainland China feels that Taiwan is still Formosa, a "breakaway" part of China. The only thing that has kept the mainland from forcefully retaking Taiwan is the promise from the USA to protect them in any conflict.

While overseas on this trip, I was able to spend a few days sightseeing in Seoul, Korea and a few days in Hong Kong, and Macau, China. Seoul was surprisingly well developed and had modern buildings and infrastructure. The people were well-dressed and very businesslike. One local tour that I enjoyed was a day trip up to the DMZ. It was somewhat frightening to look over and see North Korea. I had been to Hong Kong back in 1984, and I still found it to be as glamorous as ever. Now it is even more crowded. Macau was a real surprise. It is a gambling center, much like Las Vegas, and a part of China. I was shocked that I did not need to get a visa to enter this former Portuguese colony. And I was surprised that many people still speak Portuguese, and all of the road signs are in Portuguese.

Shortly after returning home in late September of 2007, my mother passed away. I wrote about that back in chapter four of this manuscript. It was a sad time, and the disputes with my sister (and her husband) took a heavy toll on me. It then took more than a month to catch up with chores at home, to settle family financial business, and to complete Taiwan expense and grade reports. Thanksgiving was soon upon us, and after that, we enjoyed a great Christmas trip to San Antonio to see Jay and his family. We were so busy at that point that I did not yet feel retired.

Things did change in early 2008. I started adjusting to a slower schedule and to a much more relaxed pace. There was no problem whatsoever with my newfound free time. It enabled me to sleep late if I chose, putter around in the yard, talk on my ham radio, plan more trips, try to be a better husband and to work on these memoirs. It is a magnificent feeling to have earned the right to do what I want rather than what someone else expects me to do. But that did not last too long.

Sometime after the first of the year, in 2008, there were inquiries about my teaching again in Asia. It took some time to set things up, but on April 28, I left for Taiwan to teach three graduate classes. These classes were only taught on weekends, long, and exhausting Saturdays and Sundays. However, the nice thing about this schedule was the fact that I had five straight days off each week and this gave me an opportunity to travel and see nearby places. While working in Taiwan this time, I spent one normal workweek (five days) in Singapore and Malaysia. Then, during another week off, I traveled to Hanoi, Vietnam. Then, in early June, I traveled from Taiwan to teach another class in Shanghai. When that was finished, I took an exciting 600-mile train ride from Shanghai to Beijing for the purpose of teaching what I thought was the last class of my career.

The city-state of Singapore was everything that the travel magazines claim it to be. It is a big, clean city that is only a few miles from the equator. Singapore was a British Territory between 1824 and 1963 when it achieved independence. At first it was lumped together with Malaysia, but after two years it separated from Malaysia. Travelers will be able to spot the British influences that remain. Everything is orderly and “proper.” One of the best parts of my time there was an all day visit to Sentosa Island where they have built a giant upscale entertainment park much like Disneyland. The population of Singapore is mostly people with Chinese ancestry.

While in Singapore, I took an all day bus tour across the border and up the Malay Peninsula. Malaysia is different in that the citizens are Muslim, and the great majority of them appeared to be peaceful, working class people with lower incomes. The houses were smaller, roads narrower, and people dress differently than in the city of Singapore.

My one-week trip to Hanoi was interesting. The people there are fairly poor but they were very nice to me. I saw women doing the same type of work that men were doing. I remember asking a lady if she remembered the “Vietnam War.” She thought for a moment and finally said that she did not remember it. I started mentioning some of the events of that war and she said, “Oh Yes, you mean the American War.” I also had a chance to visit the “Hanoi Hilton” or as the Vietnamese called it Hoa Lo Prison. This was the place where they kept American POWs, including John McCain. It is now a museum and is called Maison Centrale. It was a dreadful place that was actually classified as a dungeon by many. While in Hanoi, I also

visited the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum. It took me about two hours to wait in line to get inside to see the emperor's tomb.

It was nice to return home after ten weeks of being out of the USA. Cindy had retired on May 30, 2008, and I was sorry that I had been unable to help her celebrate that big occasion. I did prearrange with Marty Smith to have some nice flowers there at her retirement ceremony. There is a photo of her that was taken and it shows an uneasy smile (page 2008 of the Crawford Family website.) I think that her expression may reveal some anxiety about "what am I going to do now?" After all, her last 35 years were spent in rather structured school environments. Our little dachshund, Bubba had died while I was away, and Cindy had to take care of those difficult matters. He was about 14 years old and finally just wore out.

On July 1, Cindy and I left for Alaska in the RV. We spent more than six weeks on the road, and it was a special time for both of us old retired schoolteachers. I still cannot believe that we took off in that big RV and drove up through Tennessee, Missouri, Minnesota, North Dakota, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon Territory and Alaska. It was a fabulous trip. We drove about 9,000 miles and had no problems whatsoever. Dixie was with us, and she seemed to enjoy the trip. I remember that she would bark at the buffalo and bear that would cross the road in front of us.

After returning home, we then took off on another trip. This time we spent twelve days in late October vacationing in Sicily. That was also a special time. We rented a car and drove all over that lovely island. The most interesting place was around Mt. Etna, an inactive volcano that can be seen from thirty miles away. We also enjoyed the food and wine because it has the Italian flavors that we have come to love.

In May of 2009, we spent three weeks on a Danube river cruise from the Black Sea to Budapest, Hungary with Ron and Joy Rogers. That part of Eastern Europe was interesting because of the then recent Kosovo-Serbia border clashes. Our route started in Romania on the Black Sea, and we traveled on the Danube to Budapest, Hungary.

Then Cindy and I spent most of August and half of September in the RV in the Maritime Provinces of Canada (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island,) and on to Newfoundland and Labrador. We had so many wonderful experiences on that trip. We met some great fellow RV'ers, and the scenery was about as beautiful as anyone could ever see. The cool weather and frequent rainfall made it the perfect climate for growing flowers, and Canada has the best flowers.

After we returned home, I learned that Northwest Junior College in Mississippi had selected me as their 50<sup>th</sup> year Outstanding Alumni. I thought at first that they were kidding with me about it but later learned that it was true. I thought then, and I still think, that they could have found someone better than me for that honor. Anyway, Jerry and Jay came to the affair that was held in conjunction with the school's homecoming. Unfortunately, it was on the day that Ole Miss played Miss State, so the NWJC turnout was not quite as good as they had expected.

In early 2010 we built a 924 square foot RV garage which made it so much more convenient for keeping the RV out of the weather and for loading and unloading it before and after trips. I learned a lot by doing a good part of the subcontracting work. But, anyway, it looks good and serves the intended purpose.

Then in September of 2010, we went on a 1000-mile Volga River cruise between St. Petersburg and Moscow with Jerry and Martha Duncan. We sure enjoyed being with them, and we all learned so much on that trip. I knew a few words in Russian, and they came in handy a time or two. Seeing the Kremlin and St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow was a great event. I also enjoyed Kizhi Island which is in the middle of Lake Onega. It is one of the most ancient inhabited sites in Russia. We also walked around the Church of the Transfiguration with its 22 timbered onion domes. Jerry Duncan took some excellent photos for us, and we had some of them framed. After our cruise, we flew to Kiev, Ukraine where we spent an additional five days. That too was educational and enjoyable. Jerry and Martha were unable to continue with us on the Kiev extension of our trip.

In March of 2011, we went on a one month GCT tour to South America. Our trip began in Miami, Florida where we boarded a flight to Lima, Peru. We toured the city for three days before flying to Cuzco. From there, we traveled by train to the ruins of Machu Picchu, a breathtaking ancient city in the mountains nearby. After eight days, we flew back to Lima and then on to Santiago, Chile. We had been to Santiago four years earlier and had enjoyed this big, modern, and up-to-date city.

Our next stop was in Puerto Varas, Chile which is located in the Patagonian Region of South America. This is such a beautiful place. From there, we traveled across the Andes Mountains to Bariloche, Argentina by motorcoach. While in this lovely medium-sized city, we visited a 14,000 acre working cattle ranch on the windy Patagonian steppes. All of the women in our group fell in love with the handsome young ranch owner who prepared a delicious meal of barbecued lamb.

The next day, we flew on to Buenos Aires, Argentina. This is a big city and our group enjoyed learning about its historic past. This nation has had many colorful leaders, such as Juan and Evita Peron, and has flirted with socialism in the past. They have had plenty of economic and military problems in recent years. These problems have led to disputes with neighbors and even the British over "the Maldives" or as most of us know them, the Falkland Islands. I personally did not care for our tour leader because he seemed to be somewhat anti-American.

From Buenos Aires, we flew to Brazil's Iguassu Falls in the southern part of Brazil. These unbelievably large clusters of waterfalls are on the Argentine border. We stayed in a lovely hotel and toured the falls. From there we flew to Rio de Janeiro, the capitol of Brazil. Our small tour group saw all of the famous tourist attractions, including the iconic statue of Christ the Redeemer which stands with outstretched arms high above Guanabara Bay. We also toured the famous "favelas" or slums in Rio. That was a wonderful trip to remember.

On August 25 of 2011, we went on a 40-day RV trip to eleven US National Parks located in Montana, Idaho, Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming. The first stop was in West Yellowstone, Montana. RV'ing had become a wonderful travel option for us. We could take our dogs and



our own hotel along with us. This allows us to really absorb the beautiful scenery and take wonderful photos at our own pace. We also enjoy meeting other RV enthusiasts. This mode of travel is not cheap, but it is far more relaxing than using cars and hotels.

In March of 2012, we spent about one month in South Africa. Our direct, nonstop flight from Atlanta to Johannesburg was approximately 16 hours. We met some wonderful people and had a great learning experience. Johannesburg is a big and rough city. The blacks control the city, and there is a great deal of crime there. I would not advise going there without being in a tour group and having an experienced guide. After that, we traveled by motorcoach up to Kruger National park, an amazing animal sanctuary. The park is larger than several US states. There we saw elephants, cape buffalo, lions, wild dogs, cheetah, giraffe, and much more, and they were in the wild, their natural habitat.

We then traveled south by motorcoach along the coastal road and eventually reached Cape Town, the most beautiful city in South Africa. We spent a good deal of time with friends that were made on this trip, Roger and Barb Shulze. He is a retired Chrysler engineer and now an administrator at the University of Michigan. She is a retired schoolteacher. After returning home, we later drove up to Michigan and spent three days with them at their summer cottage on Lake Huron. And they came through Alabama and spent a few days with us in Florence. They were on their way to their condo in Florida.

In August of 2012, Cindy and I flew to Iceland for eleven days. We rented a car and just took our time driving around the ring road. We had hotel reservations at the beginning of our trip, in Reykjavik, and at the end of our trip in Keflavik, Iceland, next to the airport. Most of the time, however, we just looked for nice little bed and breakfast places to stay. Iceland is a most beautiful and different place to see. I had seen it at one time on a business trip but did not get to visit the lovely mountains and unspoiled countryside. Sheep are everywhere, and the people are so nice and friendly. They have wonderful, fresh fish there in every restaurant, every day. Fishing is the largest industry in Iceland.

We took a ten-day Princess cruise to Panama which departed on February 26, 2013. We, of course, locked through the Panama Canal which is a grand tourist attraction. Other ports of call included the island of Aruba, which was a disappointment. It was just a small island made up of rocks. Their main tourist attraction was a natural rock bridge that had collapsed. We also stopped off in Cartagena, Columbia, which is a nice, touristy place. The water was so rough that we were unable to stop in Limon, Costa Rica, but that was okay, as we had been there before. Our last stop was Ocho Rios, Jamaica. Cindy had a great time swimming with the dolphins. We had been to Jamaica before, and it seemed as though everyone is out to get money from the "rich" Americans. I do not care to go there again.

We had not taken many cruises like this, so it was a new experience for us. All of the previous cruises and overnight ferries taken in the past had been on smaller ships. One of them had been on a working ship off the coast of Norway, but none had been on a gigantic cruise liner like this one. We traveled with Roger and Barb Shulze and had great fun. There was plenty of wonderful food and wine.

Bill Stewart called me in 2012 about teaching online classes each semester at Mississippi University for Women. I did that for four semesters but finally was able to get out of it

because of frequent travel. The students were mostly black and were academically very weak. I was happy to finish up that job.

In January of 2013, my left knee had become so painful that I had to take some sort of action to get relief. Dr. Neal Clement at the Bone and Joint Clinic in Florence examined it and concluded that a total knee replacement was the next logical step. After sending the X-rays to Jay for evaluation, we set the surgery date as March 19, 2013. Dr. Clement instructed me to stop taking all medications that would act as a blood thinner. Without Meloxicam, I realized how badly the knee had deteriorated. I could barely walk and found it almost impossible to get into a car. I certainly could not drive during the two weeks before the operation. Dr. Clement told Cindy that the operation would be a "rough" one so that managed to get our attention.

The surgery went well, and I spent four days in ECM hospital and 12 days at Glenwood Rehabilitation Center. Glenwood turned out to be a waste of time. I did not make much progress there, in my opinion. I was anxious to get out and start on some real rehabilitation work at the Bone and Joint Rehab Center in Florence. I went three days each week, and they really pushed me to make a full recovery. There were two physical therapists that knew what they were doing. After about three weeks, I had caught up with and passed most of the other people that I had gotten to know at Glenwood. After two months, there was no pain, and I could work a full day outside without problems. I did not even think about the knee any more. I was so glad to have that pain and worry out of my way.

Then on July 6 of 2013, we left on an RV trip to Glacier National Park in Northern Montana. After a few days there, we traveled to Calgary, a province in Alberta, Canada, where we joined a group of RV'ers with the Fantasy RV Travel Company. We then spent 16 days seeing the beautiful mountains between Calgary and Vancouver, BC. Areas visited included Banff National Park, Jasper National Park, Vancouver and Victoria Island, all in Western Canada. After we left at the end, it took six days to get back to Florence, Alabama. We drove approximately 5,600 miles round-trip before getting home.

While at home during the summer, our border collie, Dixie, seemed to need drinking water more and more frequently. She would drink it so fast that she started regularly throwing-up. This became such a problem that we carried her to our vet. X-rays revealed that she had an advanced case of abdominal cancer. There was no cure for this problem, and the vet advised us to take her home and love her for a few days before bringing her back and having her put to sleep. On August 27, we hugged and kissed her and held her paw as the vet gave her a shot. She gradually relaxed before closing her eyes. That was a hard thing to go through for me. There is a poem that I regularly read to remind me of Dixie. It starts off with something like this: "By the edge of a wood, at the foot of a hill, is a lush, green meadow where time stands still. Where the friends of man and woman do run, when their time on earth is over and done." After almost three years, I still miss my loyal friend "Dixie."

On October 10, we traveled to China, Tibet, and Cambodia for 25 days. Cindy had not seen much of China so this was a great trip for her. I really enjoyed Tibet and Xian because I had never been to those places before. The trip included a three-day cruise on the Yangtze River where we locked through their giant new dam near Wuhan. After that, we flew to Hong

Kong and on to an eight-day post-tour of Angkor Wat and Siem Reap in Cambodia. We again traveled with our friends Roger and Barb Shulze.

We added a new family member in February of 2014. Her name is Minnie, and she is a beautiful little miniature Dachshund. She was born on December 20, 2013, and we brought her home six weeks later. She is black and tan and is shiny and pretty. She looks almost identical to Mouse, but she is smaller, and she has a longer body. We do not think that she will be more than nine pounds when she is grown. At first Mouse was a little "standoffish" but that did not last very long. They now run and play in the yard, and we laugh and laugh at them. She is more active than Mouse and seems to enjoy learning all of his routines. I do think that she is perhaps more stubborn than Mouse.

We had booked a trip to India, Sri Lanka, and Nepal on March 3, 2014 but decided to delay that excursion. Mr. Crook was quite sick, and Cindy did not want to leave him in such an uncertain condition. He had liver cancer and was not doing very well. He was 94 and had limited mobility. It was good that we cancelled that trip because on Feb 24, I had a surprise heart attack.

My dad lived to be 92 and my mother 88 and neither of them ever had any serious heart trouble. My mother did have a pacemaker installed shortly before she passed away. As far as my cholesterol, it was in the normal range. I guess that I was overweight and had become too sedentary in my early seventies. Apparently, the Advil and Meloxicam that I took for more than 30 years for arthritis pain partly caused the heart problems. My cardiologist also believes that those (NSAIDs) products were partially at fault. I can no longer take NSAIDs but now take Tylenol, which is not as effective. As part of my rehabilitation, I lost 30 pounds and became more active. I had a three month follow up appointment with Dr. Danny McFall on June 10, and he was amazed that my numbers were so much improved. Cindy was and continues to be really supportive in my rehab program. She prepares excellent foods that support a healthier lifestyle, and she accompanied me to the heart rehab program on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays each week at ECM Hospital.

Mr. Crook's health seemed to stabilize, so we made a trip to San Francisco and Lake Tahoe in August. And in October of 2014, we traveled to Tasmania and mainland Australia for one month. Our traveling companions were Ron and Joy Rogers from Cleveland, Tennessee. That was an exciting and educational trip, especially seeing Tasmania and the Outback. My only concern down there was that prices were about double what they are in the USA.

In late 2014 and early 2015, Mr. Crook's health deteriorated. He passed away on January 24, 2015 at the age of 94. He was buried on what would have been his 95th birthday. He was truly a fine man, a retired Naval Commander and a wonderful father to Cindy, Wes, and Lonnie. It was a sad time, and Cindy was comforted that Jerry and Jay were able to attend the funeral in North Little Rock, Arkansas.

In August of 2015, we purchased a brand new 2016 Tiffin motorhome. Our rationale for doing that was to enjoy travel while we still could. After all, we were getting older and would only have a few more years to do these sorts of things. Besides, all of the terrorism going on overseas gave us an uneasy feeling about continued international travel. And, frankly, there was not that much of the world left for us to see. Additionally, our old motorhome was due for some work and was not as dependable as we would like for it to be. We had owned it for eight years and had driven it more than 66,000 miles. Our first trip in the new Tiffin Allegro was to Oregon and California. We drove all the way down Route 101 on the scenic Pacific

Coast Highway with a group of RV'ers. In July and August of 2016, we will travel in our RV to the Gaspé Peninsula on the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Maritime Provinces in Eastern Canada.

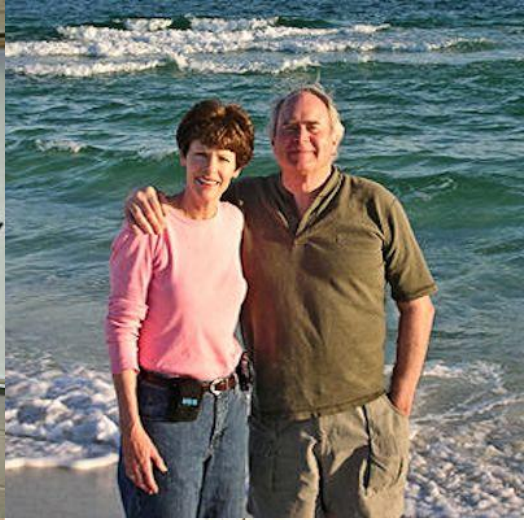
During February and March, 2017, we will also be taking a trip with Overseas Adventure Travel to Central America. Our itinerary will include Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. Most of our travel plans, however, for the next few years will center on domestic and Canadian travel in our motorhome.

It is easy to see that both of us have remained active and have truly enjoyed the past nine years of our retirement. We do whatever each of us want to do, and this has turned out to be better than we ever dreamed it would be. Our living pattern involves getting up each morning about 9 or so. In the summer, I usually go out and work in the yard for a while. Then it is lunchtime and after that, a short nap in the recliner with our dogs "Minnie" and "Mouse." Then I fool around on the computer for a while before dinner. After dinner, we usually watch a movie. Following my heart attack back in 2014, I purchased a nice treadmill. Each day I make an effort to use it for about 30 to 40 minutes. That usually burns off about 300 calories.

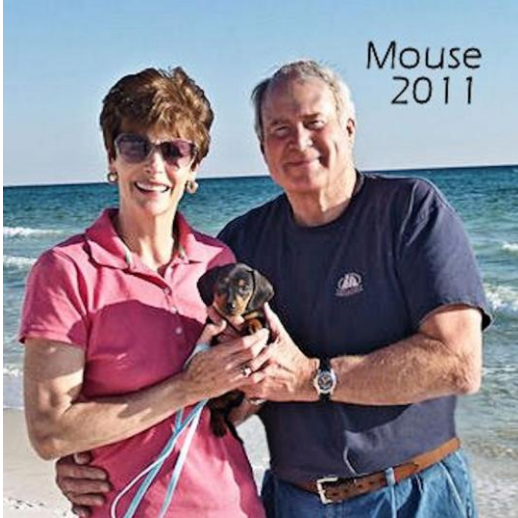
We see Jay, Staci, and their kids about three or four times each year. They are a busy family. Usually, we go there because they have so many things going on that it is hard for them to get away. They have not been to Florence in more than two years. Their kids are doing so well. All three of them are beautiful children and so smart. Jay is a complete success in his medical career. He loves his work and he makes a ton of money. He goes to work early and comes home late. He elects to take his calls and even takes other physicians' calls on weekends. I guess that the money is just too good to turn down. He is an organized guy and can get things done quickly. He has also started a physicians' computerized appointment making service or a "contact portal" as it is called. It is expected that it, too, will be successful.

Jerry and Krista did get a divorce. We do not get to see him as often as we would like. He is an excellent physician and has always been a fine son. He knows how to make others feel good. He has a way with people; they love him wherever he goes. Jerry is also highly successful in his medical career. Unfortunately, he has not found the right woman to round-out his life. He is really good with Emma, and she is a lovely young lady. She spends far more time with Jerry than she does with her mother. She attends a public school in Orange Beach, Alabama.

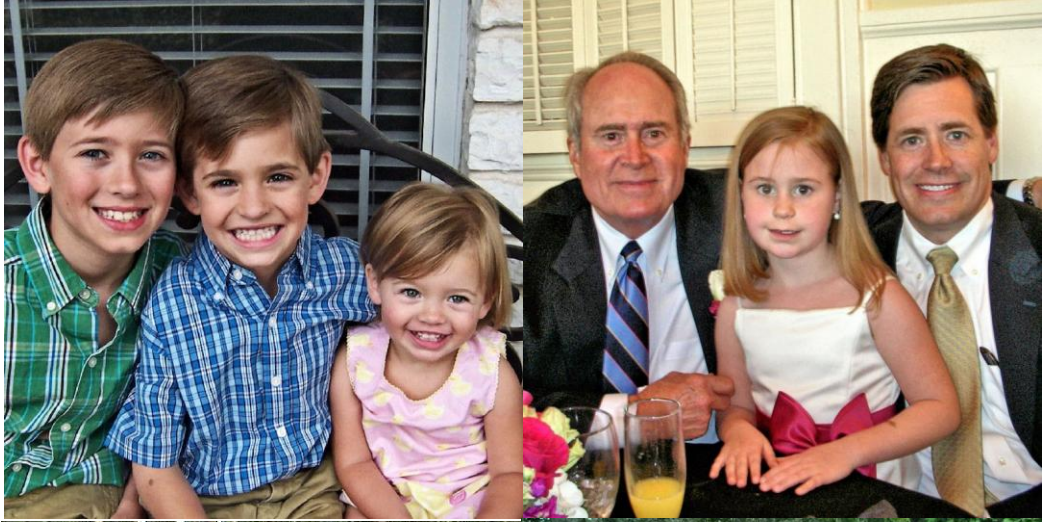
(Photographs follow, also see - <http://geraldcraw.net/>)













## Chapter 15 – Looking Back

Everyone seems to carry around a complex mixture of memories. Older people, like me, tend to focus more on events that took place when we were younger. The reason is likely that we have a lot of "past" and not much "future." Most of us probably want to remember the good times and try to selectively repress the mistakes and sad times of yesterday. In this concluding chapter, I will focus on those things that I am most proud of in my life and those things that have made me happy. I will also try to discuss some of the things that have worried me, and I will briefly acknowledge a few of my big mistakes. Most of them probably cannot be rectified at this point, but simple recognition of them could still serve a purpose. This "Looking Back" chapter will examine various things that have occupied my mind over the years.

While getting older, I have started thinking about my remaining time more carefully. I still have some energy left and want these years to be meaningful and productive. So many people just withdraw and wither away when they get older. Some of our older friends have simply turned up their toes and died. Just think about it—what if you no longer had any parents, teachers, or role models that you once turned to for advice or friendship? That is what could happen if one is lucky and lives a reasonably long life.

My Dad started showing signs of Alzheimer's disease, and he passed away at the age of 92. Other than those later memory problems, he was in excellent health all of his life up to the time we placed him in a nursing home. My mother always had some orthopedic issues, arthritis and back problems, but she was still quite sharp up until the last year of her life. If I continue to be healthy and fortunate, hopefully, I should make it to 86. The Social Security Life Expectancy Calculator gives me a projected figure of 86.6 years and that seems to be the most frequent age mentioned for white males in the obituary column of the local Times Daily newspaper. All of this means that I could well have about 10 years left, if I am lucky. People have always said that I look younger than my actual age, but they may not realize that I have survived some hard years. And there are other factors that will work against my efforts at longevity. I have carried more weight than needed most of my life, and I smoked when I was younger. Additionally, I have enjoyed "mass quantities" of unhealthy things at times during my days.

Readers already know that I came from a meager family background, but it is not something that I have tried to hide. That experience has enabled me to fully appreciate the "bountiful harvest" that has come my way. My greatest luck came from the ovarian lottery—that is, being born to parents like John and Scyble Crawford. I was born mentally bright, healthy, and later grew to be a fairly tall man. I am white and a citizen of the greatest nation in the world, the United States. Millions of people try to get into this country one way or another each year. Since 1970, U.S. legal and illegal immigration has skyrocketed.

It was also my good fortune to have had parents that were from hard working stock. They never thought about entitlements, expected a “free lunch” or some sort of handout. They were willing to work as long and hard as necessary to get what they needed. And they taught their three children these important character traits so that we might earn a decent living and achieve our goals. It seems that an ever increasing number of Americans are moving away from this sort of logic.

I remember being in dangerous places so many times in my life. Some examples include playing football, climbing tall radio towers without a safety belt, driving when I was too sleepy to be safe, running around with rough and tough friends, hunting and shooting guns, riding motorcycles and fighting too much on regular occasions. I remember "topping" a large tree that I had cut down and having it roll over on me. That incident badly damaged both of my knees when I was 33 years old. I would have died if my dad had not quickly used a heavy pole to lift the tree and allow me to escape. So often I have been fortunate not to have been killed or severely injured. Some of my younger friends have died doing these sorts of things.

And I was lucky to be born at a time when it was not necessary to serve in the military during wartime. In November of 1954, I was only 15 and too young for duty when the Korean Armistice was signed. In 1956, I joined the Tennessee Air National Guard and started to college the following year. Both of these things helped young men avoid being drafted during the Vietnam War. More than 58,000 American casualties were recorded during that conflict. I was married in 1961 and had sons in 1964 and 1966. These things also helped keep me off the draft board list. So, I never had to serve in dangerous places where I could have easily been killed. Most of my good fortune in this regard was simple luck, although I would have served proudly if called to duty.

During my younger years, college was truly affordable, and I had enough common sense to get as much education as possible. That MBA degree and a later PhD allowed me to get "safe" jobs at universities where I dealt with educated people. I was not required to work on some construction site or in a blue collar environment where mortality rates are much higher. A big part of my later good fortune, however, was related to auspicious associations with the "right" people.

### Seven Influential People in My Life

There were seven people along the way that I was most fortunate to have known. Their influence played a major role in my personal and business maturity. These people were my mother and father, Jerry Duncan, Beverly Wolfe, Chris Christopher, Bill Stewart and Cindy Crook Crawford. Some have already been previously mentioned or briefly discussed.

One earlier chapter was devoted to each of my parents. People in my generation tended to appreciate their parents more, it seems. I was probably luckier than most. My parents would

have done almost anything to help us when we were growing up. More importantly, they passed along those values that made a big difference in helping their three children escape a life of mediocrity. They taught us to work hard and to be frugal. Further, they encouraged systematic savings and investment. My parents did not throw money, cars, and other "goodies" at their children as so many parents do today. My parents felt that kids should earn those things in order to develop good habits of industry. In those days, "no free lunch" thinking was still very common. I now hear many modern-day, well-meaning parents say things like "I want my kids to have it easier than I had it." Most parents seem to discourage competition because everyone cannot be winners. They fear that some kids will get their feelings hurt if they do not win every time. So many young people today support political candidates like Bernie Sanders who openly preach socialism.

When I was about 16, I came to know Jerry Duncan. He was different from most of my other friends who were a pretty rough bunch. I learned from him that it was not necessary to do stupid things to "fit in" with the group. And, I learned about nice things and about good manners and about how classy people live on a daily basis. He and his family showed me, through example, how educated people think and relate to each other. I saw how professional people in his family spent their time and how they communicated with each other. I was drawn to their reasonably upscale lifestyle. I came to appreciate the value of a quality education and to understand that a college degree was needed to support a family, to buy quality merchandise, to appreciate good music, and to participate in a civilized dinner conversation. I came to see that one could prepare himself to earn respect and have a decent economic future. Jerry Duncan went on to become a physician, and we have remained friends since 1955. He has helped me to proofread and edit this manuscript.

I met Beverly Wolfe in 1959 at Delta State. She helped teach me the importance of study and how to make good grades. She also taught me to get serious about life, to set goals, and to make plans that would insure the achievement of those goals. Before meeting her, I had been a weak student with very average grades. That all changed during our two years together at college. My ego simply would not allow me to continue as a low achiever while we were dating. I had to get organized and work hard in my classes in order to maintain a desired level of self-respect. It then became possible to see the favorable attention and high regard that came along with being on the Dean's List and the President's List. The motivation that came from classroom achievement carried forward into my first real job. We married in 1961 and later had two fine sons. Although the marriage only lasted for eight years, I came away from that situation with much more than I had back at the time I entered Delta State.

While at R. J. Reynolds, my first real job, I started to work with Harry E. Christopher in late 1966. He was a seasoned manager with a strong personality and high expectations. At first, I think that I was technically considered to be a management trainee and most likely held probationary status until I was able to prove myself and get a permanent position. Chris gave me the opportunity to succeed, and he helped me along the way. He became my mentor and

friend. I learned so much from him over the 47 years that we worked together, vacationed together, and fished together. We attended his funeral in 2012 in Winston-Salem, NC.

After leaving RJR in August of 1970, I started a new life as a graduate student at the University of Arkansas. That is where I met Cindy Crook. If you have read earlier chapters of this manuscript, you already know that Cindy was a darling, 21-year-old student that I met and grew to care about. She was really a special person and seemed to be drawn to Jerry and Jay. This, along with her warm and loving personality, caused me to care deeply for her. We grew closer and married in 1972. She has been the best thing that could have ever happened to me. She has been a gift from heaven. She is kind and cares deeply for others. In all of these years, I have never heard her say bad things about anyone. Instead, she will look for the good qualities in every person. She loves little animals, flowers, and kids. She makes me feel exceptional, and there is nothing that I would not do for her.

On July 29, 2016, Cindy and I will have been married 44 years. We have done so many great things together and have traveled to so many wonderful places. She is a joy to live with, and I can say that I could never have found a better wife and equally as important, in those early years, a great mother figure for Jerry and Jay. She has been a tremendous influence on them while they were growing up, and I know in my heart that they would not have become successful medical doctors if she had not been there to help them develop into such fine men. Cindy has had more influence on me over the years than any other human being. I can say without reservation that she is the person who truly changed my life and made it better.

I met Bill Stewart in 1974 when I interviewed for a teaching position at the University of North Alabama in Florence. At first he was Mr. Stewart and was the head of the Marketing and Management Department in the College of Business. Two former Arkansas colleagues told me that he was a good guy and that I would enjoy working with him. When I took the job, he wasted no time finishing his PhD degree. Working for him without a terminal degree would not have been a good situation. He soon saw that I was no threat to him, and we developed a lasting friendship

I became a real producer and took every opportunity to make him look good. Bill appreciated our mutually beneficial relationship, and he threw many "goodies" my way over the years. I was fortunate to be able to do a good deal of consulting work which enabled me to use that data to write and publish almost 200 journal articles and papers at conferences over the years. I would usually develop the papers, get Bill to look over them as a co-author, and he would make suggestions and a few corrections. He would then find the money to fund our travel so that we could present these research papers. I remember that we developed and presented our research at so many overseas conferences over a 30-year time period. Some of the experiences we had were truly memorable. A whole book could be written about the situations we encountered in strange places such as Poland, and East Germany before the



wall came down, and Ireland, Italy, Switzerland, Finland (above the Arctic Circle,) Azerbaijan, Slovakia, Iceland, and Hungary.

Bill Stewart has been one of the funniest guys that I have ever met. He had a tremendous effect on my career during the 1975-2005 period. He even hired me to teach online courses for several semesters at another university after I had retired from UNA. The two of us see each other regularly in our retirement years, and we laugh and laugh about our memorable experiences together.

### Many Happy Surprises Came My Way

Everyone appreciates a nice, serendipitous event. There have been many happy surprises in my life, and some of the best are discussed in the pages that follow. They are arranged in chronological order.

I never really expected to graduate from college. No one in my family had ever done that, and it is still thrilling for me to have been the first. That event altered the course of my life, and it most certainly made many other things possible. This accomplishment enabled me to make more money, to get a better job, have a fine family, and travel all over the world. That BS degree later enabled me to get an MBA and a PhD degree. I still regularly lift a glass to celebrate the successful defense of my dissertation on a cold day in November of 1973. That capstone event made so many other wonderful things possible.

It has been a big and happy surprise to have two sons that are smart, handsome, and admired by everyone. Very few parents are lucky enough to have such accomplished offspring. It is hard for me to hold back my enthusiasm for their many accomplishments. Cindy tells me that it makes other parents feel bad when we talk about Jerry and Jay too much.

The biggest and best surprise in my life was marrying and spending most of my adult life with Cindy Claire Crook (Crawford.) Not many people that I have ever known were so lucky in such matters of the heart. I was a big guy and was probably considered to be nice looking in my younger days. But Cindy was a tall girl and mighty pretty. She probably could have done better than a divorced guy, ten years older, with two kids. When we met, it took me a long time to become brave enough to even kiss her goodnight. I simply did not want to “scare her off.” I just took my time and waited to see where our relationship might go.

The key ingredient in us staying together in those early days may have been Jerry and Jay. She liked those two little boys from the very beginning. Looking back, I think that Cindy just loves small critters, and she was drawn to those two boys who thought that she literally “hung the moon.” She liked taking care of them and teaching them all sorts of things. They sure thought she was the best thing that their dad had ever brought home.

I remember asking them to please be sweet to her, to thank her after each meal, and to let her know how much they appreciated all of her efforts. There was absolutely nothing to worry about because they treated Cindy so well, and it made me very happy. I told them what terrific sons they were for having such good manners. The important thing here is that they were not nice to her because of me; they simply adored her and it was just naturally obvious to everyone.

After we married and started a life together, Cindy continued to be their good friend. She always considered their interests before her own. This continued through their years of growing up and becoming young men. They would come to her with their girlfriend problems and school problems. Jerry once told me that he would prefer that Cindy went to PTO and schoolroom events. I suspected that he liked her youth and appearance compared to other homeroom mothers. As for Jay, there are several stories that I recall about his girlfriend situations. Cindy knew how to help him make the best decisions about dating and that sort of thing. He valued Cindy's advice and counsel.

Another big and happy surprise in my life came when the boys' mother called to ask if we wanted to take full custody of them. I think Jerry was half-way through the sixth grade and Jay was half-way through the fifth grade. That was one of the happiest days of my life, and I will always treasure their years with us. They were fine students and good boys. Everyone liked them because they had nice manners, and they knew how to shake hands and carry on a good conversation. The boys' mother once told me that some of her friends and family members had given her a hard time about letting them come to live with us. I thought about it and have concluded that her actions may well have shown that she was a better mother than others to allow the boys to be in a place where they could possibly be happier and have two caring parents. I respect her for making that decision. The boys' mother was also very proud of them. The following note is dated June 1, 2004.

*Hi Gerald,*

*Journals are very telling things. I wonder what I would discover about myself if I had recorded all of my musings and "dreams" through the years. Frankly, I don't remember having any recurring "ambition" except to find something that I felt that I really excelled at - it never happened. I always came up short as measured against my peers, so I finally dropped out. Jerry almost did, and, except for your relentless encouragement, he would probably have been detoured for life. Well Done!!! I assure you, you will be remembered for your parenting achievements, and, as I have said to many a person over the years, I am glad you are my sons' father. I hope you get as much joy as you deserve from your lifetime achievement of guiding the boys onto the path of excellence. Of no less importance, Cindy deserves equal credit for backing you up in your commitment to parenting excellence. Step-mothering is an unenviably daunting task, but she pulled it off as non other I have ever known - especially considering that the biological mother was lurking in the background as a potential cog in the wheel. We can all celebrate her for her crowning achievement, and I do so with gusto. It has been a joy to be a player (if only sharing a bit part) in the unfolding drama of our boys' growth and development. What can I say? **Thanks for the memories!!!** Have a wonderful day!*

*Beverly*

Another memorable time came along when Jay asked me to help him get into West Point. He did everything necessary to get in and when he started to school there, he stuck with it. That boy graduated and even got into Vanderbilt medical school on his own. An equally memorable and happy event that I will always remember occurred when Jerry got into OCS and became an Army officer. He later went on to get into medical school (a second time) at UAB. His road towards a career in medicine was a circuitous one, but he turned out to be a fine physician.

We managed to plan our retirements so that we could afford to do the things that both of us enjoy. That is another happy surprise. After the boys finished college, both of us followed a tight budget for many years and invested wisely. This allowed us to be in sound financial shape when we finally retired. Our nest eggs were more than adequate for a comfortable retirement.

It was a truly happy surprise that we were able to design and build our own large and comfortable retirement home in 2001. And, it just turned out better than either of us ever dreamed that it would be. We see so many older people that are required to live on Social Security or a fixed-income when they retire. At this point, I am almost 77 and Cindy is almost 67, so we hope that we can stay here another 10 to 15 years, assuming that we both live that long.

One thing that we have enjoyed a great deal is travel. It has been a happy surprise indeed that we have been all over the USA and to so many far away places. We continue to travel at every opportunity. Both of us still enjoy this sort of thing. Another facet of our interest in travel was the purchase of a nice motorhome back in 2007 and a new one in 2015. We have used our RV's for trips to places like Alaska, the U.S. Rockies, many U. S. and Canadian National Parks, Canadian Maritime provinces, the Canadian Rockies, and the West Coast.

It is a surprise that I have lived this long. My health has been reasonably good so far. I have had a total knee replacement back in 2013, and it seems to have healed properly. It was a rough time, and the rehabilitation was not easy, but now I can walk again and the quality of my life is better. In 2014, I had a surprise heart attack that resulted in the placement of two stints in the front, main, heart artery. It was not an expected event because my numbers were all in the "normal" range. After spending three months in a heart rehabilitation program, I have come to realize that there were reasons for the problem. I have now made lifestyle changes, and my weight has gone from 238 to 200, cholesterol from 196 to 78, triglycerides from 238 to 71, and LDL from 109 to 28.8.

That heart attack has caused me to think about the limited time I have left. About all I can do at this point is to try and take care of myself by eating healthy foods and not taking dumb risks. I do hope that I can survive another ten years and have a healthy exit. I do not want to struggle the way both of my parents struggled at the end of their lives. I have heard many

older people say that they would hope to pass away in their sleep. That would be a gift. But, I am not dead yet, so I will turn to additional family matters.

We are pleased that Jay managed to find a terrific wife and have three fine kids. We are happy about that but it is not really a surprise. Jerry has not been as fortunate in matters such as these. He has had two wives and neither of them worked out very well. We are sad for him as we feel that he deserved better than what he has had so far. His first wife was most likely the main factor in our not getting to know his first three kids very well. His second wife was more likeable and considerate. Maybe there is a nice 40-50-year-old woman out there that would be good for him. We will keep our fingers crossed. We are fortunate to know and appreciate Emma, his fourth child, who is a very pretty and such a smart young lady.

One last surprise is the fact that I became interested in photography and took more than 120,000 memorable photos over my lifetime. My first brush with photography was in 1955 when I went to California with the Wilson family. That is the time that I remember taking my first pictures. I recall Mr. Wilson telling me that "if people did not record their adventures, others might not believe that you actually experienced them." Then the next year at Bartlett High School, I became friends with Jerry Duncan, and he taught me how to take good photos. After that, it seems that I always picked-up and carried a camera with me when I went anywhere. In junior college, I took many photos for different campus organizations. Later, when I married and had children, pictures became a necessary part of parenthood. My first wife did not particularly enjoy having her picture taken, so the boys were my main subjects. Then when I married Cindy, it was such a happy surprise that she enjoyed being in photographs and taking photographs. Readers are invited to visit our family website where more than 5,000 total photos are filed, by year, for the past 56 years. (<http://geraldcraw.net/>)

#### Things I wished had turned out differently

At the top of this list was my desire to have a child with Cindy. And I wish that it could have been a little girl. Cindy is so loving and natural with kids. She would have been a wonderful mother with another child, just as she was with Jerry and Jay. I remember mentioning an interest in having a child with Cindy, and she said, "I have two to take care of and that is enough for me." There may be another side to this story. I know in my heart that Cindy had an unhappy childhood. She has told me several times that "if we had a daughter, she would have been tall and gangly." Cindy remembers her childhood days when other kids would make fun of her and treat her poorly. She just did not want that to happen to a daughter. That is one situation that I will probably never fully understand.

Another thing that I wish had turned out differently was my military experience. As readers know, I spent six years in the Tennessee Air National Guard. My goal in those days was to avoid the military draft. I should have gone to a college with an ROTC program or simply waited until after college so that I could have become an officer. Our sons became officers

and both learned so much from those experiences. But I was just an enlisted man and never gained much from that experience. It was a time in my life when my accomplishments were few and far between.

I wish that I had been better to my parents. Now that they are gone, it bothers me a lot to know that I could have been more attentive and more helpful. I wish that I had spent more time with them and talked more with them. There are still so many questions that I never got around to asking. I still think about both of them every day and regret that I was not a better son.

As for my mother, I should not have gone away on that long trip to China after finding out that she had an infection that could not be cured and a dark spot on one kidney. When I left, she was able to walk and could carry on a good conversation. When I came home five weeks later, she weighed about 80 pounds and was curled up in bed, unable to recognize people. Thank God that I was able to whisper in her ear that she was a great mother and that I loved her and appreciated her so much. I do not know if she could hear me, but she passed away the next morning. It was almost as if she had been waiting for me to get home before she died. I will never know if that is true, but it helps to think about it that way. She was a good mother.

The last thing that I wish had turned out differently was my relationship with Jerry. He has so many fine qualities. He has many of the same great qualities that Cindy has and that alone makes him a special person. He is so smart and helpful to others. Everyone who knows Jerry loves him. And as for Jay, I wish that we lived closer to him so that we could visit more often. He, too, is such a fine person. But he has a very full plate.

Jerry and I were always so close until he met Paula Norris at ECM hospital. She became his first wife, and the marriage lasted about 14 years. We were never able to develop a relationship with her and currently do not have contact with Jerry's first three children. He then married Krista, and they have a very nice daughter who is about eleven years old. Krista had some good qualities, and we liked her a lot. There were problems between them, and the marriage did not work out. Jerry now seems to be doing a fine job of taking care of Emma.

I have missed having a close relationship with Jerry over the past few years. He will gladly help us if we have medical problems. But sometimes weeks will pass without us seeing each other or talking on the telephone. That was the case even when we both lived in the same town. He generally does not answer my e-mail or phone messages. He will usually answer text messages from Cindy. I did not and still do not know what to do about it or how to correct the problem, assuming that there is an answer for this predicament. It makes me sad.

Jay has achieved so much. He sets his goals high, and he never falters. That is a good thing, except I think he works too much. He is raising three beautiful and smart kids. The sky is the limit for each of them. Jay was smart and married a talented and energetic wife. She is a

terrific mother because she has high expectations and helps those kids to be achievers. Cindy likes her a lot and so do I. Staci and her mother have said on several occasions that Jerry and Jay were lucky to have parents like us. Anyway, I consider both sons to be the greatest contribution that I will leave behind someday. They have indeed turned out to be fine sons and that has made me very happy.

### My biggest mistakes

I wish that I had realized the importance of elementary and secondary school when I was growing up. And I wish that I had learned more math and science. Somehow I was able to wriggle up and out of my high school and junior college mediocrity to later earn advanced degrees. Not many people are able to recover in that way. Many of my high school friends were amazed that I actually made something out of myself. I am also still amazed. Whatever the reasons for the turnaround, I have others to thank and have tried to do that along the way. If I had studied harder early in life, I would have had so many more professional alternatives.

Another related mistake was my running around with the wrong people for the first 20 years of my life. Our family lived in a tough Memphis neighborhood, and there were many rough and tough boys in Rugby Hills. They had an unfavorable influence on me. After going away to college, I met new friends that helped me to become a more responsible person. I also smoked cigarettes and drank too much in those younger years. When I married and had a family, I tried to change some unhealthy habits. And on August 16, 1977, I stopped smoking.

There was another personal imperfection that has caused problems most of my adult life. After becoming an achiever, as described earlier, I became a poster child for “plan hard, work hard, and give 110 percent.” If I could do it, then everyone should do it. As a result, I came to expect too much from people that worked for me, friends, students, and even my own children, perhaps. Some people did not like me because I expected too much, and I pushed them too hard. Yes, the top 70 percent of my undergraduate students liked me and followed the program. I would bet that these people went on to excel. Others would do the work and smile but carry a grudge. A few complained to my boss, and some would simply do the minimum work to “get by.” The rest would drop the class or just quit. I pushed people too hard.

There is one last mistake that is worth noting. I spent too much time with R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company. That was a high pressure situation that did not seem to have much of a future for me. We sold things to people that caused early death, and the public was becoming aware of those facts about the time that I left the company in 1970. All of my coworkers and peers have long been dead from corporate pressures and from cancer. Chris Christopher told me several times before he passed away that I was very lucky to have gotten out when I did.

I should have left RJR sooner. It is true, however, that I was able to work with some highly talented people. Furthermore, I learned so much about business. I learned how top managers



think and how they make decisions. This experience gave me creditability and helped me later when I went to business school. But, after three and one half years in doctoral school, I was almost 34 years old when I started a new career in college teaching. I wish that I had left R. J. Reynolds sooner than I did.

### Things I really miss in life

I miss the slower pace and the simple life of my younger days. Those were the days before cell phones, computers, and the internet. There were not so many people to deal with and compete with in everyday life. And it seems that people were a lot nicer to each other. We enjoyed taking drives on Sunday afternoons and would stop and visit with family members. In those days, people were not nearly so mobile. They were born in a local area, and they stayed in that geographical area and raised their own families. Today, kids do not think twice about moving to faraway places. Most families are not close, as they once were. I miss those days.

Back then there were not so many "foreigners." No one asked which language you preferred to speak when making telephone calls to businesses. And people on TV shows, weather forecasters, and newscasters were mainly white people which reflected the proper population statistics of the day. Now, I see a disproportionately large number of black people in all programs and media. Black people currently make up 13.2 percent of the US population. Most ads on TV, however, have 30 to 40 percent black faces and many mixed-race families. I think this over-representation is due to black demands, the "politically correct" liberal media with their social engineering ideas, and self-serving politicians. Did the election of a black president send out signals that Americans like and want to be flooded with black faces? I do not think so. For my part, I want to see faces that look like me and my family. Black people watch black TV shows and black networks. Why can't white people do that?

If I complained about this to others, I would be considered a racist. White people who voted for John McCain were said to be racists. Black people who voted for Barrack Obama, and 95 percent did, were not considered racists by anyone, especially the media. There is definitely a double standard and that does not represent real equality.

The O. J. Simpson trial caused me to rethink my position on black people and how they feel about white people. A black jury found him "not guilty" for killing two white people. Blacks everywhere cheered wildly when the verdict was announced. It is interesting that blacks make up 13.2 percent of the U.S. population but are responsible for 50 percent of the homicides (2016) in the USA.

I have come to the conclusion that most blacks are racists, although many are not. They typically dislike us and will do anything to promote themselves ahead of non-blacks. I see them as being discriminatory on a grand scale with the full endorsement of the government and a large slice of the American public who have been sold on false, "white privilege"

thinking. I have come to resent affirmative action programs and preferential hiring practices that have been in existence since the 1960's.

Another trend that I do not like is the creeping socialism that I see everywhere. Almost half of all Americans are now takers and the rest of us are the ones paying for it. It may soon become impossible to elect a conservative candidate for national office, one that believes in hard work, a balanced budget, and no "free lunch." Cindy and I find it very boring to deal with "one issue" people. By that I mean people who only want to talk about one thing, whether it be religion, black people and their self-promotion, or liberal politicians and their "share the wealth" ideas.

Along this line, I do not like the fact that 68.8 percent of Americans are now classified as overweight or obese. This might be a clue about the direction the country is moving. Maybe this is happening because people allow their kids to sit in front of a computer all of the time instead of going outside to play and get exercise. Maybe they are overweight because they just do not work hard enough or maybe they are just becoming lazy. I do not like the idea of "a trophy for everyone." Greatness is achieved through competition, not socialism.

Another thing that was not a problem when I was young—drugs. Now drugs are everywhere, and America is spending large sums of money trying to get rid of the problem. In the USA, jails are full of people convicted on drug charges. You can see young people everywhere who are high on something. They typically have many tattoos and body piercings and just reek of wasted dreams and failure. I know their parents are so disappointed. I wonder if childrearing practices and the dramatically increasing number of single parent homes have had anything to do with it?

Illegal immigration is another problem for the USA. Our open borders may be good for business because it keeps wages down. Companies can make more profits. Liberal politicians also love it because these people vote for the democratic candidates like Barack Obama, Bernie Sanders, and Hillary Clinton. But it is not good for legal, taxpaying citizens. We do not know who is coming across our borders. There are a lot of bad people and drugs entering this country. Paul Ryan, Speaker of the House, for example, is for "open borders" and that is a horrible thing. The voters in an upcoming national election are so angry at the performance of our elected officials that they are rising up and supporting people that are unusual, to say the least.

Another problem for this country is our national debt. It is out of control and will eventually cause this nation to fail. We are passing along a tremendous debt burden to our children and this is selfish and wrong. The welfare system is out of control. Barack Obama has recently removed the requirement that people do some work for their welfare money. Also, illegal immigrants can get big welfare checks. No wonder they want to come here illegally. They

then send that money back to Mexico or wherever. Our political system is in trouble because we do not hold the elected officials accountable. Our system has failed.

The last disturbing trend that I see in the USA and in the world is the growth of various extreme religious thinking. I am referring mostly to Islam and terrorism. I do know that religion has killed more people than diseases and wars in the history of the world. Of course, many of the wars were based on religion and have been interconnected. I can remember very clearly standing in front of my classes in the early 1990's and telling them that we had no business going into Iraq and later into Afghanistan. I now know those wars were a mistake. I am also against religious zealots in America who shoot into abortion clinics. I do not see a lot of differences between religious jihadists and religious fundamentalists in the USA.

Most people, at this point, will say that I am just an old man with old fashioned ideas. Maybe they are correct. My days are limited. I should probably just try to muddle through them, not worry and let the younger people try to hold this world together. Good luck to them. The reader can see that I do not have all of the answers.

#### A Synopsis or Very Brief Conclusion

This written work has been created for my family, not for a public audience. A very limited number of copies will be printed. It contains about 104,000 words which is longer than the average 80,000-word novel. It was hard for me to write because I am not a writer, and I am certainly not a typist. It has taken about 11 years to finish this document because there was no plan, and there were so many details to cover. Putting all of these ideas and stories in some sort of order and making them easy to follow and understand was not a simple task.

I have tried to edit out the mistakes and to keep my recollections as accurate as possible. One trusted family member advised me not to create a lengthy love letter but instead to make it as realistic as possible. That was good advice. It is true that our lives, and those around us, sometimes become convoluted and most of us do not want to be reminded of our muddled past. But a few of these difficult situations have been included for needed realism. They are not meant to be hurtful to anyone.

What would I do if I could do it all over again? Well, I would have studied really hard from the very beginning so that I could have become a fine physician. I would have also studied music and learned to play the piano. Johnny Depp, the actor, once said, "Music touches us emotionally, where words alone can't."

And I would have been more flexible and less rigid along the way. Also, I would have eaten less and consumed less beer and no tobacco. And lastly, I would be kinder and nicer to all people, like Cindy. Everyone loves her, and she is truly a kind and devoted person. She has made our lives better for more than 44 years. She sure took wonderful care of our two boys

for a long time and I know that both of them will take proper care of her when my days are finished.

It has been a good life. Thank you Jerry, Jay, and Cindy for all you did for me. You three people are all so special. No one could have had a finer family. This manuscript is dedicated to you, and I hope that you will read it and enjoy these words. Think about me occasionally. I will still be with you—in your memories!

This manuscript that has taken a long time to complete. I am reminded of Tom Hanks in the movie Forrest Gump. He had been running for 3 years, 2 months, 14 days, and 16 hours.

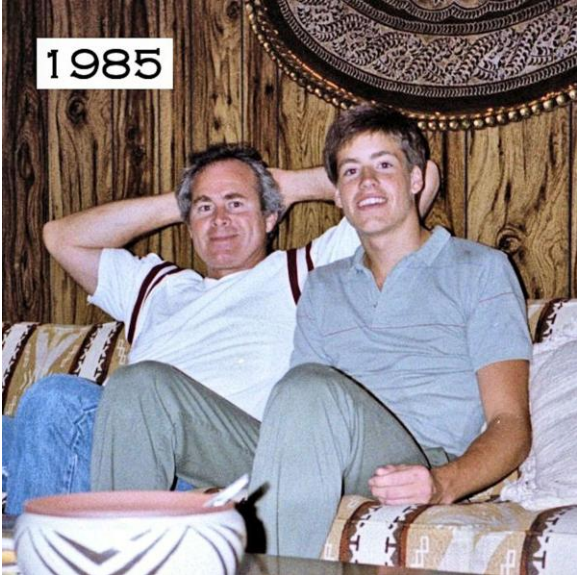
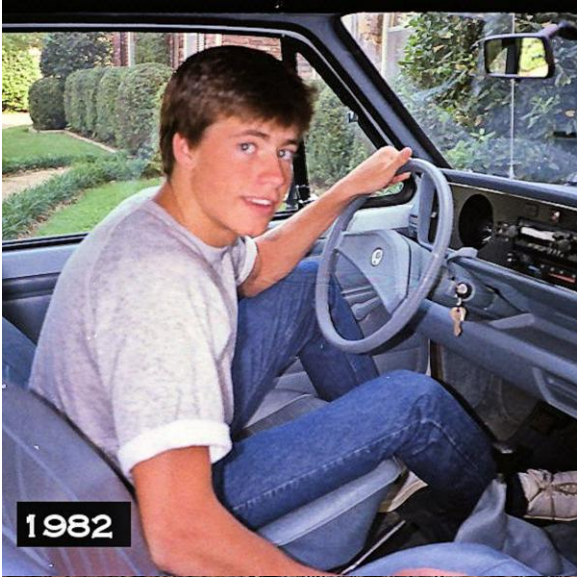
Forrest stopped in the middle of the road and turned around to face a large group of runners following him. One of those followers said, "Quiet, quiet! He's gonna say something!"

And, Forrest pauses and says, *"I'm pretty tired... I think I'll go home now."*

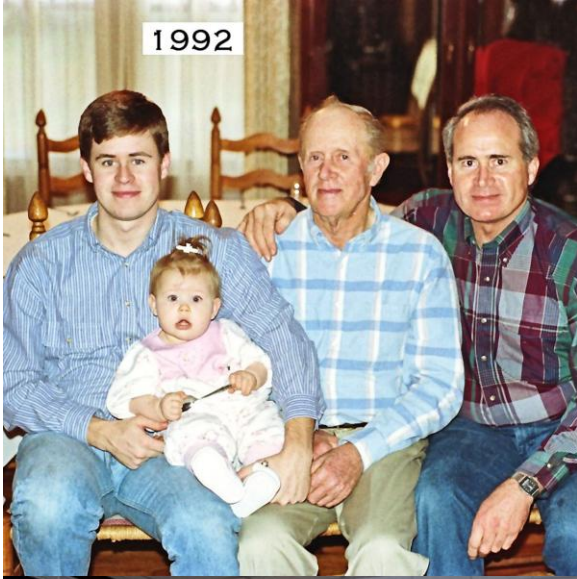


(Photographs follow, also see - <http://geraldcraw.net/>)





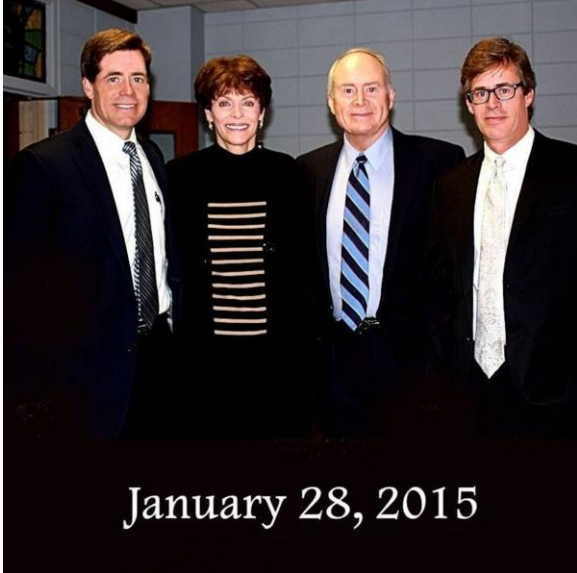




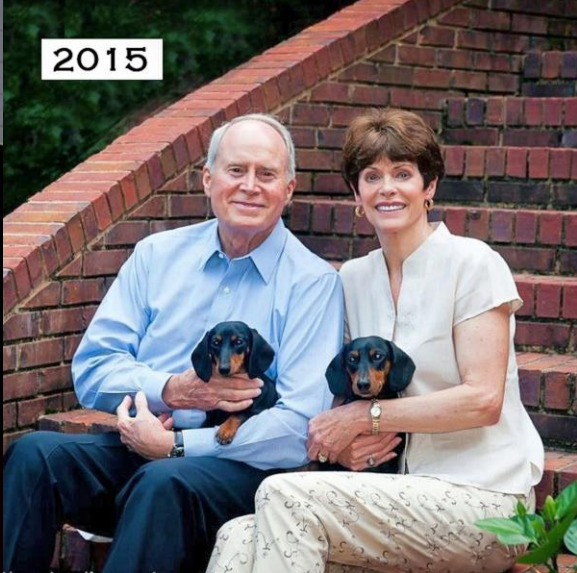
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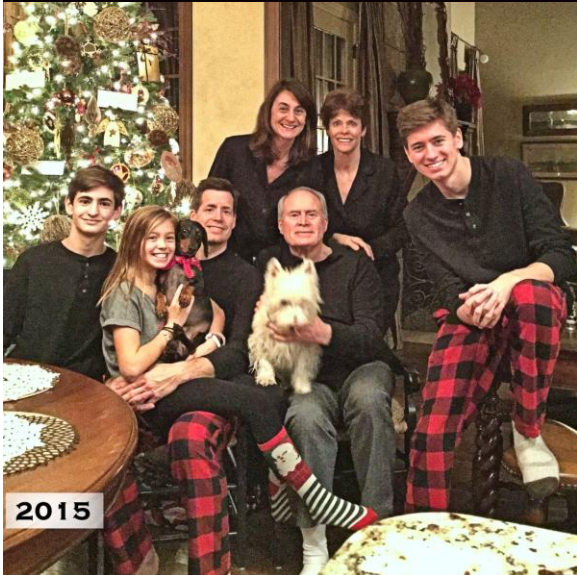
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