

And it Came to Pass
that in the Year Nineteen
Hundred
and Ninety-Four

The combined journals of
Charlene F. (Paige) Garrett
and
Charles W. Paige

Charlie's Introduction

One would never err as to say that Dad led a simple life. From the beginning he was complicated, consumed in complex relationships, unfathomable emotions and inscrutable life philosophies. His last days and death did not waver from this trend. He stayed true to form until the end, and left us all still wondering *who he was*.

Charlene—

Never in my life have I journalled before, but because of a book *Journeying Through The Days 1994* that Bob gave me for Christmas, this year has been a big exception. Because of this book, I have a record of our last few months' relationship with Daddy, which I recorded beginning January 25, 1994.

Tuesday, January 25—

I sent a get well card to both Daddy and Rosalie—hers for injuries from falling in the bath tub in December, his because he had not been feeling well.

—Wednesday, January 26—

Called Daddy. Rosalie said he's a little better.

—Sunday, January 30—

Went to Daddy's house. He has shingles.

—Thursday, February 3—

Daddy called. Rosalie is taking him to Foote Hospital.

—Friday, February 4—

Called Daddy at Foote Hospital. He didn't sound good. We went to see him. They did a spinal tap. Connie came and we bought flowers for Dad from all the family. Bob and I went to the hospital. Dad was sleeping and didn't want visitors, so Connie, who was still at Mom's house, didn't get to see him. Bob and I went into the hall and talked to Rosalie. Dad had been terribly fidgety all day and had finally fallen asleep.

At noon I went to the cafeteria with Rosalie and ate frozen yogurt while she had lunch. She said the doctor told her that her stomach trouble was from too much stress.

Charlie—

Dad's health wasn't too good during January, after he returned home from visiting me. He developed a very bad case of shingles that ravaged the left side of his body. His left eye swelled shut, and it was feared the shingles had gone into his brain. He hallucinated until becoming too much for Rosalie to handle. Thursday, February 3, he was hospitalized.

I talked with Dad by phone while he was in the hospital. One of his hallucinations was that if he fell asleep he would stop breathing. Tranquilizers helped to dispel much of his hallucinating, while medicine fed to him intravenously worked on the disease.

Rosalie was there for Dad. She stayed by his bed in the hospital while being driven to distraction by Dad's ranting and ravings as the hospital staff tried to calm him, medicate him and conduct a spinal tap, etc. There wasn't much she could do except witness Dad's misery and apparently failing condition.

Friday night the 4th, Rosalie went out with her daughter Judy Owen, and after dinner they played bingo. Judy was no doubt trying to cheer her mother and get Rosalie's mind off Dad and his medical problems for awhile. However, before it got too late Rosalie excused herself, claiming to be feeling unwell, and returned to her apartment.

Saturday morning Rosalie's son Tim found her lying on the apartment building's hall floor near her door. She had died of a heart attack, never reaching her apartment, with the coroner placing date of death as Saturday, February 5. Rosalie had a bad heart and was living on borrowed time. Most likely all the strain of the past days had been too much.

Dad virtually fell to pieces when Tim notified him by phone. Dad became so distraught that the medical staff released him from the hospital, even though he probably should have remained until the shingles were under control. The nursing staff rigged him with a self-injecting IV system that he could replenish as needed. They advised Dad that he only had to call and a nurse would come to his house and help with the IV.

Dad blamed himself for Rosalie's death, sure that the stress on her of his travails and throes was the killer. Now he was home alone, with the memories of Rosalie and Marilee to haunt him without escape. Nobody from Dad's side of the former "Paige/Henion" marriage could attend Rosalie's funeral, including Dad who was still sick.

Charlene—

—**Saturday, February 5**—

Daddy called this morning. He had eight hours of sleep and felt great—getting antibiotics for shingles that went to his brain.

We went out to dinner with Bargers and got home about 7:00 p.m. Mom was on the answering service. ROSALIE HAD BEEN FOUND DEAD NEXT TO HER APARTMENT'S FRONT DOOR. This I recorded:

"Our families are heartbroken because of the death of Rosalie Henion, Daddy's third wife. She was a very sweet person who loved the Lord. Now she is with Him!"

Just a comment—she was extremely worried about Daddy!

—**Sunday, February 6**—

After church we went to Foote Hospital to see Daddy. We didn't know he was leaving, but because of Rosalie's death he wanted to go home. He was on antibiotics, so a visiting nurse would be coming periodically to take care of an automatic injection device, so we took Dad to his house.

The house looked pretty bleak without Rosalie there. Penny, next door, was going to help get his meals, so forth and so on. Rosalie's son Tim was coming for his Mom's few remaining belongings. I was drawn to a book Rosalie had been reading that was with her Bible. It's title *Lord Help Get Me Through This Day*.

Marilee's granddaughter Carolyn Wayman came to see Daddy at hospital before he left for home. She is going to be checking on him.

—**Monday, February 7**—

Daddy called.

Bob had his umbilical hernia operation today.

—**Friday, February 11**—

Checked with Daddy to see if I could drive him to his appointment with Dr. Munro. He wants to drive himself.

Charlie—

Dad continued such for a few weeks. He was still suffering from shingles. Even after the doctor took him off the IV, Dad's appetite didn't return. Things didn't taste good even when his next door neighbor, Penny, brought over homemade goodies to stock his refrigerator.

Dad was letting himself go, hidden away in the dimly-lit house, not going out, in terrible pain from an agony in his head (which turned out to be caused by a paralyzed optic nerve), hooked on a very addictive pain-killing drug prescribed by his doctor (Dr. Munro), and praying for God to take him Home. He didn't read or watch TV because of his concern for the strain on his good eye, he didn't listen to the radio because it made his head hurt worse, and he didn't open the curtains to let in sunshine because light also made his head hurt worse. Dad told me during a telephone conversation that he had never in all his life been forced into such introversion.

Meanwhile, my health wasn't good for some months after the awful October 1993 fires. This affected me from November through part of February, in the least keeping me from feeling creative. I was off work for three days in mid-December with a cold/flu, and didn't lose the cough till mid-February. In January my lungs began filling with liquid, especially in the evenings when I was the least active. The condition worsened day by day, and I found myself being winded after short walks. All the while my chest kept feeling tighter.

It wasn't until the 9th of February that I finally saw a doctor about the strange condition. The doctor gave me a going over, ran blood tests, an EKG, and had an x-ray done. She mentioned that one possibility was congestive heart failure, but she thought it unlikely considering my age. Finally she prescribed medicine, Verapamil, to combat my hypertension.

I took the medicine three times a day as required. By Friday I could barely walk from my car to the building where I work without being totally winded. The pressure in my chest continued to mount. In other words, my health wasn't improving.

Friday night the 11th I coughed what seemed a great amount of liquid from my lungs, and by midnight I had to take very deep breaths, gasps you might say, but was still suffocating. Around 11:30 p.m. I called the doctor on duty for my health plan and told him about the problem. I could barely talk to explain the condition. Finally he said get to a hospital's emergency room.

My friend Ven Tan took me to the Huntington Memorial Hospital, where we arrived at almost 12:30 a.m. I walked up to the emergency room registration desk and was told to fill out a form. I said that I could barely breath let alone fill out a form, at which time one of the registrars offered to take down the information as I gave it orally. Even this was a major chore.

Meanwhile, a male nurse by the name of "Charles," from the cardiology unit, saw me and recognized the symptoms. By the time I finished with the forms, Charles escorted me to a bed in the emergency room's cardiology area and immediately hooked me to oxygen, a heart monitor and a nitroglycerin IV. He also gave me a shot to help eliminate the fluid in the lungs, and a pill to start the elimination of excess water from my body. Within twenty minutes much of the chest pressure was gone, and I was breathing comfortably again.

Congestive heart failure had caused pulmonary edema. In other words, blood wasn't circulating properly through the body. The congestive heart failure, itself, was caused by a build-up of fluids behind the heart and high pressure within the heart's left ventricle as it tried to push blood through arteries constricted by hypertension. I was a mess! To add insult to injury, the medicine prescribed by my doctor had significantly worsened the condition, since it slowed the heart rate.

I spent the entire weekend in bed, hooked up to every kind of monitor you could imagine. Every fifteen minutes an electronic blood pressure machine would fill the sleeve—kept around my upper arm 24 hours a day—with air pressure, then let the pressure out as it electronically recorded the results.

I was in a private, specially-rigged room all of Saturday and part of Sunday before transferring to a regular room. The first one had a spectacular panoramic view of the mountains north of Pasadena. The floor-to-ceiling window made up its entire north wall. The second room's view was of the hospital's inner court, nondescript to say the least. Both had television, and occasionally there was something good to watch.

Saturday, and most of Sunday, a parade of doctors streamed through my room. The cardiologist assigned to me, Dr. Milton Smith, came by two or three times, but behind the scenes he prescribed medicines, tests, diet restrictions and other regimens for me. More doctors than I could name repeated the same questions, with slight variations. Perhaps they were checking if my mental capacity had been damaged. All were puzzled because I was having congestive heart failure at an unusually young age.

Sunday brought nuclear medicine testing and an echo cardiogram. These told much of the story as to my heart's condition. The high pressure in the left ventricle had caused a "mild dilation," meaning it was larger than normal. I was told the heart was tired from working too hard for too long and needed as much rest as possible. I was told not to do any lifting (i.e., nothing over 15 pounds), to rest often, elevate my feet when sitting, drink not more than one quart of liquids per day, and adjust my diet to greatly reduce fat, cholesterol, caffeine and sodium. However, Dr. Smith didn't see any reason, as long as I followed the above, why I shouldn't go to work the next day (Monday).

The hospital released me Sunday evening, with Sandi Thomas picking me up. I took Monday off work to fill the five prescriptions, rest a lot, and buy some new kinds of groceries. Tuesday it was business (almost) as usual. Since then I

take naps in my car nearly every noon hour, and I feel infinitely better than I had for several months leading up to the "episode."

I received some complaints from family members out-of-state for not telling them of my problem until the following weekend. For this "deliberate oversight" I humbly apologize. However, there were just too many bad things happening with family back east to add another emotional burden.

Later I did the treadmill test coupled with more nuclear testing in the form of Cardiolite, a system that takes thirty-two graduated pictures of ones heart and its connecting arteries as the gizmo rotates 180 degrees around ones body. Everything came up negative, primarily meaning no arterial blockage. GREAT NEWS!!!

Dad's condition finally drove Penny to call Charlene and suggest she come and take care of him. If not, he wouldn't last much longer. It was now February. Charlene packed clothes expecting to stay with Dad for who-knew-how-long. However, when she and Bob got to Dad's, it turned out that it would be better for him to go home with them instead. Charlene drove their car, while Dad and Bob took Dad's car. (Charlene had asked Mom to come with them to Blissfield, but Mom declined the offer.)

En route to Blissfield Dad had Bob driving all over the place, including off the beaten path, apparently pointing out things and places during a "grand tour." Charlene had trouble keeping up with them and was afraid she would end up hopelessly lost in Michigan's outback.

Dad going to Garretts' was an excellent move for Dad, but a rough one for Charlene and Bob. At the best of times they led very busy lives, and Dad really slowed Charlene down—like a speeding locomotive with full-on air brakes. Meanwhile, they took Dad to other doctors, who tested and began treating him effectively. Charlene's superb cooking wedged its way into Dad's reluctance to eat, and gradually the reluctance turned into anticipation.

Charlene—

—Saturday, February 12—

My brother Charlie, in Pasadena, California, checked into the Huntington Memorial Hospital due to breathing problems. Was informed he suffered congestive heart failure, which was causing pulmonary edema, and would need to spend the weekend in hospital for observation and to stabilize the condition.

We didn't find out about this hospitalization or condition until a week later. He figured that there was enough bad news happening in our lives that we didn't need any more. We were concerned that he hadn't let us know immediately.

—Sunday, February 13—

Called Daddy. Found him okay.

—Wednesday, February 16—

Bob grocery-shopped for Mom and Dad, then went to see Dad. We were on our way home from Port Austin, where we had gone to turn off an electric panel in our basement after receiving an electric bill for \$162. Dad gave us an electric food processor for the Port Austin house.

He still does not feel well. He can't handle light and keeps the window in the living room covered with a blanket. He can't open his left eye because of swelling on the left side of his head.

—Friday, February 18—

Mom called and said Dad called "911"—trouble breathing. Paramedics got him settled down and did not take him to hospital. They said he was hyper-ventilating.

—Monday, February 21—

Went to see Daddy after being at Foote Hospital, where Bob's brother, Charlie Garrett, was operated on.

Daddy is still pretty sick. Bob made toast and scrambled some eggs for him. Carolyn and her two daughters came to see Daddy while we were there. He just doesn't seem to be gaining ground very fast.

—Thursday, February 24—

Picked up Mom when we went to see Charlie Garrett at hospital. Had dinner with her. Daddy seemed better. Thank you, Lord!

—Thursday, March 3—

Called Dr. Munro about Daddy. Expected a call back but none came.

—Friday, March 4—

Called Dr. Munro's office again. He will not talk to me without written permission from Daddy. **I am angry!** I don't know why Daddy isn't well by now, and I can't find out why!

—Saturday, March 5—

Daddy called, said he wasn't making it. Wants us to come and talk. I packed my suitcase and cried all the way to his house, saying "I don't want to stay with my father. He left us thirty years ago and I don't even really know him! If my mom would come with me I would go. But I don't want to go alone!"

When we arrived, Daddy talked very slowly. He said his head hurt so much that his thoughts came very slowly. He said that during the night he had become disoriented and thought the foot of the bed was the head. Also, he didn't seem to have the energy to get up and get meals. Penny was helpful but had her own family and a job to take care of.

Then he said the magic words—"Could I please go home with you guys for a couple days?"

We said "Yes" very quickly and packed his clothes and medicine. I changed his bed and gathered dirty clothes, towels, bathroom rugs, etc., to wash at home.

This from my journal:

"He is pretty sick
No appetite
Right side of head hurts
It hurts him to open his left eye
Light hurts both eyes
He sits with his eyes shut most of the day"

—Sunday, March 6—

Finally a breakthrough with Daddy! He ate a whole toasted-cheese sandwich, cup of tomatoes, vanilla frozen yogurt—on which he put raspberry jam. He said it was the first time since he got sick that food tasted good to him, and he felt almost normal. Thank you, Jesus! Mary West called.

—Monday, March 7—

Daddy ate a waffle, scrambled eggs, apricot juice. We hope this helps him get his strength back!

Bob took Daddy to see Ron Isley, our doctor. Ron said he should gain his strength back as he eats more.

John and Edith Irwin came. We played hearts. Daddy said he enjoyed having them here. He needed people around. We went out for lunch.

—**Tuesday, March 8**—

Made spaghetti for Daddy. He didn't feel up to restaurant eating yet.

—**Wednesday, March 9**—

Red Letter Day! At supper Daddy asked God's forgiveness for his bad attitude towards Bob through the years. It was very meaningful for us, and we feel God is really working in our relationship with Daddy. Thank you, Jesus!

—**Thursday, March 10**—

Daddy prayed a beautiful prayer at breakfast about Bob and my relationship to God through the years, thanking Him for our lives. I came back from the Lenten breakfast at which Jim Sherman, a judge, did an unforgettable monologue on being present for Jesus' trial, crucifixion and resurrection. I shared it all with Dad and he found it awesome, too.

—**Friday, March 11**—

Wally checked Daddy's car. He fixed the windshield washer system.

—**Saturday, March 12**—

We were invited out to eat. Daddy didn't want to go.

—**Sunday, March 13**—

Daddy confessed a pretty heavy-duty sin to us. I felt sick to my stomach during and afterwards. He's surely clearing the slate and making things right with the Lord.

—**Monday, March 14**—

We went to Toledo, Ohio, to see Dr. Anders, a dermatologist. He gave Dad a B-12 shot and cream to put on his head to take away the pain. The cream burned too much, so Daddy quit using it.

—Tuesday, March 15—

In the morning we went to Jackson. Dr. Freeman couldn't believe the bad shape Daddy was in. He had forgotten the test he had done while Dad was in hospital, which showed shingles in his brain. He checked and said yes, they were there. He ordered a blood test, which we had done immediately, and an MRI. Dr. Freeman felt the nerve was dead in Dad's left eye and that he should stay with us three more weeks. I went into the outer room and cried!

Dad was showing a marked improvement today. He joked and even sang as we left Mom's house.

—Wednesday, March 16—

Daddy drove his car to our post office. He rode Mom's exercise bike. He is so much better that we are pretty excited!

—Thursday, March 17—

Dad drove his car to the Mobil gas station for a fill-up, rode the exercise bike and played the piano.

—Saturday, March 19—

Went to Jackson so Dad could have his MRI at Foote Hospital.

Mom, Dad and we went to Bob Evans for lunch. On the way out to Daddy's house we stopped by the Wooster Road farm to see all the renovation. It was great! We saw the cross still on the hill! When we got to Dad's house it was all locked up, and we couldn't get in. We went back to Mom's so Dad could rest. She served us apple pie *a la mode*.

Bud called from Florida and told about their ocean cruise. Mary sent us a huge Hershey bar.

—Sunday, March 20—

Mary called. It's Angie's birthday, so they all talked to Daddy. Dad walked around the circle for the first time! (It turned out to be his last. He was never again able to walk that far.) That night we all had prayer, then Dad went to bed.

—Monday, March 21—

Dad and I went to the post office and pharmacy. When we returned, Bob said Mom's friend Ruth Mellinger had called. Mom fell at the New Yorker restaurant in Jackson and cracked her twelfth vertebra. I packed my suitcase and left Bob to care for Dad.

Charlie—

Mom fell March 21, the Monday before Palm Sunday, while attempting to gain entrance to Jackson's *Club New Yorker* bar and grill¹ on East Ganson Street, owned and run by Mom's next door neighbors, Sue and Nick Curtiss. Now, this is an odd thing to happen to an upstanding Christian woman who abstains from drinking alcoholic beverages and carousing with low life barflies. Also, it usually happens on the way OUT of bars, not on the way in. All levity aside, Mom was badly injured in the episode, hitting her head, bruising arms and legs, and cracking her 12th vertebra. When the ambulance came, at first they thought she might have broken her back, so they carefully lifted her onto a special board that held her back and head still. Mom was with friends from her church, Ruth Mellinger and Edith Hayes, and says Sue and Nick felt very bad about the mishap.

Again it was Charlene to the rescue (Mary in Minnesota, Bud vacationing in Florida, Chuck in California). She drove to Jackson and took Mom home with her to Blissfield. Now Mom and Dad were both staying with her. When I called Garretts, and one of them answered, I asked "Is this the *Garrett's Convalescent Home?*"

Poor Charlene!!! Here she and Bob are trying to prepare for moving to Weaver Road in June, and they have to take care of both her parents!! Meanwhile, Dad is recovering nicely but refusing to admit it. Charlene strongly believes he doesn't have any intention of returning to his house, and this is bothering her since she doesn't have any intention of having him stay with them forever. Mom, bless her soul, is being a real trooper, as usual. However, upon talking with her on the phone a couple of weeks after her accident, she didn't sound like her ol', optimistic self. I'm sorry to say that she sounded kind of down. I strongly feel that she, like Charlene, has been around Dad too much too long. Bob is weathering the situation alright and, it seems, is almost enjoying himself. I could be wrong (on any and/or all counts). Bob has been exceptional at helping with ALL aspects of this situation!!

1 Mom enjoys going with friends to the Club New Yorker for lunch. The Curtisses have a very reasonably priced menu, and their Coney Island dogs—hotdogs wrapped in buns, draped in chili and piled with chopped sweet onions for only \$.50/per—are practically to die for, absolutely no pun intended!

There were several instances during all this where it looked as though I might need to fly to Michigan because of Dad. Some of these times I actually, tentatively, booked flights. However, I dreaded having to go back partly because doing so would mean that conditions were desperate, and partly because my own health wasn't good during January and February, a fact that had curtailed much of my activity.

Charlene—

—**Tuesday, March 22**—

Good morning at Mom's house. She is up-chucking her pain pills, so Dr. Mary Bentley changed the prescription. When Mom was well enough to walk to the car, I drove her to our house. Daddy said that if she would come home with me, he would buy her a pineapple soda. Dad and Bob were sitting on the swing waiting for us when we arrived.

—**Wednesday, March 23**—

Bob went to Port Austin. Bobby had an umbilical hernia operation. Mom sleeps a lot. She has trouble getting up and down. Dad bought McDonald's milk shakes for him and Mom, and he started reading.

—**Thursday, March 24**—

Played cards at our house with Bargas, while Dad and Mom watched *Murder, She Wrote*. Lots of phone calls from family.

—**Sunday, March 27**—

Palm Sunday. After church we brought home palms for Dad and Mom. Turkey dinner.

Took Connie and friend to Metro airport for flight to Florida to be counselors at Youth for Christ Florida Break-a-way. We went to the airport about 4:30 a.m.

We were supposed to take care of the Smeader kids, but with Dad and Mom here we couldn't. They had to go to Florida on the Youth for Christ bus! Thirty-six straight hours on the road!

We watched movies *A Man Called Peter* and *The Robe* but got a call that Bob's brother Charlie was taken to Foote Hospital due to hemorrhaging. Bob left immediately.

—**Monday, March 28**—

Bad morning for Mom. We took Dad to Dr. Anders for another B-12 shot. Daddy drove me to the post office to mail three Easter packages and Easter cards. He was able to use both eyes, a real feat for him.

—**Thursday, March 31**—

Went to Adrian and bought new socks and underwear for Dad; socks and bunnies for Mom.

—**Friday, April 1**—

Bob and I made a quick trip to Jackson to see Charlie Garrett in hospital. Got Dad's and Mom's mail. Dad hopes to go home tomorrow.

—**Saturday, April 2**—

Daddy bought us a new toaster—a nice 4-slice. He wrecked a couple of ours trying to fix them! Dad and Mom sat in the front porch swing.

—**Sunday, April 3**—

Happy Easter! I made four Easter baskets. One for each of us. Also took a few pictures at Easter dinner. Bob and family came. For the first time Daddy acted like he was regressing—told Garretts he couldn't play the piano. He had been playing four or five times a day. He didn't want to eat with us, but Bob insisted so he did.

This is another red letter day. Daddy is finally having his first day without any drugs.

—**Tuesday, April 5**—

Daddy went to see Dr. Isely and came home angry. Ron gave him a clean bill of health, just wanted Dad to realize he was well, just depressed.

Daddy has always denied mourning Rosalie.

—Wednesday, April 6—

Lynn VanSumeren, Jodi and Todd came to visit Dad and Mom.

—Thursday, April 7—

Daddy went to Jackson to see Dr. Freeman. Bob took him. Dr. Freeman was pleased with Daddy's progress.

Mom got dressed for the first time since receiving the injury. Got McDonald's milk shakes for Dad and Mom.

—Friday, April 8—

Dad got me a can opener for my birthday. We got Dad a new set of sheets and pillow cases and more new underwear.

—Saturday, April 9—

Got milk shakes for Dad and Mom. Talked to Mary.

Got a beautiful letter from Charlie about his having a bad bout with congestive heart failure but okay now. Suddenly Dad said he had the same thing. Mom and I took Dad's car to Dr. Isley's house to talk with him about Dad. While we were gone, Bud and Elaine arrived from Florida. Later, Bob got Daddy some medicine because Dad's ankles were swollen, and the doctor thought he might indeed have congestive heart failure.

[A letter from Dr. Charles Miller of Jackson's Medistation was discovered among Dad's belongings a week after he passed away, telling that he had heart disease which was causing his breathing problems. The letter was dated October 15, 1991. Dad told everyone that his chronic shortness of breath was due to asthma resulting from his many years of smoking.

"Chest x-ray dated 10-15-91 shows mild heart enlargement. The lung fields shows marked chronic obstructive pulmonary disease changes with congestion and acute and chronic perihilar and basilar bronchitis. No evidence of pneumonia, fluid or other findings."

C.W.P.]

—**Sunday, April 10**—

Bud and Elaine were here. Dad ate really well at our swiss steak dinner. They left, we napped. Dad asked me to pack his clothes. Bob drove him home in his car. Jack Barger drove our car and brought Bob back home.

—**Monday, April 11**—

6:15 a.m.—Dad called and is sick, sat in chair and couldn't get out. He called 911 and went to hospital. Bob went to Foote Hospital immediately to be with Dad. They said he was anemic and gave him two pints of blood. Said he may have tumors.

I talked on phone to Mary, Charlie, Sue, Paula, Laura, Penny, Carolyn, Bud and Elaine.

—**Tuesday, April 12**—

Took Mom to Bud and Elaine's house while we went to Port Austin. Dad still in hospital.

—**Wednesday, April 13**—

My birthday.

—**Friday, April 15**—

Met with District Superintendent at the Cass City church, with the Pastor, Parish Relations Committee—getting ready for our move there.

—**Saturday, April 16**—

Picked up Mom in Saginaw and drove back to Blissfield.

—**Sunday, April 17**—

Mom went to church for first time since her back injury. Called Dad at hospital.

—**Monday, April 18**—

Dad had neck operation today by Dr. Prough. All went well—results in two to three days. Dr. Munro came in and said Dad needs his gall bladder out. Dad said no.

Dr. Clark came in—he is the oncologist. He said Dad's bone marrow was not making red blood cells, nor would it in future. He has a condition called pre-leukemia. If it becomes acute leukemia he will only have ten to fourteen days to live. Dr. Munro admitted that Dad had been anemic for two years but had refused to have tests done to find out why. Dad will need blood transfusions about every two weeks for the rest of his life.

Gary Schwab, the social worker, came to talk about a place for Dad to go from the hospital. He has become too weak for us to care for. I cried a lot, but realized we can no longer care for him. He hugged me and said this was a poor time to show weakness and to leave the crying to him.

—Tuesday, April 19—

Daddy will go to Cedar Knoll Care Center. We called Bud. We realized Dad had a beautiful mission at our house, where much healing was done. Mom and he did a lot of reminiscing together about their early married years. Now maybe Dad had a mission at Cedar Knoll.

Mom was sitting on our swing waiting for us on our return. Talked to Dad by phone. He gave me a list of clothes to bring him. Penny called. She packed his suitcase. Bud will stop and get the suitcase on his way to Jackson to pick up Dad.

—Wednesday, April 20—

We took Mom home because Charlie is coming. We are all to meet with Daddy May 5 to decide what to do about selling his house. Mary will be here, too. When we arrived at Mom's, Elaine was there and said Dad called and has cancer of the lymph glands and only had three months to live. We couldn't believe it!

Daddy said he lived eighty-four good years and didn't want chemotherapy. Said he was ready to go if the Lord so willed it. Bob and Bud did a lot of work on getting Bud durable power of attorney, since he is also executor of Dad's will.

—Thursday, April 21—

5:30 a.m.—Walked out on our porch. Cried about Dad. Wished he had been nicer to our kids. Bud took Dad to Cedar Knoll. He was so weak Bud had to help him dress.

—Friday, April 22—

Called Cedar Knoll to see how Dad was doing. He was walking with assistance and being given oxygen. He came to the phone in a wheelchair!

—Saturday, April 23—

Charlie arrived! So happy to see him! We went to Metro to pick him up. We bought Dad a new robe. Bob picked it out.

Charlie—

Ven drove me to the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) early in the morning, April 23, for my 8:10 a.m. flight. Ven didn't wait, as I was plenty early and didn't anticipate any problems.

Northwest Airlines Flight 332 departed LAX at 8:25 a.m. and flew non-stop and non-problem to Detroit's Metro Airport, where we landed at 3:30 p.m. Neither Bob nor Charlene was waiting when I deplaned, so I went directly to the baggage claim area to retrieve my belongings. It wasn't until after I had pulled the two bags off the conveyor that I saw Bob hobbling by with his cane. He said that Charlene was out front, just a few feet away, in the "passenger pick-up only" zone. LUCKY STARS!

Charlene, Bob and I had a huggy reunion while putting my things in the trunk. Then it was an hour's drive directly to Bob and Charlene's parsonage in Blissfield, where I unpacked a little. Next we visited a short while before going out for dinner.

We attended a "progressive" dinner party, where you go from house to house for each course. *Hors d'oeuvre* and salad were at the first house, dinner at the second, and dessert at the last. Attendees were members of the Spares and Pairs, a group of Blissfield churchgoers in their 40s-50s. It was fun but tiring, considering all.

We returned to Garretts' at about 10:00 p.m. There were some phone answering machine messages needing handling, which took until after 10:30 p.m. One of the calls was to Bobby Garrett. He talked with Charlene awhile, and then she handed him over to me. We had a nice talk about our respective jobs, about his kids/family, and about Dad. All in all it was worthwhile. Unfortunately, it was also on Charlene's nickel.

Finally, Charlene and I took a walk around the "circle" a couple of rounds and had a nice visit/talk, mostly discussing Mom, Dad, and their various conditions/situations. Charlene, Bob and I stayed up a little while longer to visit and watch a little TV. Bedtime came at about 11:45 p.m.

—Sunday, April 24—

Charlene—

Charlie went to Sunday school and church with us. Then we went to Jackson and picked up Mom to go see Daddy at Cedar Knoll. We gave him the rocking chair to use that he liked so well at our house. Daddy was in pretty good spirits. We took him a chocolate milk shake. Then we went to Dad's house, where Charlie would get Dad's car to drive while in Michigan.

Charlie—

I was up about 8:00 a.m. We ate at 8:30, and then I started getting ready for church at 9:00. Charlene and I left for Blissfield United Episcopal Methodist Church at 9:40. There I joined the same Spares and Pairs class that had sponsored/provided the previous evening's progressive dinner. We had an interesting time.

Church service was at 11:00 a.m., during which we celebrated communion. Then Bob, Charlene and I went back to their house around 12:30 p.m. I got my stuff together for the trip to Jackson starting at 1:00. Before leaving, Bob and I tied Dad's favorite rocking chair to the trunk of Garretts' car. Bob and Charlene thought Dad might enjoy sitting in it at the rest home.

En route to Jackson we grabbed burgers at Rally Burgers in Adrian. We ate in the car as we proceeded on the hour's drive. The burgers were tasty and surprisingly substantial for their small price. I believe it was under \$1 each.

We stopped at Mom's long enough for me to unload into her front bedroom. Then the four of us went out to see Dad at the Cedar Knoll Rest Home (just being renamed the "Cedar Knoll Care Facility"²). Dad's room since his arrival there Thursday, April 21, was Room #87. Bud had taken Dad to the home directly from Foote Hospital, since Dad required 24 hours/day care.

Dad had asked Charlene if she would let him return to their house, but she just couldn't have him. She and Bob were in the midst of preparing for a move to Port Austin and Cass City, Michigan, that was to take place at the time of Bob's retirement in June. Garretts had already fallen behind in their preparations due to taking care of Dad since March 5, and Mom after she fell March 21, banging herself up and fracturing her twelfth vertebra.

2 9230 Cedar Knoll Drive, Grass Lake, MI 49240

En route to the Home, Dad and Bud had stopped for chocolate milkshakes at the McDonald's restaurant at Sargent Road and I-94. They also stopped a couple of other times for Dad to use his urinal, since he was on a potent water pill.

Dad looked bad, physically weak and exhausted. He spoke very softly and nasally. Sound of any kind bothered him, so we had to speak softly, with as little volume as possible. Dad liked getting the chair³. He also complained a lot about his roommate, Mr. Neill, who was recovering from a broken hip. Apparently, Mr. Neill snored and made other odd noises in his sleep, all of which disturbed Dad's sound-sensitive ears. (Later, Dad learned that if he waited until the nurses made their last rounds, about midnight, he could sneak across the hall and sleep in vacant room #86.)

We stayed about forty-five minutes before it was evident that our visit was tiring Dad. During our stay several nurses paraded through distributing medicine, taking his blood pressure and listening to his heart and lungs. As we departed I told Dad that I'd be back for a visit the next day.

Overall, Dad was weak and unsteady on his feet. He preferred someone supporting him whenever he walked, which wasn't often. There was an incident, though, when he bolted out of his chair and out into the hall when one of the patients opened a fire door and set off an alarm. Dad immediately became involved in helping retrieve the fellow back into the building. After the alarm was reset, and everything (and everyone) back in place, he became unsteady again, so I helped him back to his chair.

We left Cedar Knoll and followed a route Dad defined that would take us to his house on Bunkerhill Road. It took us by our old farm on Wooster Road, where we saw that the current owner, Dave Abbott, was there working on remodeling the house. We stopped, and while Mom stayed in the car, Dave took Charlene, Bob and me on a tour of the house.

The outside was covered in blue-grey siding, and some windows had been added or enlarged, especially upstairs. Also, a three-car garage had been added off the old kitchen (and where the original, one-car garage had been). The upstairs was extended west over the entire length of the garage.

The inside of the house had been gutted. All inside plaster was gone, and outside walls were exposed. In many places the ancient ugly, grey, lint-like insulation was barely confined within the wall slats. In others there were piles where the nasty stuff had spilled onto the floor.

Dave showed how he and his wife, Mary, were redistributing floor space by changing room dimensions/usages. What had been our living room would be the parlor (without TV). What was our dining room would be the billiard room (both Dave and Mary like playing pool). What was once our recreation room, that

3 I seldom-if-ever would see him actually sitting in it. He preferred a wheelchair. However, he liked it when visitors (like me) sat in it.

became Grandma Nellie's bedroom when she stayed at the farm, and later became Mom's bedroom before turning into Dad and Marilee's bedroom, was reapportioned. The majority would become the living room (with TV). The original dinette area and full bathroom would become an enlarged and better-distributed kitchen. A utility area and full bath would be at the west end of the original kitchen area near the stairs to the basement and three-car garage entrance.

Upstairs, the bedrooms have skylights built into the ceiling. In the huge recreational room built over the garage there is a large, cathedral window facing west, allowing a spectacular view of the back woods and part of the lake. A similar window in the upstairs master bedroom is set in the wall too high to see anything but the sky. However, it lets in the pleasant, sunny, afternoon light.

A scenic view from the west end of the house used to be obstructed by a long, grey, implement shed bracketed by a dilapidated corn crib on the south side and a dilapidated tool shed on the north. All of these buildings, plus the long, shabby chicken coop running east-to-west just south-west of the house, were now gone, opening up the yard and view.

Everywhere upstairs would be clothing and other storage/closet areas. Ultimately there would be one full bath downstairs and one and a half baths up. Charlene and I were glad to hear that Dave's planning to keep, and refurbish, the front porch.

Dave was excited by our interest in the place and kept saying he was happy we had stopped by. He invited us to come by again, perhaps notifying him in advance so that his wife Mary could be there too. Dave and Mary have lived on the corner of Wooster Road and Coonhill Road for several years. When Dad sold the farm he went directly to Dave's and bent over backwards to ensure Dave could swing buying it. Dad certainly could have gotten much more than the \$75,000 that Dave was able to offer. However, Dad probably couldn't have found anyone else who would take the kind of personal care and satisfaction in the place as Dave and Mary.

We drove to Dad's house from the farm, staying there about an hour. Bob went right to the basement and played the organ they had brought for Dad to fix some time before. (It had been repaired, but Garretts had not yet been able to pick it up.)

Charlene did an inspection of the house. I was with her part of the time. Mom sat on the living room couch resting and reading some of Dad's literature. I started up the computer for Charlene to see it operate. When I brought up the program "Family Tree Maker," Charlene jotted down information on the Hubbard family. Apparently some Hubbards were large landholders somewhere in the

Thumb area, perhaps near Port Austin, and Charlene wanted to see if our family tied in with this branch. There wasn't time for any real demonstration of the computer this time. (I was planning to give the computer to Charlene after Dad was through with it, so I wanted to do a little introduction on its use and operation—which never happened. Still, Charlene seemed to be serious about learning how to use it and was already planning to take lessons in Cass City—Bob's new half-time, post-retirement ministerial assignment.)

Bob began chafing to leave, so we finally headed out. As it turned out, he wanted to stop by his brother Charlie's place in Hillsdale on the way back to Blissfield. (Charles Garrett was undergoing chemotherapy and having a rough time of it.) Charlene had pulled some foodstuffs from Dad's kitchen refrigerator/freezer, so we stopped by Mom's house to drop this off before continuing on to Bill Knapp's restaurant for dinner. I brought Dad's car from his house, and this would be my mode of transportation for the remainder of my stay in Michigan.

Bob and Charlene didn't stay long at Mom's, leaving around 8:00 p.m. Then Mom turned on the TV and we watched the last two-thirds of the movie *The Sound of Music*.

Bud called around 9:30. He and I talked for quite awhile. One of the topics was that I needed to drop by Independent Bank at Pleasant Lake (corner of Berry and Bunkerhill roads) to sign as a joint holder of Dad's checking account there. Dad and Bud had already signed, but without my signature to make things complete, Bud had to sign Dad's name and his own when signing Dad's checks. With the signature process complete at the bank, Bud, Dad or I could write checks against Dad's account signing our own names. Bedtime came around 11:00 p.m.

—Monday, April 25—

Charlene—

Laura called. Dennis shattered his big toe coming down the steps at their house.

Charlie—

Mom and I were up by a little after 7:00 a.m. Mom wasn't getting around very well, so while she got herself going I went to McDonald's restaurant and bought breakfast for the two of us. When I returned to Mom's we had egg McMuffins and hash brown potatoes. Mom had made coffee and also provided the orange juice.

Later, I took Mom to the Comerica Bank so she could get cash. Then we went to a nearby Kroger store for groceries. At Kroger's I bought eight packets of \$0.29 stamps/20 per. (Five of these would go to Mom and three I would give to Dad for his correspondence.) I dropped Mom and groceries at her house then went

to K-Mart to buy labels for a tractor-type dot matrix printer and some writing paraphernalia for Dad.

It was lunch time when I went out to Dad's house. En route I stopped at the Independent Bank and signed as joint owner of Dad's checking account there. (The woman who assisted me each time I went into that bank was "Shari," a very nice and understanding person.) Next I stopped at a little store on the corner where Bunkerhill Road branches off from Plum Orchard Road. I bought beer, sodas and a submarine sandwich. I also got the deposits on a load of aluminum cans.

Soon I was at Dad's house, eating lunch and setting up the printer and computer to print labels. While in this process I noticed Penny Kelley, Dad's neighbor, out in her yard. She also saw me through the window and I waved. She headed for her house, and I assumed that she would be coming over, so I went ahead and started towards her house.

Penny and I talked for over an hour, discussing Dad and his property. Later in the day Penny would let Stella Wooster, a realtor, into the house to evaluate the house for possible future sale. Penny had been trying to get Dad to sell the house to her and her husband, Bob, for some time. They wanted the house to live in while renting out their current abode. Penny was talking \$48,000 until Bud mentioned that the house was to be evaluated by a realtor. Then Penny started talking \$50,000⁴. She and Bob were even willing to let Dad stay in the house rent-free as long as he wanted, or could, if Dad would sell it to them now.

I left to visit Dad a little after 2:00 p.m. Bunkerhill Road south to highway 106 (Bunkerhill Road continued) to Kinch Road south to Coonhill Road west to Wooster Road south (past the farm) then east, then east on Seymour Road to Race Road, now south to Cedar Knoll Drive (almost to the I-94 freeway on/off ramps), and finally east on Cedar Knoll Drive nearly a mile to the Home. I found it both interesting and malodorous that an open sewage plant predominated in the Home's yard near the road and parking area. I figured it must be less than pleasant for the Home's occupants on warm days when the wind blew just right.

Dad was very tired throughout the hour or so I stayed. The nurses had him on water pills, so he had to urinate every few minutes. He was also working to cough stuff out of his lungs. There really wasn't a lot to talk about. I mainly just did little errands and took notes as to things he wanted, or wanted done. Among these things were: bring him a small, quiet fan; see if Independent Bank could transfer \$34 each Friday to Penny's account—\$25 as a thank you gift to her for watching over the house and doing little things here and there, and \$9 to her son Mark for keeping up the lawn and yard.

The view from Dad's window was of a well-manicured lawn stretching out to the ravine where I-94 shot by. Then on the other side of this ravine was a

4 As it would turn out, both of these offers were unacceptably low, as the house's median value was \$75,000, and Stella figured it would probably sell for nearly \$77,000. Dad had paid \$45,000 for it in 1984.

beautiful farm complete with house, out-buildings and well-tended fields and trees. Dad said that the house was where Judy and Ned Owen lived, Rosalie's daughter and son-in-law, and that Rosalie's car could be seen parked there when Judy was home from work. Talk about a small world! (I called Judy and told her that Dad was at Cedar Knoll, but Dad never mentioned her coming to visit. She did come by Dad's house, on my invitation, to look for anything that might have belonged to Rosalie. She didn't find anything except a few books in the back bedroom.)

I told Dad that I would make him a set of return address labels. He said to make the Cedar Knoll Care Center his return address, since he would probably be there awhile. I also said that I would be inputting the information from his address book into the computer. Thus he could have a printout at the Home without jeopardizing the loss of his original address book.

When I left, before 5:00 p.m., I said that I would return for another visit in the evening. This established a pattern that we would maintain all week. I would come twice a day, once in the afternoon for a couple of hours and once in the evening for a couple of hours. This left me free to do things for him, or for Mom, mornings.

I returned to Dad's house and finished creating the prototype return address label. Then I drove into town, retrieved Mom, and we went to Bill Knapp's for dinner.

My evening visit with Dad was pretty much a repeat of the afternoon one, with the exception that he asked me to wash his face. I stayed about an hour-and-a-half, and then returned to Mom's. Mom and I visited from 9:30 p.m. till 11:00 before turning in.

—Tuesday, April 26—

Once again Mom and I were up around 7:00 a.m. We had maple rolls and coffee for breakfast. Afterwards, I brought some screens up from the basement, cleaned them, and put them up to take advantage of unusually warm, California-like weather. Then I drove out to Dad's house at about 10:30 a.m., stopping at K-Mart en route to buy a small fan for Dad and a couple of submarine sandwiches (2/\$3) for my lunch. I also stopped at the Independent Bank and picked up a form for Dad to sign which would allow \$34/week transferred between his checking account and Penny's savings account.

I worked on my computer at Dad's house until about 2:00 p.m., finishing off the two subs but not finishing the address inputting. Still, I printed twenty-six return address labels and printed what had been input of the addresses.

I started off to visit Dad without noticing Dad's car was almost out of gas. The alarm chime sounded about the time I reached Coonhill Road, so I turned

around and headed back to the corner of Bunkerhill Road (Michigan 106) and Berry Road, where I knew there was a gas station. Unfortunately, I got socked for the gas, as it was selling for \$1.21/gallon. In Jackson the going rate at the time was \$1.01/gal. I would be more prudent in future to keep the tank filled, and filled in town.

An interesting note: It normally took from 15-20 minutes travel time between Dad's house and the Home, the same amount of time between Mom's house and the Home, and a similar timeframe between Mom's house and Dad's. Very close to an equilateral triangle.

I now continued on to visit Dad. He went through the printout and crossed off names of those deceased, or who were otherwise no longer part of his life. I showed Dad the return labels and then placed them in his letter writing valise. He also looked over the checking account transfer order form and then signed it.

We talked awhile, and I did some things for him, including telling the nurse on duty that Dad needed another wheelchair. The one he had was too narrow for him to maneuver properly, and he had badly cut his right palm on a broken piece of metal jutting out from the side.

Dad was still trying to get moved to the room across the hall. He had an oxygen-making machine in his room, a permanent fixture now as to his care, and was breathing from it via a nose-piece about a third of the time.

After my visit with Dad I went to Mom's. I treated her to dinner at Denny's near the west end Meijer's store. Then I returned to Cedar Knoll, arriving a little after 7:00 p.m. Tonight, besides our visiting and my doing errands, I washed Dad's face, chest and back. He moaned in ecstasy while being washed.

Charlene—

8:10 p.m.—called Cedar Knoll. Dad in bed all afternoon. Charlie was giving him a bed bath.

—Wednesday, April 27—⁵
(Day of former President Richard M. Nixon's funeral)—

Bob and I drove to Rome, New York.

Charlie—

Today, after our breakfast of coffee, juice, English muffins and jelly, Mom and I went to Sears looking for a chair. As we were preparing to leave, Bud called to inquire after Dad and to say that the Home had called him. Dad had been moved across the hall to Room #86 according to his wishes.

En route to Sears we stopped at Elias Bros. Big Boy for lunch. Mom had a Slim Jim burger with fries, and I had a Big Boy hamburger with fried onion rings.

Mom wanted another recliner, on a smaller scale to the one she had in her living room, to be situated near the fireplace and by her phone. We discovered that Sears didn't carry furniture. So it was off to Vermeulen's furniture store downtown on Cortland Street. There we found the perfect chair, complete with vibrating mechanism, which they would deliver Saturday.

We returned to the west end of town after leaving Vermeulen's, to a Shoe Source store on West Avenue. Mom was looking for shoes, but she didn't find any that interested her. Thus, we returned to her house at 2:00 p.m.

I didn't spend much time at Mom's before heading off to visit Dad. During my nearly two hour stay I took a letter to Rev. Ed Roarke from Dad. Basically, Dad asked Ed to bury the hatchet and come help him in his hour of need. There was some bad blood between them due to a malediction letter Dad had sent to Ed complaining about Ed's ministry. Before I left for the afternoon, Dad dictated another letter, this one to Maurice and Zella Harlow of Douglasville, Georgia. I made a copy of both letters. Dad actually suggested I do so.

While Dad was in the letter-writing mood, I asked if he would like to sign notes of blessing to his grandchildren. He said yes, leaving it to me to compose same. (It would take a couple of days before this project was completed.)

5 Bob and Charlene left today for Rome, New York, where they arrived the next day to spend some time with the Laura and Dennis Hill family. Then they continued on to Ridgefield, Connecticut, where they arrived Saturday. Bob's mission was to record a cassette of his vocals per the request of some Blissfield constituents, to be done in Sue and Dave Johnston's recording studio. They would be returning the next week.

LETTER TO REV. ED ROARKE

Dear Ed-

This must be the humblest apology I have ever made. My judging/scolding-type letter could have been from the meanest judge, designed only to kill ministries. Even though my intentions were the best, I'm sure it hurt.

I have a request for help that few people understand. I have a need that only people like yourself, Maxine and Dennis (well prayed-up) could give me the deliverance that I need. I have walked with Christ at death's door three nights, with Jesus at my side, so He is hopefully calling all shots, and I am being as careful as I can.

This is a real cry for help! And I do not have many places to turn.

Love you and need your help, Maxine and Dennis, too.

Howard Paige
@ Cedar Knoll
Afternoons and
Evenings best.
Room #86, Bed #1

Signed in Christ,
(Dad signed here)

(Written by Charlie, dictated by Dad, who can't write much yet.)

LETTER TO MAURICE AND ZELLA HARLOW

Dear Maurice and Zella-

Since January 27, the story of my life has been the story of changes. "Shingles" was the first culprit. Dr. Munro identified my condition as shingles, and I went to the hospital February 3. Had a bad time Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Sunday noon came the word that Rosalie had died. The hospital sent me home, out of sympathy, Sunday afternoon.

Monday morning at 6:00 a.m. the ambulance took me to Foote Hospital. Then, upper GI, lower GI, about 20 blood tests, MRI (to see if there was any nerve damage). The only damage was due to shingles and will take months to repair.

Finally, another doctor found a lump in my neck. A biopsy showed cancer through the lymph system and, generally, about

three months to live.

Through the years you both have been best good friends with me, and the Holy Spirit will bring us together once again.

Best of love to you, in Christ-
(Dad signed here)

(Written by Charles Paige as dictated by Howard Paige, since he is having trouble writing.)

Dinner was at Mom's house and consisted of: bologna sandwiches; vegetable beef soup; a dinner salad with Catalina dressing, lettuce, tomatoes and grated cheese; and frozen yogurt for dessert.

I spent much of my evening stay giving Dad a bath by washing his face, chest, back, legs and feet. A nurse's aid rubbed some kind of salve on his bedsore buttocks. When I left he was lying on his back in bed with the most sublimely comfortable expression on his face. Dad was off his water pill today, so his mind was more at ease not having to keep his urinal at immediate access.

The funeral for former President Richard M. Nixon was being televised throughout the evening, but I only caught occasional glimpses at the care center. It was over by the time I reached Mom's house at 9:30 p.m. At Mom's we watched the news until 11:00 p.m. and visited.

—Thursday, April 28—

Charlene—

Took Dennis to hospital for toe operation.

Charlie—

Mom and I were up around 7:15 a.m. We had coffee and maple coffee cake for breakfast. I took Mom to the east end Meijer's store, where she dropped off a pair of shoes at their repair shop. I bought writing pads for Mom and me plus some bananas. That was it for shopping.

I took Mom home and then drove to Dad's house, stopping to deliver the checking transfer form. Shari said that it wouldn't go into effect until the following week, so Bud would have to write a check for this week. No problem. (The next time I saw Penny I let her know about the transfer.) At Dad's I worked with the computer to input Dad's addresses/phone numbers. I got through "O" before it was time to visit Dad, finally leaving the house about 2:35 p.m.

I had looked for stamps at Dad's house to mail the letters for reverends Rourke and Harlow's but only found one, paper clipped to the lining inside Dad's briefcase. Perhaps it was a "dire emergency" stamp. I also worked a little on the blessing note.

When I got to Cedar Knoll there was a small box for mail at the front reception desk, so I mailed Rourke's letter—the most important. I was told, however, that mail wasn't sent out until 10:00 a.m. Monday—Saturday.

Dad was off his water pill, or at least wasn't on it in the afternoon and evening. He was laboring to breath, taking in great gulps of air without seeming to get much benefit of oxygen. It was also difficult for him to talk. He didn't have the wind to form words completely. He would run out of wind mid-sentence, or even mid-word, though his thoughts remained coherent. It also seemed to be harder for him to recognize meaning in words spoken to him. Repeats, both from him and his company, were increasingly the order of the day.

As usual I ran errands and tried to make him comfortable. This included telling the nurse about his breathing disorder and getting ice water for his "glass" (styrofoam cup). I tried calling his doctor, but as could be expected only got his nurse. I wanted to set up a conference with the doctor to find out exactly what was happening with Dad. Since I would be at different places at different times, I gave the nurse the phone number for Dad's house, Mom's, and also said I might be reached at Cedar Knoll.⁶ Before leaving, I took one of the three books of stamps I had bought for Dad, to keep at his house.

I returned to Dad's house and worked on the blessing till a little after 6:00 p.m. Unfortunately, it didn't get finished before it was time to go into town for dinner at Mom's.

When I got to Mom's, she was in the throes of preparing dinner—her first major cooking production since her fall. She was steaming broccoli, boiling potatoes, heating stewed tomatoes⁷, and frying a mess of bite-size bluegill fish that Bud and Elaine had brought to her from Lake Cadillac. There was also a nice, big apple pie sitting on the counter. A dinner salad topped with tomatoes and grated cheese was also included. Quite a meal! And Mom showed she still had it in her. As usual, especially that first week, I did dishes.

I was back visiting Dad by 8:00 p.m. He was still having trouble breathing, so we didn't talk much. Once again I washed his face, chest/stomach, back, legs and feet. While I was there, a nurse came in to check on Dad's breathing (per my request). Dad pulled out his little bottle of nitroglycerine tablets and plopped a pill in his mouth, the third one I had seen him take that day. The nurse asked him for

6 The good doctor would return my call Friday at 3:00 p.m., leaving a message with Mom that I should try calling him on Monday.

7 Stewed tomatoes with fish was not an option but a MUST in Mom's house.

the bottle and said that it wasn't permissible for patients to dispense their own medicine.

Dad became quite upset by the nurse taking the pills. These little bits of dynamite had been his security blanket for four years, per his own admission⁸. He claimed they helped him to breathe and took them for that reason, not for angina, their actual, medicinal purpose. Later, when I talked again with the nurse, she said the pills had expired in August, 1993. This meant, according to her, that the pills had lost much of their potency but were still capable of causing side effects, one of which included Dad's current breathing problem.

The actual reason for the breathing problem was heart failure causing pulmonary edema. His blood just wasn't pumping sufficiently through his body. I could empathize with Dad, since I had gone through the same thing in February to the extent of being hospitalized February 12 and 13 in Pasadena. Little did any of us know at the time that Dad had been diagnosed with pulmonary disease as early as 1991. He had kept it a well-guarded secret, claiming that his short-windedness, when it occurred, was the result of asthma.

I left Dad's side at about 9:00 p.m., with him puffing away and trying to sleep, sleep being a commodity that had been eluding him for some time. I got to Mom's about 9:00 p.m., and we spent the small remainder of the evening visiting and watching a little TV news.

—Friday, April 29—

Charlene—

Left Laura's; went to Sue's house in Connecticut. Talked to Charlie. Dad pretty much in bed. Has trouble breathing.

Charlie—

I was up at 7:00 a.m. I worked on my journal a short while before Mom got up. I continued writing as Mom and I sipped our morning brew and chatted. Then I made us a bacon and scrambled egg breakfast. We also each had an English muffin with jelly.

I did dishes, then went to Dad's house to work on finalizing the blessing blurb, which I completed (including printing) a little after 11:30 a.m. (See next page.) I then drove back to Mom's house, picking up a couple of chicken lunches at Colonel Sander's KFC.

Mom and I ate our lunch as though we had an appetite. I took a short rest afterward, and then swept Mom's breezeway and garage before going to visit Dad in the afternoon. En route to Cedar Knoll (so to speak) I stopped at a photocopy

8 Four years was his admission, not the security blanket part.

shop on Wildwood near Jackson High School. There I made copies of the blessings page just created. It was copied onto sky-blue, parchment-type paper and came out looking nice, if I do say so myself!

Dad was still working hard on breathing when I got there, and occasionally during my stay. It seemed as though sometimes he'd forget to breathe hard and would suddenly remember and start breathing hard again. During this visit he didn't say anything about the nurse not giving him back his nitro pills. However, he had been purposefully wetting his diapers instead of using the urinal, and had been balled out for so doing. It seemed to Dad that fussing with the urinal required too much energy and mental concentration.

When I arrived Dad was in bed but got into his wheelchair within a few minutes. He sat in the wheelchair while signing the nine blessing sheets for his bloodline grandchildren. He prayed a short while over each before filling it in with the grandchild's name (sometimes including spousal name and/or children), then signing. Dad had trouble with the ninth, and kept asking who it was for. I kept saying "Betsy West" until he finally got it done⁹.

Once Dad was finished with the ninth blessing sheet, amidst almost constant interruptions by nurses, I asked if he would like to do blessings for Marilee's grandkids. Dad said no, that God wouldn't allow him to bless someone else's children unless given special permission. I then told Dad that I would leave a few extra blessing sheets in his letter writing valise just in case such permission was forthcoming.

The signature bout tired Dad a lot, so I helped him back into bed and get situated to where he was comfortable. Just before leaving I filled his "glass" with ice and water.

Dinner at Mom's consisted of pizza and apple pie. Then we visited awhile before it was back to visit with Dad. Just before leaving for the Home, I called Mary West and talked with her until 7:35 p.m. She would be driving to Jackson the next day, so we had a few things to iron out. I asked her to bring some interesting videos that we could peruse using Mom's VCR. She said she had forgotten that Mom had a VCR and would try and scrounge something up.

Originally, Mary was planning on coming Tuesday, which would mean seeing Dad Wednesday, since she would get into Jackson late Tuesday (after driving all day from Minnesota). However, as Mary got increasingly bleak updates from Charlene about Dad's failing trend, she decided to come earlier.

9 Unfortunately, Dad was quickly losing steam/coherency and ended up writing "Angie West," a fact I didn't discover until the day they were handed out. Thus there was one blessing sheet for Angie and Mark Whitcomb and one for Angie West.

Dear

Your Grandpa Howard gives you love and benediction for a happy, Spirit-filled life. God willing, may these extend to your children, and theirs, forever.

With Love, In Christ,

[As dictated to Charles Paige by Rev. Howard O. Paige 27 April, 1994, at Cedar Knoll Care Center, Jackson, Michigan.]

I arrived at Cedar Knoll at 8:00 p.m., and then gave Dad a bed bath, which included washing his face/neck, chest/stomach and back (no legs this time). Then the nurses' aides arrived to change Dad's diaper and clean him up for the night. Dad was fading fast after they left, so I didn't stay much longer. Before going, once again I filled his "glass" with ice and water. His breathing, though he was still "working," seemed to be a touch more relaxed. Also, the horrendous swelling in his feet had reduced, since lately he had been sitting with his legs propped up, and lying in bed more and more.

The nurses had been trying all week to convince Dad that when he sat, he should sit with his feet up. However, to Dad it was just another battle of wills—his against theirs.

Underlying Dad's attitude was his desire to be "taken Home," "Home," of course, being Heaven. While in constant pain, at his house and at Garretts', he had prayed fervently for this. It was the will of "others" that he not die. More than once he said "Don't hold me, Charlie!" or "Let me go!" Selfishly, I admit, I wanted him to stay. Yet as the days passed, it became evident to me that my desire for him to stay was purely selfish, so I relaxed and did what I could to help spiritually prepare him for his passing on to the next, and perhaps happier, world.

Back at Mom's again at 9:30 p.m., she and I had some frozen yogurt and visited for the rest of the evening. Once again, bedtime came at 11:00 p.m.

IN THE END

(Howard's Final Two Days)

—**Saturday, April 30**—

Per usual, Mom and I were up by 7:00 a.m. I worked on my journal while sipping coffee and talking with Mom. It was a little after 8:00 a.m. when I fixed us french toast for breakfast. Afterwards, Mom helped by drying the dishes. It was the first time she really felt up to it (though she had always offered).

The Vermeulen furniture delivery men brought Mom's new chair at 9:30 a.m., and I left for Dad's a little after 10:00 o'clock. En route I dropped by the west end Meijer's store and picked up Mom's repaired shoes, also having two house keys made for her. Then it was out to Dad's house by way of Layton's Corners

(corner of Berry and Meridian roads near Pleasant Lake). At a little store I bought three chili dogs and a package of fudge for lunch. At Dad's I finished inputting his addresses and phone numbers on the computer, completing printing the results by 2:30 p.m.

I went to visit Dad at the Cedar Knoll Care Center and found him in a worsening state. Again his breathing was labored, and he was weaker than ever. When I arrived, he was in his chair. But soon he wanted back in bed. He now talked very little, and his lungs were working overtime.

I stayed until 5:00 p.m., doing assorted errands for him and trying to be of some comfort. Nothing made him happy or comfortable. The day before Dad had mentioned to a nurse that he felt isolated at the far end of the hall. So today, while I was there, they moved him to room #78, which was very near the nurses' station. It was noisier, and it surprised me that he would prefer to be in a noisier room, since he had gone through a lot of trouble earlier to find a quiet, secluded one. Dad's roommate, an octogenarian named Mr. Mays, was hooked to a number of machines and was pretty much immobilized.

Mom had given me a list of things to pick up at the store. However, it was raining so hard on the way to her house that I decided not to do any shopping at this time. When I got there, Mom had fried another mess of bite-size bluegills, boiled potatoes, steamed broccoli and heated stewed tomatoes. Thus, we had another great fish dinner, topped off with apple pie.

Mary, driving to Jackson from Plymouth, Minnesota, called after dinner to say she wouldn't be arriving at Mom's until sometime between 8:30—9:00 p.m. She was just starting out again after visiting with a friend at Watervlet near Kalamazoo.

I left to see Dad a little after 7:00 p.m., stopping first at Kroger's to satisfy Mom's grocery list and buy four, six-packs of assorted soft drinks. At Cedar Knoll I found Dad in an alarming state of weakness. He was in his chair, and when I walked in the door he began breathing hard and wanted back in bed immediately. Now he hardly talked at all except to say he had fallen. The floor nurse corroborated this, saying they had found him on the floor. His feet had gotten tangled in the oxygen tubing from his oxygen-making machine. The nurse said that Dad had no apparent injuries, though bruises may take a day or two to show.

I held Dad's hand a lot and tried to be comforting, but nothing helped to ease his state. I called Mom at 8:30, where Mary and her dog Bumper¹⁰ had just arrived. I asked to speak with Mary, and then told Mary of Dad's desperate condition. I knew that she had been driving all day (thirteen hours, and as it turned out, in all kinds of weather) and was probably bone tired. However, I wanted her to have sufficient information about Dad to decide whether to come out and see him tonight. At this point I wasn't sure he would last the night, and told her so. Of course she came out, despite the lateness of the hour and pouring rain.

10 Bumper is a beautiful, golden Labrador retriever.

In about twenty minutes I left Dad's side and went out into the hall. There I found Mary standing in the hall near Dad's former room (#86). Apparently she hadn't gotten the word that Dad had been moved to Room #78. The door to Room #86 was closed, and Mary was contemplating whether to knock, just go in, or wait until the door was opened. Thus she was relieved to see me. After a big hug, we headed toward Dad's room. As we approached we heard Dad's strong, baritone voice as though he were talking with his roommate. We chalked this off as wishful thinking, however, when we went over to his bed and found him in the same prostrate, weakened condition. I couldn't help occasionally watching Dad's neighbor looking puzzled over towards Dad all the time we were there. I had a strange feeling that something wasn't right, but like the strong voice, I chalked this off.

Dad seemed happy to see Mary and tried to say a few things, but his breath was so scant that hardly anything came out. Mary lost it and had to turn away as her face contorted and eyes let loose their tears. At one point he said it was the greatest honor he could bestow upon Mary and me, for us to put him out of his misery, to "send him home." He then began describing how to locate his little .22 caliber pistol in his bedroom closet at home.

We let Dad finish.¹¹ Then I said definitely not. He needed to ask God for help to leave. I asked if God had told Dad He wanted him to come home, and Dad shook his head no. Then I said something to the effect that if God hadn't made up His mind yet, it wasn't up to Dad or us to make it up for Him, and that God wasn't likely to appreciate interference with His plans for Dad.

Dad was lying on his side, breathing hard, when he asked Mary to approach closer. She bent down to hear him better. Then he said "There's a reason why you and Charlie are so close. I'll tell you some day." Mary asked if he would tell her tonight and he shook his head. Then she asked if he would tell her tomorrow and again he shook his head.

Mary and I finally made our departure a little after 10:00 p.m., returning to Mom's house for a pre-bedtime visit. Mary hadn't even finished unpacking her vehicle, so she did that while I brought in the groceries. It was still raining, though it had let up some and soon stopped altogether.

Mary and I found Mom in the living room watching TV. She turned it off immediately, and we sat visiting. Mary was shaken by Dad's sorry state and things that had been said. She, Mom and I were talking about Dad's condition when the phone rang. It was Carolyn (Weck) Wayman, Marilee's granddaughter and a young woman who had been visiting and otherwise keeping watch over Dad.

I started telling Carolyn of Dad's deteriorating condition, but she interrupted. She then began reciting what one of Dad's nurses, Connie, had told her only moments before. According to nurse Connie, Dad only acted pathetic when he had

11 We never clarified whether Dad wanted one of us to shoot him, or just that we make the gun available for him to use on himself.

visitors. Only then did he have trouble breathing. Only then could he barely talk. Only then did he not have enough energy even to sit up in a wheelchair. Only then did he claim not to be eating anything, to be having a debilitating eating disorder¹².

Connie said that the nurses were all baffled by his behavior when he had company, because at mealtime he always ate everything edible on his tray. Also, he would get in his wheelchair and roll out into the hall to visit with fellow patients and nurses, long as visitors weren't around. During those times he was an entirely different person from what he displayed to guests.

I was dealt a terrible blow on hearing this, especially when I called Connie (Nurses' Station #5) at the Home and allowed her to verify every word. Dad had been playing us for fools, it seemed. Much of Mom's, Mary's and my conversation for the next two hours centered on Dad and his despicable fabrications. When Charlene called from Connecticut a little after 11:00 p.m., Mary told her and Bob about what had happened at the Home, and what nurse Connie had said. Charlene could only say that Dad was a "snot." She also said that she no longer felt guilty for being away so long. I hoped they wouldn't hurry back on Dad's account, though I knew they wanted to see Mary (Mom and me).

Mary and I took Bumper for a walk before turning in. We kept this one short, however, since we knew the VanSumeren family was coming the next day to see Dad (and us, of course). Tomorrow promised to be hectic. Bedtime finally came around 12:30 a.m.

Mary slept on the back porch, on the sofa bed, so there was no disruption to the status quo. Originally, I had planned on being the gentleman and letting Mary have the front bedroom. However, since Mary had brought Bumper, she thought it would be better to sleep in the same room as he.

Charlene—

Bob, with Sue, recorded a tape for him to give to people when we leave Blissfield. After two songs Bob lost his voice.

"Dear God—I just called Mary at Mom's house. She says the nurse said Daddy was faking weakness when the family was around and was okay when they were gone!! Help!!!!!!!"

12 Dad's first tale of eating woe was that he couldn't eat because food got caught in his throat and he couldn't swallow. I mentioned that Mom had this disorder, and that taking a drink of liquid after each bite was what Paula Garrett recommended. Dad was quick to say that this didn't work for him. I had gone to the head nurse about this. She said that the kitchen keeps track of what is given to each patient and what is/isn't eaten. She said that she would look into this, but that nothing had been mentioned to her by the kitchen or any of the nurses. Then, today, Dad's story changed. Now he couldn't eat because, if he did, he'd retch it all back up.

—**Sunday, May 1**—
(May Day!! — First day of Michigan's 6% sales tax)

Mid-afternoon Charlie called, said Lynn, Dan and family, Karen, Mom, he and Mary went to see Daddy. Two nurses were working with him. They called the ambulance. Each of the family attending held his hand in turn, gave him their love, cried a lot.

Charlie—

I was up at 7:00 a.m. despite having gone to bed at 12:30 a.m. I started the coffee brewing, and then Mary came into the kitchen from the back room to ask whether Mom was up. I said no, so she returned to bed. I settled in the living room and spent the next, uninterrupted hour writing in my journal.

Mom got up about 8:00 a.m. Then she and I visited in the living room for a short while before Mary poked her head in to say good morning. Soon we were all in the living room sipping coffee and chatting, with Bumper always vying for attention.

Mary invited Mom and me to go with her and Bumper on a walk around the neighborhood. Mom still wasn't feeling up to long walks. In fact, we were all missing church today because Mom didn't feel she could tolerate sitting in a hard pew, especially for a full hour. Of course, this didn't mean that Mary and I couldn't go, but she and I mutually felt the day might be better spent in a different type of communion.

We started out at 9:00 a.m., heading east down North Street, then south on Gilbert and west on Leroy Street past our former home at 1308. The memories flew from our mouths, knocked off their quiet balance by our proximity to where major, even character/future-determining events in our young lives happened.

Throughout the walk, Bumper engorged himself experiencing endless new scenery, bouquets and stink pots of new smells, and an assortment of not-always-friendly, and usually illusive, dogs and cats. He was driven to distraction by numberless fox squirrels, which seemed to know his leash limitations and had great sport teasing him.

Mary and I enjoyed visiting, especially reminiscing about the not-always-so-good old days. There was also some current-family history catching up. Talk of Dad made up about 50% of our conversation, 50% of this was Howard of the olden days, and the other 50% of the 50% was Howard of the day-to-days. Mom, Mary's family adventures, and mine in California made up most of the rest.

We headed south on Edgewood Street from Leroy, past Ganson Street and into Loomis Park. We walked about a block south through the park, then continued westerly on some small back streets until arriving at N. East Street. We took this north to Ganson, crossed the street, and continued east on Ganson past Grandma Nellie's former house on the northwest corner of Loomis St. As we

returned to Mom's house via Ellery Street, a jet-black Labrador retriever discovered us.

Mary had noticed the Lab across Ganson, and he noticed us at just about the same time. He had on a red collar but was otherwise untethered. Immediately, both he and Bumper began exploring each other doggie style. The black Lab graced us with his presence all the way to Mom's house and was disappointed when we took Bumper inside. (We would see the black Lab in the neighborhood again during the coming week, but only while we passed in a vehicle.)

The three of us had breakfast consisting of bagels, jelly, cream cheese and coffee. Dad's apparent health deceit dominated our conversation as we continued to visit. Then Lynn VanSumeren called mid-morning to say they would be arriving at Mom's around 1:00 p.m. I suggested that once they arrived we go out together for lunch.

Arriving at 1:00 p.m. were Lynn, Dan, Jodi and Todd VanSumeren, and Karen Paige. We visited till about 2:00 p.m. By then, the new arrivals had been brought up-to-speed on Dad's situation. Before we left, I took pictures of Todd and Bumper; Todd and Bumper and Jodi; and finally, of Todd and Bumper and Mom, Mary, Lynn, Dan, Karen and me (using a tripod). "Todd and Bumper" became one of the themes of the day, and every time I saw them together I couldn't help but think to myself "a boy and his dog."

Mom and I rode with Lynn, Dan and Karen to the Ground Round restaurant, located at Jackson Crossing (formerly Paka Plaza). Mary chauffeured the kids and Bumper. (We couldn't leave Bumper at Mom's unattended or he would have gotten into mischief to repay us. Mary knew him well.) Lynn drove the VanSumerens' van.

We had a wonderful time at the Ground Round—all of us except Bumper, who was left in the back of Mary's "truck" while we ate. Long before the rest of us left the restaurant, however, Todd was out with his pal. A resident clown made assorted balloon animals/symbols, and conversation was lively, by us and by others in the place, with lots of laughter mixed in.

The restaurant was having a contest commemorating the upcoming Mother's Day. Young children were given an entry blank, upon which they were to write about why they thought their mother was special, and then draw her picture. The prize was a \$200 shopping spree. Both Todd and Jodi participated, and Jodi's rendering of Lynn was very good.

It was after 3:00 p.m. when we left the Ground Round and headed east on I-94 to visit Dad at Cedar Knoll. Once again, Lynn drove the VanSumerens' van. We continued with the same distribution of people between the two vehicles except for Karen, who decided she wanted to ride in Mary's "truck."

I told Lynn and Dan that I had cooked up a diabolical scheme to foil Dad's ploy that he doesn't eat anything (versus Nurse Connie saying that he ate everything on his tray that was edible). I said I would tell Dad that his family was very upset by his not eating. Thus we would make sure that one of us was with

him during every meal period, every day, to encourage him to eat. He would then either not eat to prove his point to the witness, which would leave him hungry and was unlikely, or he would be seen eating, which would disprove his complaint. Of course, I didn't really mean we would actually do it (or did I?).

The staff would have allowed us to take Bumper into the Home, especially since he was so good natured. However, Dan opted to leave him outdoors, tended, of course, by the dog's trusty friend Todd. The rest of us, including Jodi, went to the hallway outside Dad's room. The staff once again let Mom use a "visitor's" wheelchair, since the long walk would be a bit rough on her.

I asked everybody to remain in the hall until I came back from Dad's room. I wanted to make sure he was decently clad, since I had gone into his room before and found him not so. The door was partially closed when I knocked a couple of times and then walked in.

Inside, two nurses were standing by Dad's bed. One was measuring his blood pressure, the other checking his heart rate. Dad was on his back, breathing deeply but with small benefit. I could hear his lungs "rattling" as he breathed. The nurses said the oxygen in his body was not properly circulating, and they showed me how dark pink the skin color was under his fingernails. One said they would be calling an ambulance to take Dad to the hospital.

I went into the hall and told everybody that Dad was having "real" medical trouble. Then we all went inside and stood by Dad's side, except for Jodi who remained in the hall per the decision of her parents. He was now on his right side facing us, but initially his eyes were closed. It was obvious to all that breathing was taking a lot of effort. Dad was quietly mumbling in a manner suggesting there was another side to the conversation.

Finally, he blinked open his eyes and looked up at me with a smile. His smile widened when he saw Lynn, Mary, Dan, Karen and Mom. Weakly, but clearly, he said "I am blessed!"

By now, tears were flowing from all of us. Each of those in the room took turns holding his hand and saying they loved him. After my turn, I drew back and let the others have the forefront, since I had already spent time with Dad the past week.

While the others were with Dad, I got Dan to help me carry the rocking chair out to the van. The seat had broken a few days before, and it was no longer safe. Paramedics had arrived and were working with Dad when I signed off for the rocker at the main nurses' station. While Mary and the others stayed near Dad, Dan and I carried the chair out the front door. There, we found Todd in tears and sheer agony, still holding Bumper's leash but in dire need to visit a restroom.

We sat the rocker down, and Dan rushed Todd inside. When they returned, and we had finished loading the rocker into the van, Dan asked Todd why he hadn't

tied the leash to something and gone inside. Todd said he was afraid that someone would steal Bumper, so he opted to stay with him no matter what¹³.

Dan and I could see the yellow ambulance parked at the Home's Emergency entrance as we reentered. I made a beeline to Dad's room, leaving Dan in my dust, only to find him already gone. Then I quickly left the building again to see the ambulance preparing to leave. Mary, Lynn and Karen were near the ambulance, and then it pulled away as I approached. Mary was upset at the off-hand, callous way in which the paramedics had treated them. She had wanted to ride with Dad, but the paramedics had not made her feel comfortable even to suggest the possibility.

Now we piled into our respective vehicles and headed back to Mom's house. There, Dan and I unloaded the rocker. I then called Bud to tell him about Dad. However, the Home had already notified him. Bud and Elaine had just gotten home from Lake Cadillac a short while before, and Bud was in the midst of cutting some very tall grass. Bud answered the phone, and we talked about Dad's condition. He said they would be on the road for Jackson shortly, since Elaine had already been preparing their van for the trip¹⁴. I also called Charlene at Sue's house in Connecticut. Before hanging up, I assured Charlene that we would apprise her immediately after returning from the hospital.

Essential phone calls out of the way, Lynn, Karen, Mary and I went to W.A. Foote Memorial Hospital to find out Dad's location and circumstances. Dan stayed behind with the kids. They would go over to Dan's brother's house to pick up two gerbils. Mom opted to stay home and take a much needed nap.

We took Dad's car and in a few minutes were at the hospital, taking Ellery Street all the way. Arriving a little after 6:00 p.m., we went first to the lobby receptionist. She didn't have Dad registered yet. When we told her that Dad had just come by ambulance, she directed us to the Emergency Room receptionist. By the time we walked to Emergency and found the receptionist who knew of Dad's location, it was about 6:15. A nurse asked us to be seated in a waiting room until a doctor could come and tell us of Dad's condition. None of us took note that the nurse had placed us in a private waiting room.

It was 6:25 p.m. when a doctor came in and announced, with appropriate compassion, that "Mr. Paige passed away five minutes ago¹⁵." The four of us started in disbelief, and then erupted in tears, hugs, exclamations of lament,

13 I was very impressed by Todd's heroism and later gave him a special gift "from Dad" in the form of a picture of Christ holding a lamb close to His bosom. The picture was a paint-by-numbers that Dad had done in the 1960s. On the back it said "To Grandma Frank from Howard." Howard was Todd's great grandfather, and Frankie was Todd's great-great-great grandmother.

14 Bud and Elaine's original plan was to come Wednesday and stay overnight, to be at Mom's for a big family get together taking place on Thursday. As Dad had worsened, plans for a Wednesday trip got moved up to Tuesday, then Monday, until actually happening on Sunday.

15 Actual time of death was 6:06 p.m.

disbelief, loss and regret at lost or unrequited relationships. Finally, after a few minutes had passed, and we hoped that we were under emotional control, the nurse led us to Treatment Room #15, where Dad sat in his death bed, the back of which had been cranked up to a nearly-90-degree angle.

Eruptions of lamentations and memories recommenced, heads lay on one another's shoulders, more hugs for comforting. All the while Dad sat, his eyes closed and mouth oddly open wide, head tilted slightly forward. He finally looked at peace, his spirit fled. At one point, when Lynn was recovering some of her composure, she said "He sure looks good for an old man!" Recovering some of my own composure, I responded "That proves he's gone, if he didn't respond to such a compliment!" Such occasional light banter, while not intended to be disrespectful, helped take some of the weight off an otherwise unbearably heavy time.

Karen had seen Dad the most of those present. She was living at home with her parents, and Dad made occasional trips to Saginaw for visits with Bud, Elaine and her. Mary and Lynn shed many tears for their unrequited and now unrequitable love for Dad. For Mary, this would be the main reason for paroxysms of tears for days to come. I cried because I was going to desperately miss a friend, beloved father and inspirer of great awe. Whether his antics/actions seemed for good or bad, they always provoked controversy or praise, and usually inspired conundrum.

We were still in the throes of grief when a nurse came in and said I had a phone call. I went out to the reception area and discovered it was Carolyn Wayman. Carolyn had called Cedar Knoll and learned that Dad had gone to the hospital. Then she had called Mom and was told we were at the hospital to be with him. Now she was calling to hear of Dad's circumstances. Carolyn said that she had just been in to see Dad that morning and was shocked that he had worsened so fast. I remained relatively silent as Carolyn talked. But when she finally asked how he was doing, I couldn't contain my grief.

I attempted to stifle unmanly sobs as I told her "he's gone." Her mind then went through the various interpretations of what this statement could mean. I couldn't be of much help, since I was going through another wave of wet anguish, naked emotion in front of strangers. As she reached the inevitable conclusion, Carolyn's voice and emotions reached higher and more frantic pitches until I was finally able to say "yes." Then she, too, broke into tears and sobs. She kept saying "I was there this morning. I just saw him!"

When I finally became sensible again, I asked if there was someone there who could be with and comfort her. She said that her husband and children were away but would be returning soon. I asked if she would like to come over to Mom's house and be with the rest of the family. Without hesitation she said "yes!"

Carolyn eventually hung up. I went back into the crying room, where we stayed a little longer before leaving. We then returned to Mom's house, where she was still resting in her room. Dan and the kids hadn't yet returned. It was now necessary to tell Mom.

Mom came out into the kitchen a short time after we arrived. Mary and I sat her down on the back room couch, with me on her left and Mary on her right. Mary then handed Beau,¹⁶ Angie's favorite puppet, to Mom and proceeded slowly to tell Mom of Dad's passing.

Mom was shocked, and it took longer than a minute for the full impact to set in. When it did, she broke into tears and utterings of disbelief. She did a mini-version of what Mary, Lynn, Karen and I had done at Foote Hospital. When it seemed safe, and Mom's outbursts of tears grew farther between, Mary and I were able to get up and leave her to talk with Beau, which she did for about fifteen minutes. Then she set Beau aside and was ready to get back to the living.

Dan, Todd and Jodi returned a little later. When Todd heard in the kitchen that Dad had died, he walked into the back room in a daze and said "My grandpa died." I wondered just how much Todd had interacted with this grandpa. To me, the probability that he hadn't very much was the saddest aspect. Yet it's probably easier to say goodbye to a stranger.

Mary was the one to call Charlene and Bob. They were, of course, very upset by Dad's death and wanted to return immediately. However, Bob was running a fever, and they weren't sure when they could leave Sue and Dave's place. (Bob's fever broke about 4:00 a.m. May 2, and soon thereafter they were on the road to Michigan. They would be in Jackson on Tuesday, May 3, to meet with the Reverend Don Whelpley, who was to conduct the funeral along with Bob.)

It was now after 7:00 p.m., food began to appear on the kitchen table, and family began devouring to fill their voids. About this time Carolyn stopped by, and hugs and tears erupted again as more bonding took place. We all knew how much Dad meant to Carolyn, and vice versa. Some in the back room may have been a little envious of Carolyn's relationship with Dad, but there was also the realization that she was there for Dad and would have done anything for him.

Bud and Elaine arrived at 8:00 p.m. They had left home around 6:00 o'clock, just minutes before Dad died, so they hadn't yet gotten the news. They knew something bleak was up when they walked in and saw all the teary eyes.

They had told us in Emergency that Bud could come and view the body that night if we came within the next couple of hours. So Bud, Elaine, Mary and I went to the Hospital in Paiges' van. Unfortunately, Dad had already been moved to the morgue. Upon our returning to Mom's, Bud immediately called the Chas. J. Burden & Son Funeral Home in Jackson to arrange for them to receive the body.

Carolyn stayed a couple of hours. The VanSumerens left about 10:00 o'clock. Bud, Elaine, Mary, Mom and I stayed up until nearly midnight talking and reminiscing. Mary and I made a list of things to do and people, organizations,

16 Beau is a monkey puppet that has become enmeshed in family history. He has accompanied Angie to family functions since at least 1984, when he was present at Margaret Paige's funeral. He was at the Paige/Janes Pleasant Lake picnic in 1991 and was mightily coveted by Dustin Paige. He was also destined to attend Howard's viewing nights, to hold a sign and represent Dad's insouciant nature.

agencies, etc., to call ASAP. Then I began jotting down vital and other information about Dad that would be included in his obituary/death certificate.

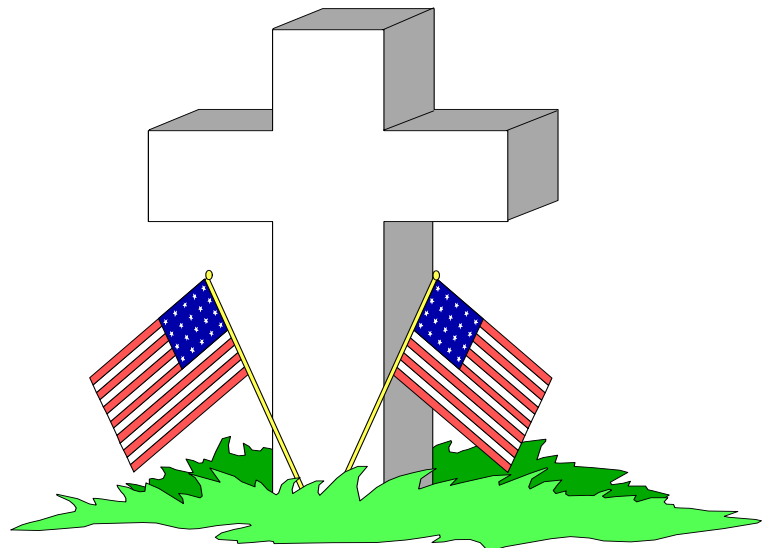
Bud and I went out to Dad's house around midnight to spend the night, since there wasn't sufficient room at Mom's. Penny Kelley, Dad's next-door neighbor, had already changed the sheets/pillow cases on the two beds for the possibility of my staying out there during my vacation. Bud and I flipped a coin as to which of us would sleep in Dad's bed, and Bud won the honor. We didn't stay up long and were in bed by 12:30 a.m.

Charlene—

Mary and Charlie went to the hospital to check on him. He had refused oxygen, got a little morphine for pain, was coherent at the end and had died at 6:06 p.m. They couldn't believe it.

Mary called me, Sue, Dave and Bob. All came near me while Mary said "Our Dad is at peace, now."

We called all of our kids. Laura said we had called them all six years ago today to tell them Grandma Verla had died.



THE LATTER DAYS

Charlene—

—Monday, May 2—

6:52 a.m.—left Sue's house for home. Called Mom and talked to Charlie. Funeral to be Thursday at 1:00 p.m. Funeral home visiting hours: Tuesday 1:00 p.m. for family; then 6-8:00 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday for all. Sue may fly into the Toledo airport. Bob didn't feel well enough to go on to Jackson when we arrived home. His hip is really hurting. Dr. said he needs a replacement.

Charlie—

It was up to Bud, Elaine, Mary and me to handle funeral arrangement. We were scheduled to meet with a representative of the Chas. J. Burden and Son Funeral Home today at 9:00 a.m. Charlene told us the night before that she trusted our decisions without reservation.

Bud and I came into town for breakfast with Mary, Mom and Elaine. Things didn't proceed with any kind of alacrity, so we didn't arrive at the Funeral Home for consultation until shortly after 9:30 a.m. Our representative was a tallish, balding, smiling fellow perhaps in his mid-to-late fifties, a Mr. Harper. He announced with urgent, precise relaxedness and smarmy smile that we had until 10:30 a.m. to call Dad's obituary information in to the newspaper.

Mr. Harper used the same urgent, precise relaxedness while guiding us through the survey aspect of our meeting. He collected an enormous number of facts which, thank heavens, we had pretty much set down in advance. All the while he related anecdotes from his other experiences with the bereaved. Something (almost everything) that we did or said would trigger a recollection. It didn't take long before we each recognized when he was going to start a tale. His hands would go together, pushed up against his lips as though he were going to pray. A bland, smarmy little smile would spread across his face, telltale sign of an inside joke. Then he would say something to the effect that "This reminds me of ..." (fill in the blank).

Mr. Harper did his job very well, though he was so bland that none of us could remember his name—regardless of how many times we heard it said or saw it written. I finally came up with a memory trick that helped Mary and I remember. Harper was bizarre, so we just thought of the magazine *Harper's Bazaar* and were set from then on. It was obvious to me that Mr. Harper was busily collecting anecdotes from our interactions with him. After all, we were odd, too, in our own unique way. Very unconventional.

There were times when we needed to make calls—to Mom for a few pieces of information and to the Reverend Donald Whelpley, asking him to take part in the funeral per Dad's request. Otherwise it was machine-gun questions and answers, with frequent anecdotes and lots of low-key salesmanship. The information collection part was finished at exactly 10:30 o'clock, at which time Mr. Harper called the Jackson *Citizen Patriot* newspaper and gave the necessary details.

The newspaper notified, it was now time to pick out the coffin and handle all the other aspects. As to the coffin, we picked out one of the pricier models, since it looked similar to a church altar through its wood construction, coloring and matte sheen.

When we finally walked out about 11:30 o'clock, we were starving. I suggested that we stop at a restaurant for a bite to eat before continuing out to Dad's house, and then Bud remembered Mom saying that Penny Kelley was providing our lunch, and that it was waiting for us at Dad's.

Bud began the long and arduous job of going through Dad's papers and putting things in order.

Charlene and Bob arrived at Blissfield, returning from Rome, NY, and Ridgefield, CT.

—Tuesday, May 3—

Charlene—

Left for Mom's house late in the morning after baking two pecan pies for her and doing some washing. Bob went to hospital to see his brother. We kids all met minister, who is having the funeral, at Daddy's house. Then we went to Burden's funeral home to see Daddy. Several people came. Then we went to Mom's house. Marilee's daughter Pat provided a wonderful chicken dinner. We then went home. All our children are coming for Dad's funeral. We are so happy!!

Bud, Elaine, Mary and Charlie did a nice job picking out Dad's coffin and with all the decisions they made. I prayed God would help me write a poem about Daddy. He did.

Charlie—

Charlene and Bob arrived at Dad's house at 1:00 p.m. They, plus Bud, Elaine, Mary and I were at Dad's to meet with the Reverend Don Whelpley about the funeral service at Charles J. Burden & Son.

Bud, Elaine, Charlene, Bob, Mary, Mom and I spent the evening at the funeral home. We played cassettes of Dad's organ music and had a nice turnout of visitors.

Charlene and Bob returned to Blissfield at night. Mary and Elaine stayed at Mom's. Bud and I stayed at Dad's.

—**Wednesday, May 4**—

Sue Johnston came from Connecticut, Laura Hill came from New York (at different times) and were picked up at the Toledo Airport by Bob and Charlene.

Rob, Angie and Betsy West arrived at the Detroit Metro Airport, rented a car and drove to Jackson. They, and Mary, got a room at Jackson's Holiday Inn.

Family that had already arrived for the funeral spent the evening at the funeral home. Once again we played Dad's organ music and had another nice turnout.

Charlene, Bob, Sue and Laura stayed at Blissfield at night. Bud, Elaine and I stayed at Mom's.

Mary, Rob, Angie, Betsy and Bumper stayed at the Holiday Inn.

Lynn, Jodi and Todd VanSumeren arrived from Saginaw and got a room at the Holiday Inn. Dan did not come today.

Charlene—

Connie arrived at 1:30 p.m. Then we went to Toledo Airport to get Sue. We went out to eat, then back to Toledo Airport for Laura's arrival.

We all went to Mom's, ate supper. Lynn and Karen had come. Then we all went to the funeral home. Many people came. Mom was a real gem! She greeted people as they arrived. We went back to Mom's house. All seven of her granddaughters were there, so we took pictures of them.

—**Thursday, May 5**—

Charlie—

Bob Garrett Jr. arrived at Dad's house late morning and got ready there for the funeral. I also got ready there. I rode into town with him.

While at Dad's, Bob Jr. picked up some things, including an accordian, a microscope, a .22 calibre rifle, a pellet gun, etc.

Steve and Karen Paige arrived at Mom's near time for the funeral.

Jason VanSumeren arrived directly at the funeral home from Flint, and just in time. He had called me for instructions on how to get to Mom's. Something got fouled up and he ended up downtown Jackson. Luckily all went well on the next set of instructions I gave, bringing him directly to the funeral home.

Dan VanSumeren arrived from Saginaw shortly before the funeral.

Funeral at 2:00 p.m.

Charlene—

Today was Daddy's funeral. We could hardly believe it! All of our children were there, and all of Bud's and Mary's kids. Several people from our church and neighborhood also came.

Rev. Whelpley did a very nice job. Bob Jr. spoke about visiting Dad at our house Easter, and of Dad talking to him of the love he felt from our caring for him and how he had many bad habits he was sorry for. I read the poem God helped me write titled *My Dad*.

Laura sang *Amazing Grace*. As she sang, Connie had her head bowed in prayer and had a vision. She saw small angels dancing around Dad's coffin, then Dad got up and danced with them. Then the angels formed a stairway and Dad started up. Suddenly he turned around, looked down at the group attending his funeral, came back down and walked over to Connie. He said a prayer for her then went back up the stairway of angels and disappeared. She related this to all of those present, after Laura finished singing.

Bob spoke about Dad and sang *Because He Lives* and *He Was there all the Time*.

What a funeral! The funeral home was full of friends and relatives, and we felt such love. Mom sat in front with us, right where she belonged.

One of the things Dad had said was that, in the end, all he had was his family.

Marilee's son Jim with wife Donna, daughter Pat with husband Phil, and granddaughter Carolyn with husband Dave, were with us at the funeral home. Carolyn said Dad was the only Grandpa she had and she loved him.

We went to Steve's restaurant, had a great buffet and took lots of wonderful pictures.

Then Bud suggested we all go to Dad's house. Each person was encouraged to take things that they wanted from his house. The whole atmosphere and attitude was so loving, and Bud was very nice allowing the whole thing to happen, knowing the rest would be sold at auction to help pay for Dad's funeral. You just couldn't put a price on the good time we had, none of us able to remember the last time we were all together. All the grandchildren were there except Bob Jr. (who had been to the house earlier and would return the next week).

Later we went back to Mom's house.

Charlie—

Lynn, Karen, Steve, Jason, Jodi and Todd spent Thursday night at Holiday Inn. Dan returned to Saginaw.

Mary, Rob, Angie, Betsy and Bumper West stayed at the Holiday Inn.

Charlene, Bob, Sue and Laura stayed at Blissfield at night. Bud, Elaine and I stayed at Mom's.

— Friday, May 6—

Lynn, Karen, Steve, Jason, Jodi and Todd left in the morning.

Laura Hill was taken to the airport in a.m. for her return to New York.

Bud and Elaine left in a.m. for Saginaw and Cadillac Lake for weekend.

Only Charlene and Sue came from Blissfield today.

Charlene, Sue, Mary, Mom and I met with Aunt Helen Leggett, Mae Lammers and her friend Bob, Steve and Dorothy Davis, Don and Lois Jackson, and Marie Beebe for lunch at Bill Knapp's restaurant. It was the annual "gathering of the nieces" for Helen and Mom.¹⁷ Angie Whitcomb was spending the day in Battle Creek (Kelloggs plant) with her cousin Amy West.

17 A tradition of the daughters of Chuck and Esther Barnes.

While Bud and I worked at Dad's house in the evening, Mom, Charlene, Sue, Mary, Angie and Betsy went to a "Mother-Daughter Banquet" at Calvary U.M.E. Church. Edith Hayes was there with a niece, and Ruth Mellinger was there with her daughter. They had a very nice time.

Charlene and Sue returned to Blissfield for the night.

The Wests stayed at the Holiday Inn.

I stayed at Mom's.

— **Saturday, May 7**—

Sue Johnston left for Connecticut.

Mary, Mom and I spent the day together running errands, eating lunch at Schlinker's, going to Dad's house to spend some time, etc. Mom treated Mary and me to a facsimile of Jackson High School's facade, bought at a boutique on Mechanic Street downtown Jackson.

While at Dad's, Mary went upstairs from the basement and said it stunk up there. I went up a few minutes later and it smelled just as Dad's room had at the Cedar Knoll Care Center—a pungent mixture of urine and chemicals. The stink went away about fifteen minutes later and was not noticed again.

Mary went to Carol and John West's house from Mom's about 7:45 p.m.

— **Sunday, May 8**—
(Mothers Day!)

Mary, Rob, Angie, Betsy and I escorted Mom to church for the Mother's Day service.

The Wests/Whitcomb then went to spend some time with Alvar and Marie West.

Mary and Angie came over to Mom's about 3:30 p.m., after Rob and Betsy left for Detroit and their return flight to Minnesota.

Mary, Mom, Angie and I went to Blissfield in late afternoon to spend Mother's Day evening with Charlene and Bob. (They wanted us to make it an overnighter, but we decided not to so as to get an early start the next day.) We took two vehicles—Mary and I in Dad's car going to Blissfield, with Mom and

Angie in the "truck" with Bumper; Mom and I in Dad's car returning, with Mary and Angie in the "truck" with Bumper. We had a great time, including a traditional walk (or three) around Brenot Circle. Spectacular dinner and Mom even got gifts!

We got home at exactly midnight. We all stayed at Mom's house, I in the front bedroom, Mary, Angie and Bumper in the back room.

— Monday, May 9—

I was originally going back to California today. However, due to Dad's demise and all the things that needed doing, I decided to stay and assist Bud. My new return date would be Sunday afternoon, May 15.

Bud and Elaine arrived at Mom's from Saginaw in the afternoon. Soon thereafter was the reading of the will. Each of the four surviving children received one-fifth of whatever money remained after all was paid and done. The executor (Bud) and Mom shared one of the fifths, also. A gift of \$1,000 was also to be paid to Charlene and Bob for housing Dad during the latter days of his illness, plus \$250 towards a chair. Bud said that, due to my helping him, he would share his executor's money with me, giving me one-third of what he gets as executor.

Bob and Charlene spent much of the day with us.

The evening meal consisted of a mountain of mashed potatoes, ham and trimmings for: Bud, Elaine, Mom, Mary, Angie, Charlene, Bob and me. (This was still the delicious ham that Helen and Clyff Leggett gave us the Monday after Dad died.)

Bob Garrett Jr. arrived at Mom's house around 10:00 p.m. He, Mary and Angie stayed at Dad's house overnight. Bob Jr. slept in Dad's bed, and the next day asked if he could keep Dad's pillow. Mary and Angie stayed up late playing cards.

Bud and Elaine stayed overnight, as did I, at Mom's house. They had the front bedroom; I slept in the back room.

—Tuesday, May 10—

Bud, Elaine and I went early to Dad's house for the day. Mary and Angie had already left for their day-long return drive to Minnesota. Bob Jr. was still at Dad's.

Mr. Chuck Warfield of Leslie, the auctioneer picked to sell Dad's things, stopped by and looked things over. He was not at all impressed with the pickings, since the great Paige treasure hunt had significantly reduced the number and value of things for auction.

We arranged that Chuck would send his crew out in a couple of weeks to collect everything and lug it to a warehouse in Leslie. Dad's place did not allow reasonably good accessibility and was on a dangerous curve in the road. We would share warehouse rental costs with the owners of bric-a-brac for another small auction to be held at the same time. Besides warehouse rental, there would be hourly cost for collection and preparation work done by the Warfield crew plus a percentage of take to the Warfield auctioneer. It would not be cheap by any measure¹⁸, though Warfield would provide a complete breakdown printout of all costs and proceeds.

Charlene arrived around 11:00 a.m. to help Elaine with cleaning, organizing, pulling things out of drawers and closets, etc. Bob tried coming, driving the white car. Unfortunately, he had car trouble and it kept him away.

Bob Jr. picked up a few more things before returning to Caro, Michigan, around noon. Though he had gotten a few things the day of the funeral, he hadn't stayed to be part of the "Great Paige Treasure Hunt." Thus, he hadn't taken much in comparison with others.

Bud, Elaine, Charlene and I ran some errands around lunch time. We went in Paiges' van to Cedar Knoll Care Center first to pick up some money left for Dad's incidentals, and the last of his belongings. On the way back we stopped at the Sargent Road McDonald's restaurant for lunch. Afterwards, we continued north on Sargent Road to Seymour, then out Seymour to Wooster Road, Wooster Road to Coonhill, then Coonhill Road all the way to Munith, there to close out Dad's checking account. Then we returned to Dad's via M-106 (Plum Orchard Road) to Bunkerhill Road. I think we all had a very enjoyable time together!

Marie Beebe provided a dinner at 6:00 p.m. consisting of boiled potatoes and carrots, roast beef (from a bull), and rhubarb pie. Attending the feast were: Bud, Elaine, Charlene, Mom and I. Marie left us to our extreme culinary enjoyment.

Charlene returned to Blissfield at 7:00 p.m.

18 Everything was retrieved to storage on Tuesday, May 31, and the Leslie auction took place Thursday, June 9. There was a good turnout, including family and others who wanted to buy specific items. Everything, including Dad's car, was sold. The total collected was less than \$7,000, and the net return to the estate was less than \$5,000. This figure was a couple of thousand less than the minimum we had hoped for.

—Wednesday, May 11—

Bud and Elaine worked at Dad's all day. I took Mom to the doctor (Mary Bentley) then to the jeweler's for watch batteries and to get the watches adjusted for Mom's wrists.

Bud and Elaine came to Mom's for lunch. Later, they returned to Dad's while I went to the Economy Art and Frame store on Michigan Avenue (downtown). I had them mount some pictures for Mom and Charlene that I had drawn in the 1960s while still in school. (I took my Michigan-circa-1960s portfolio to Michigan per Mom's suggestion. When she went through them, Mom found some that she especially remembered and liked. There was another picture I did up as a gift to Charlene—a thank you for her and Bob looking out for Mom.) It would take the framers at least two weeks to finish the job(s), so I let Mom know that she would need to arrange for picking them up.¹⁹

I arrived at Dad's house about 3:45 p.m., and Bud, Elaine and I returned to Mom's for dinner at 6:00 o'clock. Steve and Karen Paige arrived from Saginaw and joined us for a great, meat loaf dinner.

Bud, Steve, Karen and I went to Dad's after dinner, where Steve collected his TV and Sears *Craftsman* tool cabinet. Then Steve and Karen left for home around 8:00 p.m., while Bud and I returned to Mom's for the evening and night.

—Thursday, May 12—

Bud and I went to the Jackson County Probate office on W. Michigan Avenue to obtain a form needed to collect on Dad's Consumer Power Company stock and a life insurance policy. Our morning at Dad's afterwards consisted of filling in this form.

Bud and I returned to Mom's at noon, from where Bud and Elaine departed for Saginaw and Lake Cadillac shortly thereafter. They did not stay for lunch. I went back to Dad's in the afternoon to work for a few hours, and back to Mom's house for dinner.

Charlene, Bob, and Bob's nephew Al Garrett arrived at Mom's about 6:00 p.m., with Charlene driving their white car, Bob driving a borrowed truck and Al bringing his own truck. The four of us went out to Dad's house for the Garretts to retrieve their organ, an upright freezer, a sofa, the microwave oven and a vacuum cleaner. Charlene and Bob had brought the white car for me to use when driving to their house the day I would be leaving for California. Charlene had me drive when

¹⁹ Bud retrieved all a few weeks later.

we went to Dad's, to relay some of the tricks and persuasions necessary to know when driving a vintage auto with personality. (This was the car that had broken down when Bob tried driving it to Jackson not long before. Still, it was transportation.)

Al returned to his home in Waldron, Hillsdale County, after the loading and tying was accomplished. Charlene and Bob returned to Mom's in the borrowed truck and I drove the white car. En route Bob pulled into a gas station and filled my gas tank. He said one of my headlights was out but that I wouldn't be driving at night, anyway, when going to their house. They would have it fixed later.

The Garretts only stayed at Mom's about ten minutes and were off to Blissfield by 9:30 p.m.

—Friday, May 13—

Mom and I went to Horton at 11:00 a.m. for lunch. En route I dropped off two boxes at a UPS shipping store. These were the things I had gleaned from Dad's estate, and they cost about \$70 to ship. Ouch!

Left Horton at 3:20 p.m. and stopped at Polly's supermarket on Spring Arbor Road, where Mom did some shopping. We were back at Mom's around 4:15 p.m.

I went to Bob and Sandra Harkness's at 5:00 p.m., dropping by Colonel Sander's KFC for chicken, mashed potatoes, gravy, biscuits and coleslaw. I took these to Harkness's home at Pleasant Lake, where Sandy and Bob provided scallions, celery, coffee and rhubarb crisp as their contributions to dinner. I stayed until returning to Mom's about 1:00 a.m.

—Saturday, May 14—

I went to Dad's, arriving by 9:40 a.m. Pastor Don Whelpley was already there, patiently waiting in the driveway. I let him into the basement to look through Dad's books and select any he was interested in keeping. Meanwhile, I packed up Charlene's IBM computer and readied it for transport.

Pastor Don filled a couple of boxes with books, thanked me and my family for our generosity and left at 10:30 a.m. I left an hour later for lunch at Mom's house.

I dropped off some packages of Hope School pictures, newspaper articles and other written matter to the city (Carnegie) library in the afternoon for them to place in their archives. Later I picked up an order of Coney dogs and fries to-go from *Club New Yorker*, dinner for Mom and me. After dinner I trimmed Mom's back yard bushes and tried catching up on this journal. (Mom and I helped each

other get our journals up-to-date. I opted to do a "Comings and Goings" outline, since it would be impossible to get into heavy detail, be thorough and still be in California the next day.)

The remainder of the evening for me was spent packing, watching TV, visiting with Mom and talking with Bob Garrett Jr.²⁰ on the telephone for awhile. We finally turned in at our regular time—11:00 p.m.

—Sunday, May 15—

Lynn and Dan VanSumeren came by around 9:30 a.m. with Dan's missionary brother Tim. Dan and Tim then went out to Dad's house to pick up some things Lynn had selected. Lynn stayed to visit with Mom and me and was still there when I left for Blissfield at 10:10 a.m.

I arrived at Blissfield about 11:15 a.m., then unloaded Charlene's computer system and called Northwest Airlines to verify flight information before relaxing in one of Garretts' recliners and catching a few winks. Charlene got home from church at 12:15 p.m. We loaded my things into the trunk of their Buick and then picked up Bob in front of the church. The three of us now went to the Hathaway House for lunch, an expensive and popular locale, where the Garretts treated me to a prime rib buffet. Both the cuisine and ambience were delightful, and we had a very nice-if-rushed repast.

We departed the Hathaway House at 1:15 p.m. heading for the Detroit Metropolitan (Metro) Airport and arriving at 2:15 p.m. Soon as my baggage was checked in (including the accordion discussed in the last footnote), and the three of us had exchanged parting hugs, Charlene and Bob left for home.

The flight was on schedule and uneventful. Ven picked me up at the airport in Los Angeles, and soon things would be getting back to semi-normal.

20 One of our topics of conversation was an accordion that Charlene and Bob had dropped off with Bob Jr. shortly after the great Paige treasure hunt. Bob Jr. had already taken an accordion, and the one Garretts dropped off was one that had been marked for Laura. They were letting Bob Jr. decide on which of the two he wanted. Meanwhile, Charlene and Bob talked with Laura, who said that she had not wanted, nor marked, an accordion (although someone had marked it with her name). Bob Sr. then mentioned that I had said it would be nice to give to Ven Tan's sister in the Philippines, who could play but couldn't afford to buy one. Thus, Bob Jr. told me that, when Charlene and Bob returned to Blissfield from Port Austin tonight, they would collect the accordion for my taking to California. To me, this was both good and bad news. I was enthusiastic about the idea of giving it to Ven for his sister, but I loathed the fact of having to carry it on the plane. Technically it would be access baggage, though sometimes airlines let such trespasses slide without taking financial notice, especially if a flight is not full and there is room for the extra storage.

Charlene's Epilogue

God has worked a miracle in our family. There was a great deal of hurt when Dad married Marilee and related mainly to her, and her family. Mom kept on praying for him and us, forgave him, and in her own way taught us to try and do the same for our own peace.

When I talked to Marilee's daughter Pat at the funeral home, she said she didn't want her mom to marry Dad, but because of the love she feels from our family, she is now glad her mom did.

Then Carolyn, Pat's daughter, felt Mom's love so much that she asked if Mom would be her grandmother. Of course, Mom was thrilled and said yes.

The days following the funeral were beautiful, as people went back home and Bud, Elaine, Mary, Charlie, Bob and I worked on Dad's house. Then Bud and Elaine finished it after Mary and Angie drove back to Minnesota, Charlie flew home, and we moved to Cass City and Port Austin.

Dad's auction was held. I cried when his car was sold, because Dad loved and was so proud of it!

Then Dad's house was sold—end of an era.

Bud and Elaine did a beautiful job cleaning Dad's house, handling his financial affairs and selling his house.

Through it all Mom hosted us in her home, showed her love of us and love of God, and made a beautiful time out of a very traumatic episode in all of our lives; helped us to love and forgive a father who wasn't around much of our last thirty years.



DECEMBER 1993						
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January

FEBRUARY 1994						
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SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
30 Dad stayed at home fighting shingles.	31 Dad stayed at home fighting shingles.					1 Dad back home after being gone two weeks to see Charlie in California.
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17 Devastating 6.8 earthquake struck southern California.	18 Subzero cold snap froze northern States.	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27 Dad got shingles.	28 Dad did final computer "save" for his auto-biography.	29 Dad stayed at home fighting shingles.

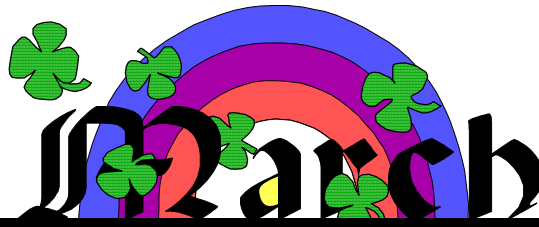
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MARCH 1994						
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SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		1 Dad stayed at home fighting shingles.	2 Dad stayed at home fighting shingles.	3 Dad taken to Foote Hospital due to shingles. Rosalie by his side.	4 Dad at Foote, hallucinating and otherwise suffering with shingles. Rosalie by his side.	5 Rosalie Henion died outside her apartment.
6 Dad told via phone (Tim Henion) of Rosalie's death. Dad leaves hospital.	7 Dad on automatic IV unit at home as of yester-day.	8 Dad on automatic IV unit at home.	9 Dad on automatic IV unit at home.	10 Dad on automatic IV unit at home.	11 Dad on automatic IV unit at home.	12 Dad on automatic IV unit at home.
13 Dad on automatic IV unit at home.	14 Dad on automatic IV unit at home.	15 Dad at home doing poorly.	16 Dad at home doing poorly.	17 Dad at home doing poorly.	18 Dad at home doing poorly.	19 Dad at home doing poorly.
20 Dad at home doing poorly.	21 Dad at home doing poorly.	22 Dad at home doing poorly.	23 Dad at home doing poorly.	24 Dad at home doing poorly.	25 Dad at home doing poorly.	26 Dad at home doing poorly.
27 Dad at home doing poorly.	28 Dad at home doing poorly.					

FEBRUARY 1994						
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APRIL 1994						
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SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		1 Dad at home doing poorly.	2 Dad at home doing poorly.	3 Dad at home doing poorly.	4 Dad at home doing poorly. Penny Kelley said he needed help.	5 Charlene and Bob drove to Dad's. Took him to Blissfield.
6 Dad in Blissfield.	7 Dad in Blissfield.	8 Dad in Blissfield.	9 Dad in Blissfield.	10 Dad in Blissfield.	11 Dad in Blissfield.	12 Dad in Blissfield.
13 Dad in Blissfield.	14 Dad in Blissfield.	15 Dad in Blissfield.	16 Dad in Blissfield.	17 Dad in Blissfield.	18 Dad in Blissfield.	19 Dad in Blissfield.
20 Dad in Blissfield.	21 Dad in Blissfield. Mom fell in Jackson, got bruised, cracked 12th vertebra.	22 Dad and Mom in Blissfield.	23 Dad and Mom in Blissfield.	24 Dad and Mom in Blissfield.	25 Dad and Mom in Blissfield.	26 Dad and Mom in Blissfield.
27 Dad and Mom in Blissfield.	28 Dad and Mom in Blissfield.	29 Dad and Mom in Blissfield.	30 Dad and Mom in Blissfield.	31 Dad and Mom in Blissfield.		

MARCH 1994						
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MAY 1994						
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SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					1 Dad and Mom in Blissfield.	2 Dad and Mom in Blissfield.
3 Happy Easter! Mom and Dad in Blissfield. Dad's first drug-free day.	4 Dad and Mom in Blissfield.	5 Dad and Mom in Blissfield.	6 Dad and Mom in Blissfield.	7 Dad and Mom in Blissfield.	8 Dad and Mom in Blissfield.	9 Dad and Mom in Blissfield.
10 Mom in Blissfield. Dad returned home, seemed to feel better.	11 Mom in Blissfield. Dad called 911 and went to Foote Hospital.	12 Mom in Blissfield. Dad at Foote Hospital.	13 Mom in Blissfield. Dad had bone marrow operation. Leukemia found.	14 Mom in Blissfield. Dad at Foote Hospital.	15 Mom in Blissfield. Dad at Foote Hospital.	16 Mom in Blissfield. Dad at Foote Hospital.
17 Mom in Blissfield. Dad at Foote Hospital.	18 Mom in Blissfield. Dad had lump on neck removed.	19 Mom in Blissfield. Dad at Foote Hospital.	20 Mom home in Jackson again. Dad found to have cancer of lymph system. Prognosis: three months to live.	21 Mom in Jackson. Dad taken to Cedar Knoll Care Center by Bud.	22 Dad at Cedar Knoll Care Center due to need for 24/hr/day care.	23 Dad at Cedar Knoll. Charlie came today from California.
24 Dad at Cedar Knoll. Mom still not fully recovered, so no church for her today. Charlene, Bob and Charlie arrived from Blissfield. Mom, Charlene, Bob and Charlie visited Dad. Took him rocking chair from Garretts'.	25 Dad at Cedar Knoll. Seemed to be failing fast.	26 Dad at Cedar Knoll. Seemed to be failing fast. Enjoyed having face washed.	27 Dad at Cedar Knoll. Seemed to be failing fast. Stopped taking water pill that retards heart failure. Charlene & Bob left for NY and CT. Bob to make tape of his singing while in CT.	28 Dad at Cedar Knoll. Seemed to be failing faster. Having problem breathing. Nurses took expired nitroglycerine tablets from him. Said he may not dispense own medicine.	29 Dad at Cedar Knoll. Seemed to be failing faster. Refused to take water pills any longer.	30 Dad at Cedar Knoll. Seemed to be failing faster. Bud and Elaine planned on coming Monday. Mary arrived from MN in late evening. Charlie called from Home and recommended she visit Dad tonight.

APRIL 1994						
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JUNE 1994						
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SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1 Dad at Cedar Knoll. Van Sumerens and Karen Paige arrived to see him. DAD DIED AT FOOTE HOSPITAL 6:06 P.M. Bud & Elaine arrived from Saginaw. List made of things to do. Bob not feeling well in CT.	2 Mary, Bud, Elaine and I arranged funeral. Lunch at Dad's by Penny Kelley. Made phone calls to people who should know. Pat Weck provided assorted luncheon foods. Helen Leggett provided a large ham. Char & Bob trying to return.	3 Charlene & Bob arrived in Jackson from NY and CT. Bob still not feeling well. Evening viewing at funeral home.	4 Arrivals: Rob, Angie & Betsy West from MN, stayed at Holiday Inn; Sue Johnston from CT; Laura Hill from NY; Connie Smeader from Pigeon; Van Sumerens from Saginaw. Evening viewing at funeral home.	5 Dad's funeral held at Chas. J. Burden Funeral Home. All nine grandchildren present. Ministers: Rev. Don Whelpley and Rev. Bob Garrett Sr. Bob Sr. and Laura Hill sang. Charlene read poem. After, buffet; Paige treasure hunt at Dad's house.	6 Bud & Elaine leave for Saginaw and Lake Cadillac. Laura returned to NY. Barnes met at Bill Knapps for lunch. Mother-Daughter banquet at Calvary U.M.E.- Mom, Sue, Mary, Angie, Betsy, Charlene attended.	7 Sue Johnston returned to CT. Mary, Mom and I spent day together, at Mom's, Dad's, etc.
8 Mothers Day! Mom escorted to church by Wests and Charlie. Rob and Betsy returned to Minnesota. Mary, Angie, Mom and Charlie went to Garretts' for dinner and evening.	9 Reading of Dad's will by Bud. All offspring and Mom present. Bob Garrett Jr. arrived later. He, Mary & Angie stayed at Dad's overnight.	10 Mary and Angie left by car (truck) for Minnesota. Auctioneer came to look Dad's place and remaining possessions over. Bob Jr. returned home in afternoon. Marie Beebe provided roast beef dinner and rhubarb pie at Mom's.	11 Steve and Karen Paige arrived at Dad's to retrieve some things.	12 Bud and Elaine left for home and Lake Cadillac. Char, Bob and Allan Garrett retrieved things at Dad's. Left off white car.	13 Mom and Charlie visited Leggetts in Horton. Charlie visited Harknesses at Pleasant Lake. Char & Bob at Port Austin.	14 Pastor Don Whelpley chose books from Dad's library. Charlie retrieved Charlene's IBM computer from Dad's.
15 I drove white car to Blissfield, was treated to wonderful lunch and returned to California.	16 Bud and Elaine returned from Saginaw and Lake Cadillac to spend week at Dad's cleaning, doing paper work, etc.	17 And the work continues, now mostly by Bud, Elaine and and sometimes Charlene.	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

