

The legacy of a young life .. returns again home

PART TWO

Jabo Turner took a few days of rest after returning home, and went to work at his dad's sawmill. The pace of life was slow and serene when compared to the hustle of war. During his period of adjustment, he returned to the jungles many times in his dreams and the war was as real as ever. Waking up after such a dream was a pleasant experience. The dreams finally became less frequent and then disappeared.

They built a house near where the Brightwater School once stood. Jabo had attended that school, but Dorothy was schooled in Silas. They furnished the house in the best possible way; a piece at a time. Each new thing that they purchased became a cause for celebration and rejoicing.

Their cup of joy overflowed on April 4, 1948 when Larry, their first son, was born. He was such a blessing to have in their home, and they learned quickly that he was richly blessed with both intellectual and athletic ability. Two other sons, Ricky and Rodney were born to the couple, and the family was complete.

When they thought about a girl, the couple found comfort in knowing that in a few years the boys would each bring home a "daughter" for them to love.

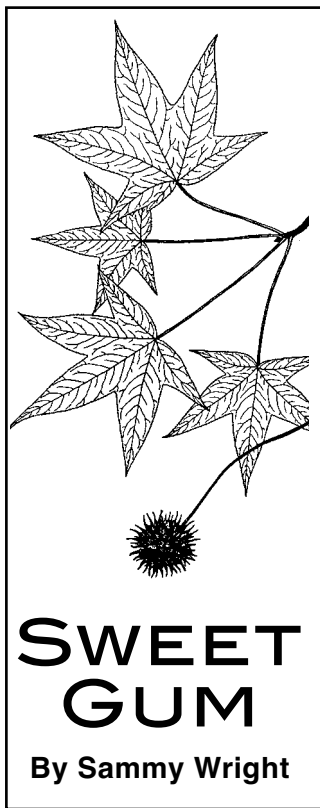
The years were very good, but they passed quickly. When the paper mill opened up, Jabo went to work there. He found an unemployed war veteran to take his place at the sawmill. Members of "The Greatest Generation" always look out for each other.

The boys were schooled at Needham Elementary, and all the family attend Larry's sixth-grade graduation ceremony. The principal, Mr. Lyman Broadhead, invited him to the front of the auditorium and asked him to name all the American presidents.

In an unrehearsed recitation that was without a flaw, Larry stunned even the principal by naming all the presidents and their wives. We are writing here about a genius, whose ability was just as astounding on an athletic field. A few years earlier, Larry had joined Explorer Post 44 of the Boy Scouts in Butler. He pitched for the boys, and his record was astounding.

He entered Choctaw County High School and pitched for the baseball team. We learned about one particular game that everyone in attendance still remembers. Eight batters came to the plate to bat, and Larry struck all of them out. The ninth batter got a hit, but Larry caught the ball, so it was nine up, and nine out. Larry had the pitching record for the entire county.

Plans were made at the school by coach for Larry to fill the position of starting quarterback in the fall after his 16th



birthday, because he was just as good on the football field as on the baseball diamond. In that same year, 1964, he achieved the cherished dream of every American teenager; he got his driver's license. From then on, he drove Ricky to his practice in Little League athletics. Larry drove with the care and responsibility of an adult.

The family always worshipped with their worshiped relatives at the Needham Bible Chapel and Larry became a friend to David Rupp, a boy of his own age who lived out of state, but occasionally came to the chapel. Larry asked David to spend a few days with the family, because it was summer and they were both out of school. On June 14, they decided to go to the picnic area on the river, a few miles south of the highway bridge.

What happened as the boys played and rested on the wide sandbar can probably best be characterized as the attraction that water has for adventurous teenagers. Both boys were in excellent physical shape, so challenging the river did not seem to be a problem. They decided to swim to the eastern bank. All indications later seemed to verify that everything on the swim went well.

David reached the bank, but he turned and saw Larry go under just 20 feet away. He dived into the water, located Larry, and pulled him to the surface, but he lost his grip and Larry, who was no longer conscious, slipped beneath the surface again. Before long, Dorothy received a call and learned that Larry was missing. In a state of hysteria she threw the phone against the wall.

Everyone in Brightwater and Needham went to the river, because Larry was a part of all of them. They could not stand the agony of waiting for news to reach them. It is better to face trouble than wait for news of it. When Dorothy and Jabo reached

the river, they learned that the search for Larry had passed from rescue to recovery. That night, Larry's body was pulled from the river.

Mental experts who deal in psychology stress that losing a child is most painful trauma that parents can experience. Somehow or other, Jabo and Dorothy made it through Larry's funeral, but instead of the depressive cloud of despair lifting after a period of time, it grew heavier and darker. After a full month had passed, Dorothy looked at Jabo and realized what the tragedy was doing to them.

God put something special in mothers, an innate quality than no one but a mother can understand. Dorothy realized that only she could bring Jabo back to normalcy. Instead of dealing with what was lost, she considered what was left, and stressed those points to Jabo.

They still had two growing boys who needed them both, and they still had the Bible Chapel and the good people who stood with them, and they still had their own families and friends.

But more than all those, Dorothy emphasized that we should, in giving them their thanks, also thank her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and thank the Mighty God for his mercy to them. We are more than happy to respond. In losing themselves in others, Dorothy and Jabo gained a priceless asset; they found themselves.

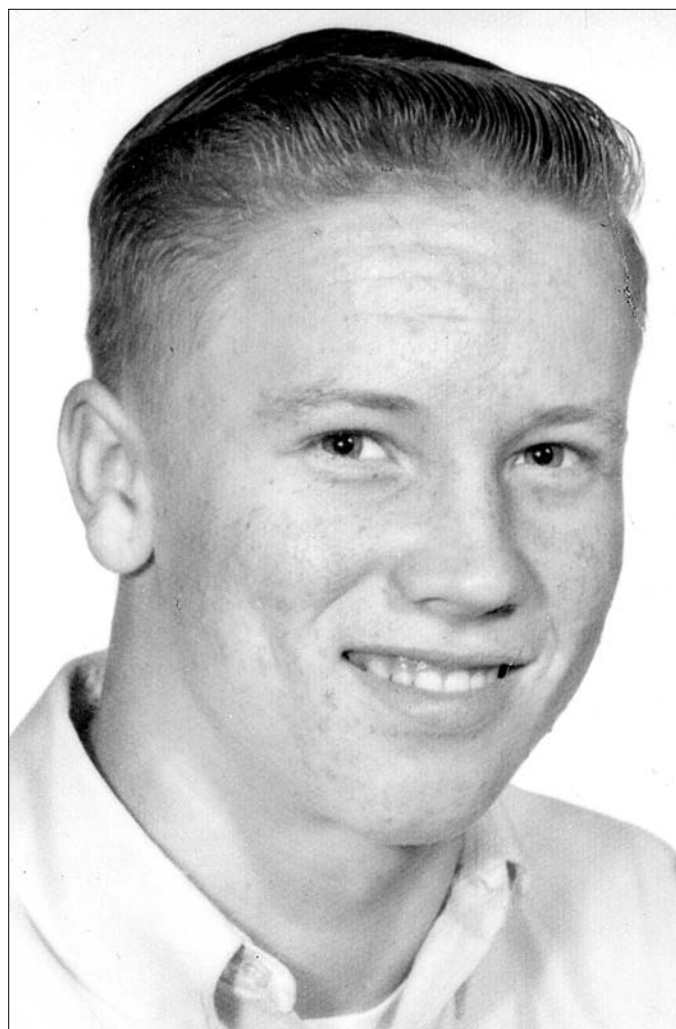
Now, let us introduce their family in its present state. Ricky married Elaine Bonner, and they have one son, Travis, who recently secured an MA degree at Livingston. He is a teacher.

Rodney married Wanda McMullen. They have two daughters, Amy and Holly. Amy is married to Carlton Watt, and Holly is married to Chris Bedwell. Both girls are teachers. Ricky and Rodney work at the paper mill. Dorothy appears to be in excellent health, but Jabo's health has deteriorated in recent years. Rodney is a specialist in stringed instruments in three genres: Country, Blue Grass, and Gospel. He stages a Johnny Cash Memorial Concert each November at the Scott Mountain Fire Department. It is very good.

Dorothy and Jabo lost their house and all its contents in 1984 to a house fire. A few years ago, while picking pears in the front yard, Dorothy was bitten by a monster rattlesnake. Her recovery was slow and painful, for the doctors lost her twice. She no longer cares for pears.

We thank them for the manner that they welcomed us into their beautiful home, where they continue to experience the American Dream.

We were away from Choctaw County for a very long time, so we did not know Larry or anything about him. We learned about Larry from Mr. Hub Miller on one of our numerous trips to Meridian. He finished the story as we crossed the state line. Ahead, the dirt road jutted from the highway and ran on into the hills. We asked Hub to pull off the road and stop the truck engine. Knowing that this day would come, we asked him to describe the surface of the river



Larry Turner

Someone had left the jar behind, or maybe it was substance leading to evidence. We heard the sound three times. Maybe others would have their doubts about the sound, but to us it was real, for we have heard the sound of a bat slicing the air in New York's Yankee Stadium, in Chicago's Wrigley Field, and Los Angeles' Dodger Stadium, and in a thousand other places. We did not wait to hear a ball slam against the bat, for we knew there would be none. In that moment, we knew Larry.

Alfred Lord Tennyson used words in part from the three scriptures to create his most widely-known poems "Outward Bound." We want to give you four short lines from that poem, and then we are finished. Notice the beauty and eloquence, but above all notice its hope. Then you will understand why we asked Hub about the surface of the water so long ago on that dirt road.

"But such a tide as moving seems asleep, Too full for sound or foam; When that which came from out the Boundless Deep returns ---"

Returns again home."

after Larry's body was pulled from it.

"It was calm and peaceful," he said, "without even a ripple on top."

That was a long time ago, but the day has come. We had to know Larry to end this article with hope. We told the Turners that we were going to Brightwater to visit their son. On our way, we recalled the words of Paul that Rev. Aaron Lolley gave us several hundred times at Land Methodist Church during our early years; "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

We whispered the scripture on the way up the hill, while remembering Hub's words. We took the picture that you see here with us into the cemetery and stood beside Larry's grave. We never had any doubt at all that hope, which always springs eternal, would show itself. We are too old to start doubting Saint Paul.

We entered the cemetery yard stood for a few minutes. There was a cemetery cleaning and a memorial at Brightwater a few weeks ago, but there has been no rain since that time. A stiff wind was blowing, and perhaps that was the reason why dust was on the top of Larry's stone. We took a napkin from our pocket and knelt to brush away the dust, and in that moment, we got our happy ending.

It is necessary now to consider the words from three separate scriptures that deal with faith, substance, evidence, and hope Genesis 1-2, 3, states in part "The spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," and "God said let there be light." Finally, Ecclesiastes 12:7 states: "Then shall the dust return to the earth, and the spirit shall return to God." A blinding light hit us in the eyes as we knelt.

We went to the grave directly behind Larry's and noticed the tinted fruit jar that reflected the light of the setting sun. At that moment, the wind stopped blowing we heard an old familiar sound as we read the cursive word on the side of the jar: Ball.

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