

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

I've previously written about my grandfather, John McCamey Caldwell's entrepreneurship, resulting in his acquisition of 1,000 acres of land by growing cotton on it, operating a family farm adequate to support a wife and twelve children, owning and running a country store to provide life's necessities to his family and the community, owning stock in the Bank of Matthews and a building near the railroad in Matthews which, I think, still stands. His fourth child, my Dad, Joe McCamey Caldwell, lived under Grandpa's roof and worked on the farm until he was 25. Unlike his middle son, me, Dad was fairly reticent, as were some, maybe most, of his siblings. For over 20 years, Dad's brother and my Uncle, Jack and Aunt Virginia lived less than 200 yards across the garden behind our house on Rama Rd where he and Dad faithfully grew most of the vegetables we ate, fresh in summer, and from the jars of green beans, black eyed and crowder peas, okra and tomatoes and frozen corn in winter, which Mom, with Bill, Harry's and my limited and begrudging help, had canned or frozen, "put up", in country parlance, during the summer. Mom told a great story of how once, Uncle Jack and Uncle Don, Dad's and Jack's youngest brother, were over to visit Dad. They were sitting in the den and she was in the kitchen, separated from the den by a partial wall with a counter to pass food thru to the den, where we ate, with cabinets above and louvered shutters which could be pulled across the counter to cut off view between the rooms but which didn't restrict sound. She said she kept listening for conversation from the den for quite some time and hearing none, she peeped in to see if the three brothers were still breathing!

To my everlasting regret, I guess because I was more interested in the present and future than in the past and couldn't see how hearing stories and lessons from yesteryear could be of any potential benefit, then or later, and certainly because I was more interested in city, or, at least, suburban, than country life (seven years in the old Craig house on Sharon Amity with no central heat, toiling in the Rama Rd garden, and seeing how Grandma and Uncle Irvin's family lived "down in the country" and how Mom's twin brother Leighton and Aunt Eva Dell and their three sons lived on a dairy farm near Chester, SC, were all reminders of why I was glad Dad & Mom decided to move to town), but probably mainly because I was a kid and loved doing kid stuff, like tagging along to play ball with Bill and his buddies, I learned very little about Dad's formative years and what business lessons he may have learned from Grandpa. For example, I have no idea if he ever worked in the store, when he opened his first bank account and wrote his first check, bought his first car or paid his first income tax. Gosh I wish I had asked more questions and paid more attention. Not sure George Bernard Shaw's epigram fits perfectly in this context, but it's a good one anyway; "If youth only knew and age only could!"

Dad left the farm and moved to Atlanta in 1933, when he was 25. He didn't say much, at least to me, about that period of his life, but I remember that he delivered bread for a bakery and worked at the Post Office, which I guess meant he passed the civil service exam. I don't know where he lived or how he got around. He must have bought a car at some point. In 1938 he came back to Matthews and married Mom on Thanksgiving at her Aunt Emma Dunn Cook's house and moved her to Atlanta. I think Dad was still working at the P.O. Prior to their marriage, Mom had been working as the office manager for the Travelers Insurance agency in downtown Charlotte, five and a half days a week for 8-10 years. (60 years

later, I represented the driver of a truck insured by the Travelers which ran into the rear of a car stopped to make a left turn on NC 200 North, killing one and rendering another a paraplegic. Flamboyant Eddie Knox represented the paraplegic and the case went to trial. [Eddie was a state senator when I was in law school and a partner in a prestigious Charlotte law firm. I arranged to go over to see him in his office in the Legislature building in Raleigh {the only time I was ever in the Legislature} about going to work for his firm. I'd never met him before and when I walked in his office, he was sitting with his cowboy booted feet up on his desk, chewing tobacco. He didn't get up but I guess shook my hand. He was holding some pictures of bloody fetuses and handed them to me with some crack about the intelligence, or, in his view, the lack thereof of whoever would think they could influence his wise judgment on a pending abortion bill. He told me to throw them in the trash can beside his desk where he spit tobacco juice on them. I'm not sure if I even asked him for a job. Though I wasn't "woke" politically at that stage of my life, and in some opinions, may still be sleep walking today, and hadn't given much thought to the abortion issue, which wasn't then the hot button issue it is now, I didn't appreciate his cavalier attitude toward it and his constituent, to whom it was apparently a matter of life and death. I wouldn't have voted for him for dog catcher. If I recall correctly, Eddie was elected as a Democrat as mayor of Charlotte and then, when the political winds began blowing in a different direction, he ran as a Republican for governor. I don't remember who beat him, probably the perennial governor, Jim Hunt. The last time I saw Eddie, many years later, I had become a certified mediator and mediated a case in his office. He had developed a golf course community up near Lake Norman which he named "Verdict Ridge" and invited me to play a round with him there, but we never did. I think the public's verdict on his real estate foray was similar to the voters' verdict in his gubernatorial race, turning an intended financial ridge for Eddie into a sinkhole, or more appropriately, a money pit.] The jury gave the injured lady a deservedly reasonable amount, but significantly less than we'd offered before trial. Eddie was p'ood! Shortly thereafter, flamboyant, in his own way and mind, local Abe Lincoln lookalike and thought-he-was, attorney Larry Harrington settled the death case before trial for much less than he had been demanding. Travelers and I considered them both "wins". That might sound crass, given the death and serious injury caused by Traveler's insured, but from an insurance and legal standpoint, it all comes down to \$.)

I don't know where the newlyweds lived in Atlanta or if Mom worked, but I expect she did. At some point, they bought a duplex in Decatur and rented one side. Now remember, the country was still in the Depression, but I guess they had steady enough employment and adequate income to obtain a loan. Grandpa Caldwell died in April, 1942 and while in Charlotte for the funeral, Bill was born. I'm not sure when, but Dad was drafted and went in the Navy. Mom told about taking Bill as a toddler on the crowded train from Atlanta to see Dad in Jacksonville. Dad went for training in Maryland and Maine and was finally stationed permanently in Norfolk. Mom sold the duplex and moved with Bill to join Dad in Norfolk for the duration of the war. Imagine her doing that on her own. She had never owned or sold a piece of real estate. For her to go about deciding, I'm sure with Dad's help via correspondence (I doubt if there were many expensive long distance phone calls-I wonder if they even had a phone), what to sell it for, listing it with a real estate agent, negotiating and signing a sales contract, coordinating whether the tenant would have to vacate or could stay, selling or arranging to move what furniture they had accumulated, closing her bank account and I guess obtaining a cashier's check for the sales proceeds and

her bank balance and, probably selling their car and, traveling , I guess by train, with a youngster, to Norfolk. Some country girl! We used to call Mom “Sarge”, not the most feminine or endearing nickname a mother would choose, but in Mom’s case, her smart aleck sons thought it was apropos. My friend Ricky Creech likes to say about a dependable person, “I’d want him in my foxhole”. I always wanted and Sarge always was in our family’s foxhole.

When the war ended and Dad was discharged from the Navy, they moved to Matthews, living briefly with Grandpa and Grandma Beaty in a house which I think Mom’s oldest sibling, Bertie and her husband Harvey Hatfield owned, where they were living when I was born in Presbyterian Hospital, our hospital of choice, where all three of us were born and where Dad was treated for his various heart episodes over the years and where he drew his last breath in December, 1989. Mom died in Presbyterian-Matthews in August, 2006. Bill’s heart procedures have been in Presbyterian. Union Memorial in Monroe was acquired by Carolinas Healthcare System (“CHS”), successor to Charlotte Memorial, and starting with my heart attack on a Saturday in, I think, September, 2002, which was diagnosed by an ER doc after, when asking me what was wrong and I told him I thought I was having a hiatal hernia attack and he said no, that I was having a heart attack, and I responded that I didn’t think so, and he asked where I had gotten my medical degree and pointed to the ekg machine which he said showed I was in fact then having a myocardial infarction, I became a CHS patron, receiving stents following my heart attack at Mercy Hospital, begun by the Catholic Sisters of Mercy order of nuns and later sold to CHS, double heart bypass surgery in June, 2010 and knee replacement in Feb, 2011. Now I’m a patient of Norton Healthcare in Louisville, Ky which gave me outstanding care when I presented myself (I think that’s medicalese for showing up in pain) with chest discomfort to Norton Brownsboro just before Thanksgiving, 2019, which turned out to be indigestion from the fried chicken the night before, and to each of the 6-8 medical providers who attended me through my 6 hour stay, I thanked after Thanksgiving with a note of appreciation attached to a giftwrapped package of 4 Rebecca Ruth bourbon balls. I learned that from my late father-in-law Col. Mac Tweed, who usually took his md’s a bottle of good whiskey.

Well, back to Joe & Louise and their growing band of ruffians. We moved to the Shannon home place on Matthews-Weddington Rd and Dad started carpentering with Charlton Forbis, the bachelor older brother of Sanford, who also worked for him, and who was the husband of Eunice Shannon Forbis, the only child of “Uncle Jim Shannon”, as Dad called him, Grandma Ellie Shannon Caldwell’s brother and therefor Dad’s uncle. Uncle Jim had left the place not to his wife, Minnie or his daughter, Eunice, but to two of her four sons, his grandsons, Jimmy Lee, killed in WWII, and Shannon (“Shank”). Charlton and his crew did carpentry work for TJ Watson, a contractor who was building houses for the returning GI’s to a rapidly growing Charlotte. I don’t think they used any power tools and 2x4” studs were not precut to 8 or 9’, the way they are today, so Dad developed his right arm sawing studs to length, as well as joists, rafters and 1x6”’s for wall braces and floor and roof decking; no plywood in those days. He also became a pretty good finish carpenter. I think I’ve written before about his proclivity for tight fitting finish wood joints, becoming pretty proficient with a coping saw and razor sharp pocket knife. Shank worked with them as a young man and remembered Dad’s expression then, repeated often in later years, when a tight joint was completed, “Ah, one fit after another.” The joints were all air-tight in the walnut

grandmother clock he made for Mom and the grandfather clocks he made for each of his three sons in his later years.

I don't know how long Dad worked for Charlton, but at some point, he met Curtis Walker, who was selling Dan River dresses, and probably other merchandise, wholesale around the Carolinas. I have no idea how they met or why or how Dad got interested in sales in general, and wholesales in particular. I don't remember much about Walker except he was a BS artist, which Bill and I were able to detect even as youngsters.

I remember two stories he told, I assume, as the truth, or at least what he thought we would swallow as the truth. One was when he was a kid riding his bicycle down the road and topping a hill, only to discover the bridge had been torn out at the foot of the hill with only a plank to walk across until the bridge could be rebuilt. According to his tale, it was too late to stop, so he just closed his eyes, expecting doom. To his amazement, and ours, his bike crossed the narrow plank bridge, delivering him safely to the other side. It was a miracle, ranking right up there beside Moses and his band crossing the Red Sea on dry ground while the following Egyptian army was swept away. I had not yet developed any cross examination techniques, or I would have asked him why there was no barricade keeping motorists, or even bicyclists, from proceeding into the abyss or at least signs warning motorists that they would have to become dare devils, tilting their car up on two wheels to cross the one plank wide make shift bridge. Another penetrating question on cross would have been, how far would your bike have traveled if you had immediately, upon recognizing impending disaster, applied your brakes? For me to remember that story so vividly, he must have told it several times and I'm sure Dad must have heard it. Surely he wasn't as gullible as we, but I don't remember him raising any objections to the story's credibility. Maybe he thought his senior partner deserved a little story telling latitude.

The second Walker story was maybe more incredible than the first. He was getting some samples out of the trunk of his car during a thunder storm and a bolt of lightning struck him and flung him over the car, lengthwise, depositing him on the ground in front of the car. He was unscathed. I don't know whether he was able to keep his sample Dan River dress out of the mud or whether he made a sale. What a first business partner Dad hooked up with!

Actually, I have no idea what their business arrangement was. Walker was operating out of an old house on Bland St, not far off Mint, near Little Hardware and across Bland from a bus garage. I don't know what their full line of merchandise was, how they found customers, lined up suppliers, financed their inventory or whether they extended credit to their customers. I know that eventually they settled into a routine of each traveling to see customers every other week, with the other minding the store. At some point they owned a chenille bedspread company. I remember going with Dad over to the manufacturing facility, which consisted of several ladies at big sewing machines. I also remember riding down to Gaffney, SC with Dad, it seems like on a Saturday morning, in a pickup truck to take bedspreads to be dyed. Bedspreads were piled high in the floor and provided a great "King of the Mountain" mountain. Bill, the textile man, probably remembers more.

I don't know the name of the business or how long Walker had been in it or what his business background was. To my knowledge, Dad had no experience as a businessman other than what he learned from Grandpa and from his job as a storekeeper in the Navy. He had no friends or kin with business experience that I know of, except for his oldest sibling, Frank, who had a business degree from UNC and was, I think, credit manager in the Charlotte region for Firestone, a huge corporation, of course, which probably required little, if any, entrepreneurial skills or personal risk taking. But from the time he went in business with Walker, which was probably about 1948 or 9, when Dad would have been 40 or 41, with a wife and two, or by then, three children to support, Dad was in every sense an entrepreneur.

Dad worked 5.5 days a week, till noon on Saturdays. Occasionally he would take me along on Saturdays or on a weekday in the summer. On those Saturdays, we would sometimes get breakfast at a little diner across from Mercy Hospital, maybe my first time eating in a restaurant, beginning a life-long love of breakfast "out". Now, I would rather eat Johnny D's Breakfast Burrito, with sour cream, guacamole, an extra helping of salsa, and a side order of hash browns at Stony Knob Café in Weaverville on Sunday mornings before the church crowd arrives than any meal in any eatery I've ever tried. Janet and my favorite pastime while eating there, or most anywhere, for that matter, is picking out look-a-likes among the staff and patrons. The founder is an elderly (at least he appears older than me) Greek gentleman with a full head of white hair who eats at the corner seat at the counter nearest the cash register, a Greek, Bernie Sanders. When I once remarked to him of the resemblance, he smiled but immediately let me know that he was the polar opposite of Bernie politically.

The Knob is now run by his two sons who work in the kitchen and behind the counter, and the servers are all young, attractive females dressed in black, most very friendly. Eating an early dinner there recently before many diners had arrived, I asked our waitress if they were all kin to the owners, and when she replied in the negative, I asked if she was familiar with Seinfeld, which she was generally, and I told her about the episode where all the waitresses at the diner frequented by Jerry, Elaine, George and Kramer were not only beautiful but well endowed, and when Elaine protested to the owner about what she considered his sexist hiring practices, he told her they were all his daughters. Janet thought that I could have been "me tooed" for telling our waitress that story, but she backed off a bit when I pointed out I was just repeating a story that had been seen and, I would guess, laughed at, by millions, including those of the fairer sex. But, on reflection, millions, including me and my family, thought the overtly racist Amos and Andy show was hilarious. I can see why the Seinfeld story would be considered by many as sexist, though, I have to admit, political correctness in this day and time may seem to some a bridge too far, but Derek Penwell, PhD, pastor of Douglass Blvd Christian Church in Louisville, which I've attended 4-5 times recently, and who I took to lunch a few weeks ago, in one of his two books, OUTLANDISH, an Unlikely Messiah, a Messy Ministry, and the Call to Mobilize, Chalice Press, 2018, which I'm now reading, says: "That's why I get so chapped when I hear people whining about 'political correctness'. Near as I can figure, people who are always grouching about how we 'have to be so politically correct nowadays' are merely saying something like: 'I used to be able to treat these people any way I wanted. Now I'm supposed to treat them with respect? I just want to go back to the good old days when I didn't have to think about how my language affected anybody else.'"

There was a small diner on the corner of Mint and Bland. One weekday when I went to work with Dad, I got hungry and he sent me over there with 35 cents to get some lunch. I don't know why he didn't come with me; maybe he had a customer. If I remember correctly, for that 35 cents, I got country style steak and rice with gravy, either pinto or green beans, a corn muffin, and a glass of iced tea. Man, was it good. I can taste it now!

I don't know how long Dad stayed in business with Walker or why he decided to part ways with him, but after a few years, he did and went in business for himself as a wholesale mercantiler around the corner in an old house on Jefferson St. Actually, I don't know if he started out as a sole proprietor but if so, it wasn't long before he went into partnership with Bob Hutchison as Imperial Sales Co, later, when they acquired Princess Curtain Co, changed to Imperial Manufacturing & Sales Co, and finally, after I started practicing law and incorporated it, Imperial Mfg & Sales, Inc. I don't know how he knew Bob nor anything about his background. He and his wife and two kids, a boy and a girl, one, I'm not sure which, named Sydney, and the other, again, I'm not sure which, named Hart, who, I think, were younger than us and who I never knew very well, lived off South Blvd in the Sedgefield community and were members of the ARP Church on East Trade where the Great Aunt Stella Center is now located, where, I seem to remember, Bob sang in the choir. He was short and round and had a big round bald(ing) head and was most often found behind the counter with his feet propped up on the desk, whistling or making wise cracks or, as Harry remembers, trimming his fingernails with his pocket knife, often with his eyes shaded by their lids. Bob's position and utterances and eyelid positions remained fairly constant, even when a customer or customers came in, his assuming, I suppose, that they knew where the merchandise was and/or that Dad would wait on them, which he always did, without complaint, as far as I knew.

Before Dad opened Imperial in the old house on Jefferson St, some renovations had to be made. I remember helping tear out some walls, which was a pain because they were plaster, applied over wood lath strips, hard to knock loose and heavy and dusty to shovel into a wheel barrow and push out and onto somebody's pickup truck to haul to the old landfill off Statesville Rd. I don't know whose pickup it was, but between raking and hauling pine needles and "woods dirt" (leaf mold and other rotted organic matter than would accumulate over the years in the woods which Mom thought was gardening gold, and it was, a poor gardener's substitute for peat moss, Brown Cow, and other commercial soil supplements, and she had a nose for it [she always carried a bushel basket, sheet, rake and shovel in her trunk and we were often pulled over on the shoulder, trekking into the woods and hauling out a bushel basket full of woods dirt for her flower gardens]), scavenging the Sharon Memorial Park dump for discarded cemetery plot floral arrangement materials such as foam wreaths and crosses and metal stands which she used for church and home Thanksgiving and Christmas arrangements, and hauling those big, heavy, wooden ballot boxes which, as East Mecklenburg voting registrar, she stored in our garage and we hauled to the East gym the night before the voting precinct opened at daybreak on election days, and then, after Dad and others counted the votes election nights, she had to haul to headquarters for canvassing under the supervision of election czar and later political mover and shaker, Liz Hair, you would have thought that we would have owned a pickup, but I'm the only one in the family who's ever owned one, now on my third.

As I said, I was involved in the demolition. I don't know who did the remodeling, but I didn't help with that. I've always been a better demolisher than builder. Dad probably did a lot of it himself and may have gotten Charlton or Sanford Forbis to help. I feel certain Bob didn't lift a hammer. They eventually added a cinderblock warehouse, maybe in two stages, with a concrete T-joist roof, onto the back of the house, and later tore down the house and built a brick faced front to the warehouse. There were wooden and later some metal shelving to hold merchandise and a couple of large wooden tables across from the counter behind which a couple of desks, a safe, and Bob sat, where customers stacked their purchases and where merchandise to be shipped was packed and wrapped. Trucks delivering merchandise to the store and picking up merchandise being shipped to customers backed in at an angle to the front door to get out of the street as much as possible. Later, a loading dock was built on the side with room for even a tractor trailer to back up to and get completely out of the street.

Let me explain the mercantile business. Until the 60's and, in some places, later, many housewives in rural areas and small towns didn't have transportation to get to town to shop and when they did get to town, especially a small one, the shopping was limited. Peddlers have existed for centuries but the quality and quantity of goods has, of course, grown over time, the hunger for them stoked by war (How ya gonna keep em down on the farm, after they've seen Paree), Madison Avenue, the Sears-Roebuck catalog, radio and tv, and more jingle in pockets from "public work" (any job where one received a paycheck) making them more obtainable, thus broadening the market, the obstacle being making the goods available to the immobile housewife. So, the trade of the mercantile man, or traveling peddler, flourished, particularly in the rural south its towns. These peddlers would develop a route of customers, coming to their door with samples of pots and pans, sheets, pillowcases, blankets and bedspreads, curtains and rugs, lamps, toasters, irons, ironing boards, ironing board covers, and Bibles, and Mrs Housewife would buy what he had in his car or order what he didn't have or another color or style from what he had. And if he didn't have what she needed with him or in his garage, he would come to Imperial Mfg & Sales at 1225 Jefferson St in Charlotte to pick it up, or at least place an order and have it shipped to him, or, if he couldn't get to Charlotte, he would call FR 58038 and they, mostly likely Dad, as Bob could hardly stretch far enough to reach the phone from his perch, would take his order and ship it to him along with an invoice.

Every other week, Dad would pack his car with samples of Imperial's stock of merchandise on Monday morning and travel throughout North and South Carolina, southern Virginia and West Virginia, eastern Tennessee and northern Georgia to take orders from customers who couldn't get to Charlotte, usually not getting home till Friday night. The next week he would mind the store and Bob would hit the road. Mom usually went to the store at the end of the month to pay the bills and balance the books, which Dad meticulously kept in ledger books which I used to marvel at. I think all the entries were in his flawless handwriting, none of Bob's scribbling.

There is no telling how many miles Dad logged on the road, first with Walker, then for Imperial. The first car I remember us owning, and it from pictures, was a '49-'51 (same body style) black Ford four door sedan. I guess Dad started out driving it on the road. Next, it seems like he bought a '52 or 3 Ford, followed by a '54 green Dodge and then a lighter green '55 Dodge. At some point, he bought a green (must have been his favorite color-it's mine) '55 Cadillac and later a '56 or 7. I think Bob got one, too. I'm

sure they were more comfortable to travel in and held more merchandise. To me, they were big, sleek, and a little embarrassing when we pulled up in the parking lot at Matthews Baptist and parked beside Mr. Culp's old pickup. We have a photo somewhere which Mom made of Dad washing one of his Caddys in the backyard, on the bottom of which she wrote, "Even a man with a Cadillac has to wash it."

Twice that I remember, Dad took me with him on a road trip. The first was to southwest Virginia, maybe Wytheville. We stayed in a "tourist home", many of which existed in small towns in the south, maybe in other areas as well. Usually they were large older houses, often owned and operated by widows or single women to supplement or provide their income by renting bedrooms to travelers, mostly salesmen, like us, and sometimes offering family style supper and breakfasts. I remember eating with some other men around the dining room table, and good vittles they were. From that home base, we made a side trip or two, the one I remember being on a twisting road over Big Walker Mtn to Bluefield, WVa. We may have spent the night there. One night, we went to a minor league or semi-pro baseball game, I guess the first real baseball game I'd seen live. I was in heaven! The second trip was to the Florence, SC area. The main thing I remember about that trip is that it was summertime and as we were driving that '55 Dodge down a long straight road with cotton fields on both sides of the road, Dad said "let's see what it will do" and got it up to 90mph. The cotton rows, running perpendicular to the road, blurred by and the wind swept the Spanish moss hanging from the trees was as we along with the windows down, and I remember thinking, not many kids have ever gone this fast or have as cool a dad as mine. He seemed proud to introduce me to his customers as his son. I loved those trips, just me and Dad.

Imperial had a wide variety of customers, and looking back, I think Dad saw them all as friends as well as customers, and I suspect that feeling was reciprocated. What better way to build and run a business than by turning strangers into your customers and friends, and that based solely on the way that you treat them, personally as well as from a business standpoint. I doubt that Dad, unlike me, ever dreaded a day of going to work. Though he never talked about it, I think he integrated his personal, family, business and spiritual lives as seamlessly and completely as anyone I've ever known. If he was ever fearful, anxious or even pessimistic, I never witnessed it. Nor angry. The only time I ever saw him raise his voice or utter a profane statement, other than occasionally in a joke or story, was when he hired a guy to fine grade and sow grass in the yard of our new house on Rama Rd. Ever the frugal farmer, in the early spring after we moved in around 1/1/56, Dad planted peas in the yard to later plow under and add nitrogen to the soil. I was embarrassed when a couple of schoolbusmates commented on the crop growing in our yard, but that was all forgotten with the fun we had chasing and whacking big rats which ran out when a guy bushhogged the peas before plowing them under in the fall. For some reason, Dad decided to sow the yard with a combination of fescue and Bermuda grass seed. It was a weekday and Dad was at work. With rain in the forecast, he told the guy sowing the seed to cover it with his harrow but when he didn't, a gully washer came that night and much of that seed ended up in the garden. When that Bermuda came up and started spreading across his garden in the spring, I heard him say, "I told that son of a bitch to cover that seed." He fought Bermuda grass in his garden the rest of his life. Why he planted it, I'll never know. When I was chairman of the Recreation Advisory board in Monroe and we were interviewing a golf course architect to design the new 2nd 9 at Monroe CC, and we were

talking about using Bermuda on the fairways, he laughingly told about recommending Bermuda for use on a course he was designing, and an old golfing farmer on the committee said, "you mean you're gonna PLANT wuare (wire) grass?"; unbelievable to a farmer that anyone would actually plant Bermuda anywhere.

Willis Rimmer, Jesse Warr, Jay Dismukes, Dick Bergman, who I think was confined to a wheelchair and to whom Dad would deliver merchandise at his home in west Charlotte where I've been more than once, and even Ralph Smith, brother of Arthur Smith, founder and star of the blue grass/country string players, singers and wisecrackers, who for decades appeared as Arthur Smith and the Crackerjacks on WBT radio and WBTB, were some of Imperial's customers that I remember. Actually, Brother Ralph, as Ralph was called in his duo act on the show with Tommy Faile, known as "Brother Ralph and Cousin Fud", wasn't a mercantiler but came by Imperial occasionally to buy merchandise wholesale for his personal use. I guess he couldn't afford retail. I was at the store once when Brother Ralph came in. I was probably 12-14. Ralph liked to run his mouth and be the center of attention. He asked if I'd ever been to a watermelon roast and when I replied in the negative, he proceeded to explain that a watermelon roast was when you and your buddies took some girls out to the edge of the woods and built a bonfire and placed a watermelon in it, and when the watermelon exploded, each guy would take his girl out into the woods and get him a piece. I think I got the joke but don't remember how I reacted. Ralph bellowed. If he'd told that on tv he probably would have been Grouchoed (Groucho Marx, host of You Bet Your Life, a nationally syndicated comedy show, was suspended for a while after saying to a guest, who had said that he was the father of a rather large number of kids, "well, I like my cigar, too, but I take it out every once in a while") or Dizzied (Dizzy Dean, pitcher for the St Louis Cardinals "Gashouse Gang" in the 30s and 40s and colorful color commentator for televised major league baseball on Saturday afternoons in the 50s, famous for his country sayings such as "he slud into second", was benched for several games when he said he'd been watching this young couple sitting out in the bleachers for a while and he thought he'd figured out their routine: "He kisses her on the strikes and she kisses him on the balls"). Dad was somewhere between amused and chagrined.

Cousin Ben Franklin remembers Dad visiting his family, his mother, Dad's sister, Faire, and her husband, Count and Ben and his siblings, Bobby and Eleanor at their home in White Plains, NY when Dad must have gone up there on a buying trip. Ben has told me that they moved to Charlotte in, I think, 1954, so Dad's visit would have been before then. We must not have taken him to the airport or I feel sure I would remember that (Dad used to take us out to Douglas Municipal Airport on Sunday afternoons to watch the planes take off and land; we loved it). After the Franklins moved to Charlotte, Uncle Count, I guess with Dad's encouragement and maybe their impetus for moving, became a mercantiler and an Imperial customer.

Several of Imperial's suppliers were Jewish. The one name I remember was Ben Guggenheim. I think he was the one that would always give Dad a cheese sampler at Christmas, which we loved. The only Jewish customer of his that I know of was the Levines, who owned a small department store in Rockingham. At least one of the sons, Leon, the founder of Family Dollar Stores in Matthews, attended Wingate College, where he donated one or more buildings named for him, one of which, I think, houses the business school, which I think is also named for him. He is, I guess he's still living, or was one of Charlotte's

leading philanthropists. I think I'm correct that his brother, Alvin, founded Pic-n-Pay Shoes and brother, Sherman owned Sherman's Ltd, a clothing store for the "in" young man which was on the Plaza. I never bought anything there, not even sure I was ever in it.

My haberdasher was the Famous Mart in the Amity Garden Shopping Center or off Wilkinson Blvd, which handled only out of date or overstocked merchandise, kind of the "day old" bread store of men's fashion, occasionally Ledford's, also on the Plaza, owned by Bill Harris, co-founder of Harris-Teeter, Harris-Hart on East Blvd, a store whose name I don't remember in Cotswold Shopping Center, and Belk's and Ivey's, later, Dillard's. Dad took me to buy my first grown up sport coat or suit, either at Belk's or Harris-Hart. I tried on the jacket the salesman recommended and was a bit embarrassed when Dad, after looking at the price tag, said "we're just buying a jacket, not the store." His frugality, maybe the more appropriate term is good stewardship, was legend at Matthews Baptist. I heard from someone, maybe the pastor told it at his funeral, the story of Dad sticking his head in a meeting of the committee planning the church's new family life center and saying, "now remember, we're not building a country club."

Back to Leon. Wingate University, as all schools must, was and is continually seeking new sources of revenue. It had reached into Mecklenburg Co with its MBA and other programs and was working to raise its profile among potential supporters in Charlotte. One of Wingate's most talented and illustrious alumni is a terrific lyric tenor named Tony Griffey, from High Point, who has been a leading tenor in a number of Metropolitan Opera productions for many years. (I had the privilege of singing in the same choir with him for a semester, probably 30 years ago, when Ken Murray, a Wingate music professor and member of the choir at First Baptist, Monroe, recruited him and several other Wingate students as ringers in our choir.) Wingate put on a gala at the Duke Mansion in Charlotte; a full sit down dinner in the gardens and an after dinner concert by Tony. For some reason, I was invited to attend and to invite others, so I invited Bill & Sylvia and from Monroe, my 11th grade US history teacher and Beta Club adviser, Janie Woods Durland and her husband, Bill, both music lovers. During the social hour before dinner, I saw Leon and his wife arrive. I'd never met him before but recognized him and went up and introduced myself and told him that my dad used to call on his dad at his store in Rockingham. He remembered Dad and engaged with me in a brief but animated conversation about those days until someone from the college, it may have been President Jerry McGee or someone assigned for that purpose, swooped in and squired the Levines away to socialize with real potential supporters, not a former paltry donating Trustee and son of a mercantile man.

Several years before, at the suggestion of two of our clients and Wingate Trustees, Ed Gaskins, president and chairman of American Bank and Trust Co in Monroe and later, United Carolina Bank & Trust, as a result of American's merger with Whiteville based Waccamaw B&T, and later merged into BB&T, and Bruce Simpson, who built a little chicken processing plant in Monroe and contracted with farmers to raise broilers to become fryers therein (my Uncle Irvin was one of his original growers), later selling to Holly Farms, now Tyson Poultry, one of Union Co's largest employers, and later becoming a Food Town, before and after it became Food Lion, anchored shopping center developer, Wingate President Paul Corts asked me to serve a 3 year term on Wingate's Board of Trustees, which I did only after telling Paul that I wasn't in position to be much of a financial contributor, which he said he

understood. During the 3 year term, Jerry McGee became Wingate's president, and at its end, I wasn't asked to stay on the Board, which neither surprised nor disappointed me. The hi-light of my term was when the Trustees and spouses were invited to a weekend retreat in Charleston and Janet and I went and took Mom, which was not long after she became a widow. I paid for her room and board. Scott Walker, who First Baptist, Monroe called as pastor after being enticed by a pulpit committee which I chaired, served only a couple of years before becoming pastor of historic First Baptist, Charleston, one of the oldest Southern Baptist churches in the US. He spoke at the retreat and later took Mom, Janet and me on a tour of the church located right in the heart of the historic district. It had been damaged rather severely during Hurricane Hugo, which, after sending his wife Beth and their three young kids inland along with most other Charlestonians, Scott rode out in the historic parsonage beside the church. Hugo struck on September 22, 1989 while Dad was in Presbyterian Hospital with a bout of congestive heart failure. He had no idea of the severity of the storm or the damage it had done in Charlotte until I drove him around a day or so later. Dad's final heart episode was on Sunday night, December 10 when he died in, or, more probably, in the ambulance on the way to, Presbyterian Hospital from Plantation Estates, where, the night before, I had helped him take his Saturday night shower in the medical wing.

Cousin Mary Lynn tells the story of how her twin brothers, David and Douglas became entrepreneurs when they were young teens. They asked their dad, Uncle Frank, how they could make some money and he suggested they try sales. Imperial had begun carrying a line of products that seemed to be good sellers in the black community. One was a tie pin and cuff link sets and the twins began selling them like hot cakes to gentlemen who wanted to spiff up their look on Saturday nights and Sunday mornings. Other big sellers were Red Rooster iron pills and roach powder that came in a pink, Oatmeal box-like container. David went on to become a very successful food broker and Douglas a beloved minister and eventually the leader of the Moravian Church in the US, both utilizing the salesmanship skills no doubt rooted in their early mercantile careers.

Gene Kiser was the oldest of Aunt Verla's five children, left fatherless when Uncle Wilkes committed suicide around 1948 in the garage beside the house on Sharon Amity which we moved into after Aunt Verla used the \$5000 life insurance proceeds, from the policy on which the suicide exclusion period had just expired before he shot himself, to build a house a few blocks away on Windermere to move her brood into. All Gene ever wanted to do was run a service station. After Dad's death, Gene told me the story I had never before heard about how Dad helped him start down the road of entrepreneurship. There was little station owned by Shell Oil on Commonwealth which was available to rent from Shell. I don't know how old Gene was, maybe under 18 and therefore not of contracting age, but Shell wanted a responsible adult to guarantee the lease. Aunt Verla was afraid to because she couldn't afford the potential liability with Gene's four younger siblings still in the house. If Gene told me, I don't remember whether he approached Dad, or Dad, after learning of his dilemma, approached him, but whichever, Dad signed the lease as guarantor. Dad then asked Gene if he had any working capital, and after Gene asked him what that was, Dad pointed out to him that he would need some cash to buy gas, oil, tires and other inventory. Apparently Gene's business plan hadn't been developed that far. Dad loaned him \$2500 and wrote out in long hand a promissory note which Gene signed. Gene told me, but I've forgotten, how long it took him to pay off the loan, and he still had and showed me the original note on which Dad had

written, "paid in full" and dated and signed. I wish I had made a copy of it. I asked Mom if she remembered that transaction and she said she seemed to remember a little something about Dad loaning Gene a little money to get started. To me, that's as, if not more, amazing than Dad actually loaning Gene the money. \$2500 was a lot of money in 1950 or thereabouts, and to loan it to a kid, with no experience and no collateral to start a service station, on top of guaranteeing his lease. It's hard to imagine Dad having accumulated that kind of cash and almost impossible to imagine a wife, with three small boys to raise in an old, uninsulated house with no central heat, no automobile, making her and her family's clothes on a pedal sewing machine and raising chickens in the backyard whose necks she cut off with an ax to scald, clean and eat on Sundays, not going ballistic when her husband even suggested such a thing, and it being such an incidental thing that she only vaguely remembered it. Unbelievable!

Bill and I learned how to wait on customers at the station, pumping gas, checking their oil and tire pressure, washing their windshields, not as a paying jobs, but just for fun, when we would hang around there, which was quite often as I remember it, which we also did at Gene's next station, an Esso at the corner of Independence and Albemarle Rds and later at his Exxon at Monroe Rd and Sharon Amity. It seems like late most every Saturday afternoon, after Dad got home from work and we had finished the yard and garden chores, we'd go up to Gene's. Dad would gas his car and we'd get gas for his tractor and the lawnmower. Harry told me the other day when I was telling him about this story that when he started driving Bill's '31(is that the right year, Bill?) Ford A-model coupe to school, that's after I left for college after driving it to East myself for two years, he would pump himself \$1 of gas at Gene's, which would last him for a week. He said Gene didn't charge him; he assumed he put it on Dad's tab. I think I always paid for mine. I didn't know about the tab or, rest assured, I would have added to it. And of course Gene would fix our flats and I guess, sell us new, or in some cases, retreaded (remember those?) tires. We were always borrowing tools from him to work on the '30(is that the right year, Bill?) A-model two door sedan Bill and I, or rather Bill with me as his apprentice, or, maybe more appropriately, indentured servant working off my debt for embarrassing him all those times I spit on the sidewalk during our Saturday morning bus trips, when we lived on Sharon Amity, to Charlotte for window shopping at Gottlieb's Army/Navy, Faul & Crymes, Johnny's Hobby House and Ivey's bookstore, refreshing ourselves with an orangeade and complimentary pack of peanuts at Tanners, usually the one on N Tryon, it being closer to our final stop at Iveys, rather than the one on S Tryon, occasionally substituting a fountain Coke at Kresses or Woolworths on the square, worked on for years, doing a body- off, frame-up restoration over what seems like most of my teenage years.

Gene lent us his service-call pickup to tow a rusted out '29 (Bill,?) A-model four door sedan which we, actually Bill, as I had only sweat equity in the project, bought cheap for parts, somewhere northwest of Charlotte, which necessitated towing it on Sugar Creek Rd across its intersection with US 29/49, a location forever etched in my memory as the site of my close brush with death. Bill drove Gene's pickup and pulled the hulk with a chain wrapped around the front axle, with me sitting on a crate, since it didn't have a front seat, behind the steering wheel, which was about a quarter turn loose. It had no brakes, so I put it in 2nd gear and depressed the clutch so it would free wheel when moving and would let the clutch out to slow it down and, hopefully, stop when necessary. As we approached the intersection, our light on Sugar Creek was green, but Bill must have decided it would probably change before we got there, so

he slowed down and I let the clutch out to slow down and had come almost to a stop and some slack had developed in the chain. Bill, seeing our light was still green, decided to proceed on through the intersection and gunned the pickup, jerking the slack out of the chain and, it felt like, the front end out from under the A-model, which would have left me in the southbound lanes of 29/49, ripe pickings for a tractor-trailer which might have only slowed down, anticipating his light changing to green. I think I left some stain on that crate!

But it was at Gene's Exxon that I knew I was surely going to meet my maker. He always had a Lucky Strike hanging out of his mouth with a ½-¾" ash barely holding on, even when he was leaning over a carburetor with the air filter off and the engine running, pulling the throttle linkage to rev it up, thus pulling more gas into the open carburetor, with me thinking, the more gas, the higher my body will be blown when that cigarette ash makes a direct hit in the carburetor. I don't know how we survived. Looking back, maybe the reason Dad was at Gene's so often was in the capacity of the banker keeping an eye on the prospects of his borrower's ability to repay his loan. After Gene got out of the gas station business, he delivered parts for NAPA and would often stop by Imperial, just for a visit with Dad, reversing the earlier visitation routine.

We organized a 50th wedding anniversary party for Mom & Dad at Matthews Baptist Church, replete with stories and well wishes from family and friends. We have a video of it somewhere. It's not of very good quality and doesn't show all the stories that were told. Harry recently told me a story I didn't remember-must have been in the loo (British term I picked up the other night from Last Tango in Halifax on Netflix) or stepped out for a smoke. One of Dad's customers told of his wanting to go into a business of some kind, maybe as a mercantile man, and knew and discussed it with a friend and customer of Dad's, who said that he needed to talk to "Mr Joe", and took him with him on his next trip to Imperial. He said the friend introduced him to Dad, who was waiting on a customer and told him to look around and he'd be with him when he finished helping the customer. When Dad got free, the fellow said Dad walked him around the store and gave him a lengthy tutorial on every aspect of starting and running a business, unhurriedly answering even the most elementary questions. The fellow never forgot it, and it was important enough for him to give up a Saturday afternoon to travel to Matthews to share his story with Dad and us. Harry also told me (it must have been a long loo or smoke break-you can miss a lot on those) of another fellow, maybe a member at Matthews, who was asking someone about advice on marriage and family and he was told that he, and maybe his fiancé or wife, should talk with Joe & Louise Caldwell, which he did, with apparently good results. I wonder what they told him? Uncle Bill Black, husband of Dad's youngest sister Dot, told me that he was over at the house once and Mom was complaining about us in some respect, probably our laziness, and Dad's only comment was, "Well, I guess we should have had girls." Sounds like Dad; Mom, too.

Paper routes were often boys' first introduction to entrepreneurship. Joe Poole, Bill's good friend and classmate, lived across the gully behind our house on Sharon Amity, the Poole's house faced Craig Ave. Joe delivered the Charlotte News, the 6 day afternoon newspaper, on his bike to customers up Craig to Richland Dr, which ran over to Monroe Rd in downtown, Oakhurst. In my later Sharon Amity years (we lived there until I was almost 10), I substituted for him a couple of times and if I remember correctly, I had to ride my bike up to Elder's Grocery at the corner of Richland and Monroe, pick up the papers, roll

them up and put a rubber band around them, and put them in paper boxes along Richland down to Craig, and then down Craig to Sharon Amity, and maybe on some streets that crossed Craig. I think I rode Joe's bike, outfitted for the purpose with a big basket in front of the handlebars. I think he would collect when he delivered on Saturdays when Mr Moneybags would be home.

I don't know who came up with the idea, maybe Bill got the idea in Boys' Life, but his and my first entrepreneurial venture was just the reverse of Joe's paper route. We asked neighbors, primarily up Craig to past Selby Daniels house, then over to Castleton, which ran parallel to Craig, to save their newspapers and magazines and we would come around each week to pick them up in our little red wagon. Dad made us side planks, and maybe front and backs as well, I don't remember, which slipped down over the 4-5" wagon walls so that we could stack papers 2-2.5' high. One of us would pull and the other had to push when it got heavy. I think I was usually the pusher. There were a couple of dogs along the route that we, or, at least I, was scared of, and for good reason. One of us, I think it was me, got bit by a little son, actually, could have been a daughter, of a bitch, which drew blood. I think the owner had just said not to be afraid of him/her, that he/she wouldn't bite. He, or she, the owner, that is, was as much of a son, or daughter, of a bitch, as the dog, in my then and still now opinion.

We stacked our weekly collection on the little back porch, which had clapboard siding from the concrete floor up 3 to 4 feet and screened in above, which kept our inventory mostly dry. Our first second car was a black four door sedan with running boards, maybe a '38 or 9 Chevrolet, something Al Capone or Bonnie & Clyde would have driven. Dad bought it from Aunt Pat, I think Grandpa Beaty's sister, and her husband Uncle Joe, who live on or just off Tuckaseegee Rd, near Aunt Em, Grandma Beaty's sister. I wonder what they paid for it? When we accumulated enough papers on the porch, Mom would drive her mobmobile around back and we'd take out the back seat and load the entire back seat area, from the floor board to the ceiling, and the trunk, full of papers. I guess Bill, Harry and I would all three squeeze onto the front passenger seat and Mom would drive us to the Chesapeake Paper Co near the railroad tracks on West Trade where they would weigh our papers and pay us by the pound. It seems like we might get \$6-8. I don't remember how or who came up with how the profits were split, but I don't remember any squabbles over money. I don't know if Harry ever lent his young hand to this venture or, if so, whether he got a few farthings, but I don't remember him complaining.

We had very low overhead. I think we repaid Mom for her gas and time by grumbling about having to cut with scissors the stems of some weed which grew in the few patches in the yard where anything would grow. These aggravating devils weren't cut but just pushed down by the boy powered reel bladed mower with which we tried to keep the weeds at bay, only to spring back up to attention once the mower had passed over them. Mom thought those valiant little fellows marred the splendor of the freshly shorn weeds, so out there she sent us, on hands and knees, with scissors, remember, this was before clippers, at least BCITCH (before clippers in the Caldwell household), tin snips, serrated knives or any other implement found capable of severing those wire tough stems, which defied pulling up, and which, if miraculously, by super human strength resulting in stem burns to the hands, were uprooted, would also dislodge the few leaves from which it sprang and to which it owed its life, thereby further reducing the sparse greenery in the desplendent (not sure that's a word, but if not, it could and should be, meaning the opposite of resplendent) lawn. The main reason we objected to that duty is we didn't

want to look and sound stupid when Sonny Reynolds, George and Byron Helms, Tommy Flatt and Hicks, Joe Johnson, Farnum Gray, the Swofford brothers, and even cousin Frankie Kiser saw and asked and we had to explain why we were crawling around on our front yard baseball diamond and football gridiron with scissors, snips and knives in hand. If we'd had been as smart as Tom Sawyer, we would have convinced them of how much fun it was and had them competing to be next in the exciting challenge of weed stem extirpation.

I'm not sure what we did with our hard earned money. At some point, Dad helped us open savings accounts at Home Savings & Loan on S Tryon, but I think that was a little later when we had accumulated some surplus. Bill added to his income stream by becoming the yardman for Mrs. Wright, in the next block toward Cotswold and across Sharon Amity from us. I don't know how or how old he was when he graduated from stem cutting at home to becoming the yardman of a show place like Mrs. Wrights. There was a Mr. Wright, but Bill's principal boss was the Mrs. I don't know if there were any Wright offspring, but if so, they must have already fled the coop. Bill cut the grass with a gasoline motor powered reel mower, if I remember correctly. I guess their grass was fescue. I think he learned to aerate, lime, fertilize and sow seed, which he still practices with the accumulated wisdom of his 65 years of experience, as evidenced by the greenest non-professionally attended yard on Ansley Ct. Regarding grass; the lawn that first caught our discriminating eye was at the corner of Sharon Amity and Addison Dr, the entrance to Sherwood Forest, the plushest grass we'd ever seen, probably Bermuda or zoysia, which we called "city grass", a big step up from the Wrights' fescue and a giant leap from our cow pasture. Mrs. Wright had extensive shrub and flower gardens which Bill learned to tend, and from which he kept the grass from encroaching with a technique, heretofore unknown by country folks like us, known as edging, also used to make a neat delineation between grass and sidewalk and driveway. He also kept the ditch banks cleared of weeds with a sling blade and raked the leaves in the fall.

I feel sure Bill, at least I know I would have, regretted the two times he enlisted my help at the Wrights. Once, he pulled me on his bicycle handlebars down there to help him sling the ditch. Maybe it had over grown with abundant rain. We took our sling along so we'd each have one. I guess Bill's bike was the 2nd hand one Dad had bought from our landlord, Mr. Neal Craig, for his present one Christmas. Of course, he had taken off the fenders and chain guard, early hot rodding. I would sit on the handlebars, holding on to them with both hands, with my feet dangling down near the front tire. On the way home, I was holding on with only one hand and was holding the sling by its handle with the other, with the blade dangling down beside my foot, careful to hold it out away from the wheel. I guess my arm got tired or, more likely, I wasn't paying attention, and the blade swung into the wheel spokes, clipping or at least mangling enough that the wheel collapsed, sending us sprawling. I don't remember any of the details, i.e. , how bad we were scraped up, how we got the bike home, how close we got to getting run over by a car, how much it cost to repair or replace the wheel, whether Bill ever pulled me again, or how mad he got.

One other bike story while I'm thinking about it. A ditch ran along Sharon Amity in front of the house, fairly deep before disappearing into a drainage pipe under the Edgerton's driveway. When riding the bike home from down the Wright's way, we wanted to shorten the trip by the 100 or so feet we would have to travel to come in on our driveway, so we built a bridge just beyond the hedge row that marked

the property line between the Edgertons and our house and which served as the end zone in front yard football games, but which prevented us from riding in on their driveway and then into our yard. The bridge consisted of a couple of 2x4 girders maybe 2' apart that spanned the ditch, with 1x decking, plenty wide to walk or ride across if approached fairly straight on, but one day, with Bill pedaling and me on the handlebars, he missed the bridge. The cause of the resulting catastrophe is still under investigation by the NTSB (National Transportation Safety Board, which you'll be familiar with if you've ever watched the movie, Sully), Bill contending that I was horsing around, swinging my arms or legs, thereby causing him to lose control, while I blame it on his poor aim. His insurance has denied my claim that I would have been much handsomer, smarter, and talented, maybe an Olympian or a Merle Haggard or Ice Cube had it not been for his negligent driving. If it comes to litigation, once the jury sees the sorry shell of a man that remains, I'm sure they will give me what I rightfully deserve, about \$1.50, that is, unless Bill counterclaims for the cost of repairing his bike's front wheel from the rake catastrophe, which would probably exceed \$1.50. I think I'll forget suing and just let bygones be bygones. Oh, the other time Bill took me to the Wrights was to rake leaves and Mr. Wright refused to pay me because he thought my work was substandard. I blame it on a sorry, gap toothed rake. Well, Mr. Wright, we'll see about that when Caldwell v Miser Wright comes to trial.

Harry was almost 8, I was almost 10 and Bill almost 14 when we moved to the new house Dad built on Rama Rd, which ran parallel to Sharon Amity but a mile or so further out, causing us to complain that we were moving to the sticks. Soon, Bill got a real job bagging groceries at the Winn-Dixie in the Amity Gardens Shopping Center, leaving me and Harry to fend for ourselves financially, though I'm not sure Harry had ever fended up to that time. I don't remember us ever receiving an allowance, a term we weren't familiar with when our schoolmates discussed theirs.

It was probably the summer after we moved to Rama that Harry and I entered into our first business arrangement. They were adding on to McClintock Jr Hi, a quarter mile or so below (a country term which I, a quasi-country boy at heart, can't help using) the house. I don't know who came up with the idea or helped us formulate and implement our ingenuous business plan. We figured the workers at the school would need to quench their thirst during the hot days and wouldn't have the time to walk or want to go to the trouble of driving down to Lightsy Wallace's old store just across the railroad tracks in downtown Rama (there was an official department of transportation or railroad "Rama" sign where the road crossed the tracks).

An aside about the Wallaces, who were to Rama and vicinity what the Craigs were to Sharon Amity: Mrs. Bess Wallace was a widow who lived by herself in the two story white house on the corner of Rama and Monroe Rds, which I guess is where her son, Lightsy grew up. Dad bought our 2-3 acres from her. I viewed her as somewhat mysterious, a bit aristocratic and aloof but a little spooky, mainly, I guess, because of her age. I thought her place, with the beautiful house sitting among ancient oaks, with a white wooden fence separating her yard from the overgrown field she retained between us and her, was stately. But I remember her vulnerability as an older woman living alone when she locked herself out of her house and sought our help, somewhat panicked, if I remember correctly. I guess she drove down, because I can't see her walking down the road, to our house for help, and I went up and climbed, maybe up a trellis, onto the roof of the one story back porch and into a cracked bedroom window on the

second floor. I vaguely remember coming through the bedroom and down the hall to the stairs and down the stairs to the front door and thinking it was as stately inside as out. I don't remember Mrs. Bess's response, that is, whether she hugged me or gave or offered to give me a tip but I seem to remember thinking that thereafter, maybe she saw us as more than just ordinary ruffians, but maybe she never did think of us that way, or if she did, maybe this didn't change her opinion too much. I don't remember ever being in her house again.

One aside often leads to another, this one about Mrs. Wallace's white wooden fence. One windy early spring Saturday afternoon, Dad decided to burn a pile of sticks and limbs that we had drug out to the garden in the fall and winter, maybe thinking it would burn off some of the broom straw in preparation for plowing. I don't remember if we had taken rakes and shovels and other potential fire containment equipment out there with us but it quickly became apparent we would need them because the fire blew across that field of broom straw like a firecracker fuse. We started battling the spreading conflagration as it raced toward Mrs. Wallace's field. I ran to hook up the hose behind the house and, heating up myself, pulled off my windbreaker and threw it down in the yard. By then, the fire was burning across Mrs. Wallace's field also grown up in broom straw and heading toward her fence. I think one of us had previously suggested to Dad that maybe it was time to call the fire department but he said, no, we can handle this. But as the flames approached her fence, Dad acquiesced and one of us ran in or called to Mom to call the VFD. They arrived shortly and quickly put the fire out. I don't remember whether any of the fence actually burned but it certainly got scorched. When the fire chief asked if Dad had made his annual contribution for its support, and Dad, rather chagrined, said no and went and got his checkbook and wrote them a check on the spot. I think the Oakhurst fire chief was Mr. McManus, who lived just below us. When I went to pick up my jacket from where I'd thrown it down in the backyard, there was nothing left but the zipper and a little smoldering cloth, lying on scorched earth.

Mrs. Wallace's deceased husband must have been part of a large family. There was another two story white Wallace home in a grove of oaks on the left on Monroe Rd between Rama and East Meck Hi School where a large apartment complex was built when the house was torn down, which I think was Mason Wallace's home. Down below East is a Charlotte-Meck park named for him. His family probably donated the land. I think the Wallaces were Presbyterian, probably members at Sardis, one of the oldest Presbyterian Churches in Mecklenburg Co and I think the Mason Wallace family has been a significant financial supporter of Davidson College. I think there may be a scholarship which they've endowed, bearing their name.

But I feel sure there's not a park or scholarship named for Lightsy. He lived in an old white frame house on Rama Rd on one side of the railroad and the old two story brick Rama store building was across the tracks. The store was the center of what must have been a fairly thriving little community at one time. The train must have stopped there for passengers and maybe to unload fertilizer and pick up cotton bales. I think there was even a sidetrack where rail cars could be decoupled for loading and unloading and, if I remember correctly, a steam locomotive water tank still sat beside the tracks. There may at one time have been a cotton gin nearby. I assume Mrs. Bess owned the store because Lightsy, whose real name I'm not sure I ever knew because he was Mr. Wallace to me, ran it, if that's what you would call it. I don't know if he was married or ever had been or had any children. The store was a typical old country

store with dusty shelves and counters and a ceiling fan and light hanging down from the high ceiling. I think there were usually bags of fertilizer stacked just inside the door and sheds outside where bulk lime and fertilizer was or used to be stored. There were soft drinks, crackers and cookies (lots of Moon Pies), gum and pop sickles. After football or baseball practice at McClintock, the store would usually be flooded by thirsty and hungry kids and each would leave there with a drink and pack of Nabs or candy bar, or a Drumstick, Creamsickle or a Dixie Ice Cream cup, and probably less than \$2 would go in Lightsy's cash register, the rest pilfered right under his bright red nose and face and undetecting red eyes. That wasn't Cheerwine or RC Cola on his breathe. I honestly don't remember, but I don't think I ever stole anything from Lightsy, but I can't say for sure. I hope I didn't. If I did, Lightsy, I'm sorry. I only remember stealing two things in my life, both in college. I took his favorite record from an SAE or Kappa Sig rich, wise guy's room in my dorm who I couldn't stand, mainly to make him mad, and a sleeve of 3 Titleist golf balls from a box of dozens in Dr. Tom Scott, the athletic director's office, who was also the golf coach, while taking a slide course in athletic administration from him 2nd semester my senior year. I've always regretted both.

Back to Harry's and my partnership. We arranged for a soft drink distributor to sell us bottled drinks by the crate and they were delivered to the house in one of those big trucks which also delivered them for stocking vending machines, restaurants and grocery stores with bottles of sugar water, laced with chemical flavors and color, for human consumption. (Paranthenetically, I wonder who decided it was a good idea to addict people to a concoction that has helped America to become a nation of obesity and diabetes. I guess the same sorts that got us, including me, hooked on nicotine and bribed scientists to lie to us about tobacco's safety. I guess they, too, were entrepreneurs, out to make a buck.) The delivery guys probably got a good laugh out of our dinky operation, but that levity I feel sure was tempered by their aggravation at having to pull in our narrow drive, pull off a few crates of drinks and load crates of empty bottles back on the truck and then having to back out into the road. They even provided an ice box to keep the drinks cold, which we kept on the breezeway. I don't remember where we got the ice. I guess Mom would take us up to get block ice, which was cheaper, at Oakhurst and we would crush it by putting it in a burlap sack and pommeling it with the sledgehammer or we could get more expensive crushed ice at the service station catty-corner across from Gene Kiser's station at Sharon Amity and Monroe Rds. If there was room, we probably kept it frozen in the food freezer in the garage.

Mid-morning and mid-afternoon, we would load up Mom's tin wash tub with ice and drinks and pull it on the red wagon down Rama to the school and around the construction site, which was rough and rutty from concrete and brick trucks coming in and out, and sell Cokes, Nehi orange and grapes and RC colas to the workmen, and wait to collect the empties and then pull it home. I don't remember what we sold them for or which were the best sellers but I do remember keeping up with that and adjusting our purchases accordingly. I'm not sure why we didn't go at lunch-maybe most of them drove down to Lightsy's for lunch. I don't know how long our enterprise stayed in business; I guess most of the summer. I have no idea how much we made, what kind of records, if any, we kept, where we kept the cash, what the split was, whether we made some "draws" from the business account along the way or waited until it was over before we distributed the net profits. Mostly what I remember was one of us pulling and the other pushing that little wagon through the mud. That inspired me to set my sights on management.

My next stab at entrepreneurship, lawn care (for others, as cutting grass and pulling Bermuda grass out of the day lilies that lined the drive at home were part of the cost of room and board, always substantially subsidized), was very limited in scope. I only had one yard, that of a Mrs. Brinkley (there was a Mr. Brinkley, too, but he was rarely home when I was there, so I usually dealt with her), whose house was on a street that turned off Rama into Forest Heights, I think it was called, the younger and slightly poorer cousin of Sherwood Forest, which it joined. I don't know how I got the job. I don't think Mom and Dad knew them and I don't remember any little Brinkleys. I must have been 12 or 13 when I started and I rode my bike to their house. They were next door to Linda Leopold's house, a year or two older than me, but who I didn't know till a few years later. I think their mower was self-propelled, light years ahead of ours, and if I recall, when I filled it up with gas, I checked the oil and added a little when needed as Dad had taught me to do. It seems like it could be a booger to start. I would choke it and get it flooded and had to wait before pulling on it again, which perturbed me (I was, and, I suppose, still am, easily perturbed). That mower reminds me of a Frank Griffin saying: if cussing is a sin, a 3.5hp Briggs&Stratton has sent many a man to Hell. The yard wasn't too big but a chain link fence was along 2 sides of the back and was a pain to mow along. The mower would push the wire over enough to cut under it the mower deck would hang up in it. But the worst part was that she wanted me trim along the concrete drive and sidewalk with a pair of clippers, something we didn't have to fool with on the gravel drive at home. I don't remember how much I got paid or if I got any raises over my several years thus employed. I said my lawn care business was limited, mainly because I didn't seek any more customers. It seems like Bill and I raked leaves a couple of times at houses on Providence Rd, up near Christ Episcopal Church. That may have been when we lived on Sharon Amity.

Since this story is entitled Entrepreneurship, which implies working for oneself rather than for THE MAN, I won't go into detail about my jobs working for the latter, but I'll try to remember my summer jobs. Unlike Bill, who started working on weekends and maybe some after school as a bag boy, and maybe even a stocker, you'll have to ask Bill what all he did, at Winn-Dixie in the Amity Gardens Shopping Center, I played 3 sports from 8-12th grades and only worked in the summers. But every summer till I began practicing law in August, '71, I had a job. I think the following is a full list:

'61-between 9th and 10th grades: packing and shipping dept at Pelton & Crane, which made dental office equipment such as autoclaves for sterilizing instruments, dentist chairs and the lights they pull down to illuminate your mouth, and the drills, suction and blowing equipment. David DuMontier's (classmate from 6-12th grades) dad was an executive with P&C and got us the jobs. They lived off Albemarle Rd and would come by the house and pick me up and drop me off. It was a good first job. There were folded flat cardboard boxes designed for each piece of equipment they made and we would unfold and fasten the bottoms with a special staple machine, put the piece in and secure it in place with pieces of folded cardboard or styrofoam specially designed for each box, tape the tops and affix address labels. Our boss was named Ross, a gregarious guy, who reminded me of Jackie Gleason, with a little mustache, who showed us how they wiped their rears with one square of toilet paper in the Army. I never could tell if he was pulling, our leg, but he knew how to get the attention of a couple of 15 yr olds. The first day or so on the job, I was sent to get some spots for the spot welder. Looked all over the huge plant but never did find any. They even sent Dave, a VP'son, on a goose chase for something. Good for employee

morale. We took our lunch Mondays thru Thursdays, but on Fridays, someone would go pick us up the fried trout special, with fries, hush puppies and the best slaw I've ever eaten, before or since, at the South 21 on South Blvd. Like most workers, I sure looked forward to Fridays, as much for the trout special as for my usually uneventful weekends. That was a good summer, so good, that Dave and I worked there the next summer, too.

'63- before sr yr: Dad knew some guy who owned a machine shop between Tuckaseegee Rd and Freedom Dr and I spent that summer in, if not hell, certainly purgatory. It was hot and grimy work. The first day they put me on a punch press, punching parts out of sheet metal. I had to handle the metal bare handed as gloves wouldn't have allowed me to pick up the thin sheets. I think I counted 30 some little paper like cuts on my hands that night. The next day the owner came through and asked why this green kid was operating the expensive punch press, and, thank goodness, I was demoted, or maybe it was a lateral transfer to a milling machine. They had an order to make a large number of steel lock casings and I got put on that job. I started with a 6-8' heavy cylindrical bar of solid steel, or, I guess, a steel alloy, 3" or so in diameter, and then cut off a piece about the thickness of a hockey puck. I think I cut them on a lathe and then I would round off the sharp edges on both sides of the puck on either a lathe or milling machine. The next step was to drill a large hole into the edge, about $\frac{3}{4}$ through the puck, on a drill press, where the innards of the lock would be inserted. Then I drilled 2 small holes in the edge, perpendicular to and deep enough to enter the big hole, where, I suppose, the U shaped part which rises up out of a lock when the key is turned would go. All of the cuts, millings and drillings into the steel puck had to be done with precision to meet the design specifications. It was the job of the trained tool and die maker to set up jigs which I would place a piece in to insure that all the holes were precisely drilled. Over several weeks I cut, milled and drilled hundreds of those pucks, which the tool and die maker would check periodically with his micrometer and caliper to be sure the jig had held them perfectly in place as I drilled into them, only to be told upon inspection by the purchaser that none of them met specifications. Whoops, but don't look at me; I'm just a 17 year old kid. And they didn't fuss at me, though I never knew what went wrong.

A new guy, I don't remember what age, but older than me, came to work one Monday morning. I don't know what kind of machine they put him on. At mid-morning break, he said he was going to his car to get a snack. He never came back. I guess Bill dropped me off at purgatory each day on his way to his summer job in a textile place in Mt Holly, or somewhere over that way. Grandpa Beaty died that summer and he came by to pick me up at lunch to go home and get cleaned up and dressed for the funeral that afternoon. He was driving his A-model. As we approached the intersection of Queens and Providence on Morehead, a car stopped suddenly in front of us, and, as it became apparent the mechanical brakes weren't going to prevent us from rear ending him, or her, Bill turned hard to the left and the A's front wheels bounced over the at least 6" high median, and we stopped, Ka-Bam. It's a good thing we weren't driving the early 50s Studebaker or we would probably have been hung up, like a beetle on its back. But Bill, rather sheepishly, as his right foot was a little heavier when applied to the accelerator than the break, backed the A back over the median and we made to the church on time.

'64-after graduation: I drove a dump truck for the State Dept of Transportation. I'd forgotten how I got that job till Bill Carr reminded me that DOT had called East Hi and said it could use two students and

Carol East, who taught clerical courses and was senior class adviser and just all around busy body (the previous spring, my junior year, she corralled me and asked who I was taking to the Jr-Sr prom, and when I told her I didn't have a date, she said Marilyn Lowery didn't either and strongly suggested I ask her, which I did, the only time we, Best All Arounds in 9th at McClintock and as seniors at East, ever dated), told Bill and me, maybe as our reward for not screwing up too badly as president and vice president, respectively, of the senior class, about the jobs. DOT needed someone to work in the office and someone to drive a truck. To his dismay, Bill got stuck behind the typewriter and I got behind the wheel. It reminds me of the coffee cup Tommy and/or Tim gave me years ago with a Far Side cartoon on the side of a fox sitting behind a desk wistfully watching a bunch of his buddies chasing a deer thru the field, with the caption: "Lucky skunks. I hate this desk job!" I became friends with Gary Boyd, a wrestler from South Meck, who also drove a truck.

I'd never driven a truck that big before. It was their smallest dump truck, with a single axle, but it had a floor shift with 3 forward gears and a button you could pull which would give you 3 more, if needed. When starting off with a load, particularly if uphill, you would have to start in low first, or Granny, and shift 6 times to get to road speed high. Sometimes the gears would grind, which could be reduced by double clutching, but I never got the hang of it. We would usually haul crushed stone from a quarry below Pineville or somewhere out the Beatties-Ford Rd area. You would back down under the crusher to be loaded or beside a pile to get loaded by a front-end loader. Either way, your truck sank down about 6" from the load. Sometimes we would haul it to where they were stockpiling for a project and just dump it in a pile. To dump, you would put the transmission in neutral, depress the clutch, pull the dump lever, reach out the window with your left hand and pull the rope which would release the pin to allow the tailgate to swing open, slowly let the clutch out, and the bed would rise and the gravel would slide out. Then you would push in the dump lever slowly and the bed would lower slowly; push it in too fast, and the bed would slam down, making a big racket and calling attention to your greenhornery.

Sometimes we had to spread the gravel along a roadway rather than dumping it in a pile. This would require pulling the dump lever while driving along in 2nd or maybe even 3rd gear, depending on how thick they wanted it spread, thus causing the bed to start to rise, and then pulling the rope at just the right time. If you pulled it too soon, too much gravel would come out too soon and the spread wouldn't be uniform, but if you waited too late, as the bed rose and the gravel slid back against the tailgate, the weight would prevent the tailgate from opening and as the bed continued to rise, the truck's front wheels would lift off the ground and if you didn't stop it from continuing to rise, the truck would literally sit back on its haunches, with the rear on the ground and front pointing up in the air, like a missile ready for launch. BIG TROUBLE, and humiliation! That never happened to me, but I was always scared it would. I saw it happen once or twice. They had to take an excavator and scoop most of the gravel out of the bed so the truck could ease back down onto all four wheels.

Much of the time, we were like those road workers that taxpayers driving by complain about, just parked and sitting in our trucks, waiting to spread our load of gravel or to be loaded with dirt to haul away. We got bored on stretches where there wasn't much traffic passing by, but our boredom was relieved when we sat on a closed lane of US74 or some other busy stretch and watch from our elevated perch for girls with their skirts hiked up driving slowly by in the open lane. A couple of other hi-jinks we

discovered: raising and lowering our empty beds while driving past oncoming motorists and intentionally backfiring by down shifting at relatively high speed. Nothing like putting 18 year olds, acting like 12 year olds, behind the wheels of 2 tons of potential mayhem to unsuspecting motorists. Thank-you, Mrs. East! Sorry, Bill.

'65-college man: Dad also knew a guy who owned a linen service located on S Tryon, so he got me a job as a delivery truck driver. I had a high school guy, seems like he was the son of Dad's insurance guy, maybe named Wright, who lived near Southpark and who I think I picked up on the way to work, as an assistant. I drove a truck with a big box bed with a tailgate that we could hydraulically raise and lower. Each morning, we would fill big canvass hampers on wheels with clean sheets, pillowcases, towels, washcloths, and table cloths and napkins and load them on the truck. We would deliver them to motels and restaurants and pick up their dirties. All the motels that I remember were on Tryon; the Mangor Inn Motel and Barringer Hotel on N Tryon and a motel on S Tryon and Independence or Morehead, called, if I recall correctly, The Heart of Charlotte. The restaurants I remember were the one at the Mangor and the ones at Charlotte and Myers Park Country Clubs. Dirty restaurant linens, wash rags and drying towels were the nastiest stuff we handled.

Two swimming pool stories: we were in the kitchen and dining room at the Mangor and saw a commotion out by the pool. There were a number of African Americans in bathing suits screaming and pointing in the pool, but nobody was doing anything. We ran out and saw a 12-13 year old girl floating helpless in the bottom of the deep end. I started pulling off my shoes and emptying my pockets to dive in and some guy in a bathing suit jumped in and pulled her up and to the side of the pool. She was unconscious and when they tried to pull her over the edge, her top slid up, or down, exposing her breasts, and they were so concerned about that, that they let her head bang down on the concrete with a loud thump. I remember thinking that if she wasn't drowned they probably had killed her or at least fractured her skull. Someone, I don't actually remember but it could have been me, started artificial respiration by pushing on her back and pulling up her elbows and before long, water poured out of her mouth and she started breathing and crying. That's the closest I've ever come to seeing someone die right before my eyes. A happy ending, but the second story was happy all the way around. It was a hot Friday afternoon, I think the last day of our job. We made our last stop at The Heart of Charlotte about 4 and it was boiling. I parked our truck beside the pool and nobody was in it. I told my helper I was going to cool off and he asked what I was going to do. I emptied my pockets on the seat and said "watch" and walked over and jumped in the pool, in full uniform, white pants and shirt, socks and black leather shoes. There were several African American maids on the upstairs balcony and they just howled. When we got back to the plant, I was still dripping wet and when asked why, I told them it must be the hottest day of the year and I'd sure worked up a sweat. Most refreshing swim I've ever had!

'66: I guess Occidental Life in Raleigh posted some kind of ad in the Davidsonian or on a bulletin board that it was hiring college students to sell time sharing on its GE 235 main frame computer to potential users in the Charlotte area and Ben King and I were hired. Ben was from Alabama, a year ahead of me, a Kappa Sig, the richest and/or coolest dudes on campus, and he fit the mold perfectly, a smooth, good looking guy who I had gotten to know up close, through an unintentionally, from my standpoint, brief encounter my freshman year. I wasn't on our fraternity intramural wrestling team, but one night we

were wrestling the Sigs and whoever was supposed to wrestle King couldn't for some reason, and they were looking for somebody to wrestle him. Now, though I'd never wrestled in an official match, Bill and Harry and I'd wrestled pretty regularly growing up, often as the final means in dispute resolution, and I'd recently pretty well handled Walt Greene, a fraternity brother and center on the football team who outweighed me by at least 20 lbs, in wrestling as part of off season football conditioning, mainly because I was quicker and more agile than he, who is now still a practicing orthopedist in Fayetteville. I was in King's weigh class, so I said sure, I'd love to whip that pretty boy. If anybody knew, they didn't bother telling me that pretty boy had been a state wrestling champ. He twisted me into a pretzel before pinning me in probably less than a minute. We were friends after that.

I knew nothing about computers, nor did Ben. We went to a week's training in Raleigh and were given a crash course in the computer language, BASIC and how most any business, from banks to accounting to engineering firms could solve their computing needs (like we were supposed to understand those businesses and their needs) by getting on the Occidental GE 235 (can't believe I still remember that) via teletype, and then sent to Charlotte to make cold calls. We knocked on a lot of doors but never made one sale. We had no idea what we were doing and I'm sure that was quickly apparent to whose ever time we talked the receptionist into our wasting. I think we'd call headquarters periodically to report in and would get a pep talk but I was glad when that summer ended; pure frustration for Ben and me. I don't think we ever knew how other college kids did around the state. Maybe some State guys actually knew what they were doing, but pre-med Ben and undecided Tom had no idea.

'67-just married, living in a small apartment off Independence Blvd: Hard to believe, but Occidental offered me the same job as the previous summer and I accepted. They must have hired a new guy to manage this project and he just picked up the file from '66 and found my name and number but not my sales results. Another week's training in Raleigh and a new partner to work with in Charlotte, a State guy from Kannapolis, and mostly the same frustration in trying to create a market for a new technology, but with a little better results this time. We made a sale to an engineering firm. I wondered how that worked out for it and Occidental. At the end of the summer, as I began my senior year, I still had no idea what I would be doing after graduation but I was pretty sure I wouldn't be going into sales or applying with IBM.

'68-a sheepskin and a contract to punt a football for Dallas in hand: In the spring, with a light schedule my last college semester, I pulled the old wooden Best Yet motorboat (I've written about it before) up to the little house Janet, little Tommy and I were renting just north of Davidson and began refinishing it, why, I have no idea. It wasn't exactly a Chris Craft. I finished it up about the time school was out. Bill had recently gotten out of the Army. I don't think he'd ever been in the Best Yet so he came up one Saturday and we put it in Lake Norman. The prop on one of the engines was all bent up and I had gotten a new one and we were trying to put it on with the boat, not on land, like thinking people, but in the water, like non-thinkers, with the motor pulled up, and Surprise-Surprise, we dropped either the prop or the pin which held it in place in the water and never did find it. Bill never had the pleasure of cruising in the BY, so never knew what he missed. I don't know what happened to the old girl.

After graduation, I moved Janet and Tommy to her folks in Va Beach since I was going to become a Cowboy. After losing my spurs, or actually, having them taken away before I got a chance to try them out, we moved to Chapel Hill to see if a powdered wig might be a better fit. My class would be the first in the newly built Van Hecke-Wettach Hall law school building, on which they were putting the final touches when we moved into our apartment in Odom Village, the on campus married student housing complex, toward the end of July. I think we moved in on a blazing hot Friday and on Saturday, I went to Raleigh and spent most of our cash reserves on a window AC unit, but it was worth every penny. For the first time in my life, I was living in ACed comfort. I think Mom and Dad got their window unit only later. The American dream in practice, the parents' hope that their kids will have it better than they did.

On Monday, I went over and got a job with the contractor building the law school and worked a month or so, till school started, with Frank Goldsmith, a year ahead of me at Davidson and UNC, who returned to his native Marion and became a role model for lawyers and human beings, an Army veteran, a pioneering civil rights lawyer in western NC who volunteered to represent detainees held in Guantanamo after 9/11, co-chair of the NC Commission of Inquiry on Torture, presented the Atticus Finch award by the NC Bar Association, awarded the Distinguished Alumni award by his Davidson class, and is presently living in Asheville, doing mediations and arbitrations, and, having converted to Judaism, is a member of the Beth Israel Congregation in Asheville and is on the board of Carolina Jews for Justice, and Jim Cline, an NC State grad and rising 3rd year student who gave me some good tips for navigating the law school landscape. We laid bricks for sidewalks, installed carrels in the multi-floored library stacks, and very scarily, climbed up scaffolds to break off metal fasteners that protruded through the concrete block walls of the elevator shafts. When school started, I knew my way around the new building pretty well by virtue of the job and around the curriculum and faculty better than most entering students by virtue of Frank and Jim.

'69-hadn't flunked out yet: At the beginning of our first year, we were told by our professors to look to our right and left and see who was on either side, because at the end of the first semester, one of us 3 would be gone. I took that seriously. I had a wife and child to support, so, I studied harder than I'd ever studied in my life, and made 4 C's and 1 B, and thought, this is ridiculous, studying this hard for Gentleman C's. Second semester, I found Finley Golf Course, the 18 hole college course, and memorized my SS #, which was also my student ID #, which I had to use every time I played. I played several times with college fraternity brother, Mike Westall, who was working on his Phd in math, and met Mike Correll, a slow talking, easy going undergrad senior from Hudson, NC who was a good athlete and golfer, and played with him frequently. Of course, I slacked off on the law books, but apparently I had learned to do something right, because my grades at the end of second semester, in the same courses with the same professors I'd had first semester, each subject, required for all first year students, Civil Procedure, Criminal Law and Procedure, Torts, Contracts, and Real Property, being two semester courses, my grades were 4 B's and 1C. At graduation, I received the award for the most improvement in grade point average from our first semester through our last. As a sprinter in track, I was a better finisher than starter. Hopefully, my life will continue to follow that course!

I don't remember how, but Mike Correll and I got summer jobs with Security Building Co. I probably learned and had more fun that summer than any previous ones. We both started with a crew building a

house for Martin Gelblum, a Philadelphia lawyer who was moving to Chapel Hill to become an assistant dean, responsible for development, a euphemism for money raising, for the law school. The house was a contemporary going up on a lot that sloped from front to back, a one story with a full, walk out basement. Only the basement slab had been poured when we arrived, so we helped build it from the ground up. All of the crew building the house and the level of management directly above were from Saxapahaw in Alamance Co and personally knew or knew of Bob Scott, then or soon governor of NC and son of former governor, Kerr Scott, all dairy farmers from Alamance Co.

The crew was led by Thomas Guthrie, who, like all of them, grew up on a farm. In elementary school, when each student was asked what they wanted to be when they grew up, Thomas said he wanted to own a store and sell plow points and other confectioneries. His wife was a school teacher. I've never had a more genuine, friendly, helpful, competent, hardworking boss. He did all the framing layouts and he scared me to death the first time I saw him stand on a 2x4 stud outside wall, 2 stories high, hook his measuring tape over the end, and walk backwards the length of that wall, bending down and marking where to nail each joist. He told some great stories about his time in the Army, the two I remember being about young GI's, lonesome for female companionship. To keep this story rated G, I won't repeat them here. I'd want Thomas Guthrie in my foxhole.

Then there was Ed Haith, a heavy set older guy who wore bib overalls. Ed kept Mike and me in stitches, just by his normal conversation. Some of Ed's comments that I can remember: A guy delivered something to the job site in his pickup, and when he pulled out, he slung gravel and wound it out in 2nd gear going up the street. Ed casually remarked something like "I'd love to have a pick up like that, with all that power, but I'd save it and gas. I'd keep it parked in the yard." About his grandkids, he said "I love to pick 'em up, and I love to put 'em down." Three or four of us were trying to lift a heavy flitch plate into position and we had to lower it for some reason. Ed had the end which was adjacent to a cinder block wall, and as we lowered it, Ed said, not screaming as I would have, but with some urgency, "Hold on, this wall's grinding my fingers down to the nub." Mike and I said we could make a fortune by becoming Ed's agent and getting him on Johnny Carson and in Las Vegas, but Ed just laughed and said he'd rather stay in Saxapahaw.

The crew was rounded out by Tom Woody, who, I think, was a lay preacher and probably the best finish carpenter in the bunch, and would get a bit righteously indignant over Otis and Junior's profanity and bawdy jokes, which just spurred them on. Otis told the story about some guy who used to work with them who'd been to jump school in the Army and was always telling them about his expertise in parachuting and what excitement they'd missed. One day they were on a second story roof and the guy was going on about how to land and roll to break your fall, and Otis asked him about how hard a jumper's impact would be on landing, if it would be about like jumping off the roof they were on. When he said that would be about right, Otis suggested that he jump off and show them his to landing and rolling technique, so he did. He broke both legs! Mrs. Gelblum, a rather stout lady, came by most every day to see how things were going and to give Thomas directions. We were on the roof or in the attic and she came in without our knowing it and was standing right below us when Junior made some juvenile comment about the size of her derriere or the quantity and/or quality of the gas it could probably emit, when someone looked down and saw her and punched Junior and pointed down. She didn't say

anything but I worried she might have thought it was me and it would get back to Marty and my grades might reverse their upward trend. But Junior had a rather distinctive, high pitched voice, thank goodness, which may have saved me.

The next level in the chain of command above Thomas was Dick Pittard, the supervisor for all the jobs Security had going on. Dick looked a little like Buddy Hackett. He was from Saxapahaw, too, and well knew and I guess had hired all of our crew. They all liked him ok, I think, but thought he took himself a little too seriously, and knew how to pull him down a notch or two, but good naturedly, and he took it that way. But Dick's Uncle Hub was a little different story. Hub was Dick's gofer and in charge of miscellaneous minor projects, like cleaning up around the jobs. Dick drove a nice new pickup, but Hub's looked like Sanford and Son's. He carried a bunch of old hand tools and a wheelbarrow and such in the back. When he needed a little job done, he'd usually come get me and/or Mike to go do it. Hub was as slow and country talking guy a guy I've ever known. A house was almost finished on Hoot Owl Lane. One day Hub came by the Gelblum job and said, "Tom, you and Mike take a shovel and the sorry mattock over to Hoot Owl". I guess you had to be there and know Hub to appreciate how that broke Mike and me up, and still does me to this day. I don't remember exactly what we were supposed to do at Hoot Owl, dig a little ditch or move a pile of dirt or some such, but whatever it was, from Hub's analysis, the job didn't require the good mattock, the sorry one would do. There must have been a much more important job for the good one or a job for a better worker than Mike or me. Sorry worker, sorry mattock! I could see Hub's logic.

I was cleaning up around a house with an old black fellow who worked occasionally, usually doing crappy jobs. I think I'd worked briefly with him before. He got to shaking and couldn't stop. I guess he had the DT's. I'd never seen anything like it. I asked him what I could do to help him and he said he needed a beer, a tall one. I probably told him I didn't think that would help, but he got worse, so finally I went to the 7-11 and got the tallest Old Milwaukee they had. When I got back, he was sitting on the ground, still shaking. I handed him the can, he got up, popped the top, seems like wrapped his mouth around the whole top, stepped around the corner of the house so I wouldn't see him down it, I guess, and within seconds, came back around the corner and threw the can down, empty. He'd sucked it dry and the can was crumpled and I wondered whether he crumpled it with his hand or it crumpled because he sucked the air out of it, going for the last drop. Within a few minutes, he stopped shaking and went back to work. I wondered what kind of life he'd had and had left. I probably told Mike about it but never told Hub or Dick. I'm not sure I ever saw him after that.

Marty must have spread the word about what he thought were my carpentry skills around school because Bob Melott, another assistant dean who I knew pretty well from the day he had let me back in law school after the Cowboys sent me packing, hired me to build a screen porch on the side of his house. I got Jimmy McMillan to help me and we spent several Saturdays and Sundays on it and must have done a pretty good job, at least he must have thought so because he paid us, relatively well.

'70-two down and one to go: Security Bldg Co was owned by JP Goforth, who I first met the previous summer when he would visit the Gelblum house from time to time, usually with Marty, his customer, and by the end of that summer, I'd gotten to know him somewhat. He was 5-6 years older than me,

grew up on a dairy farm in Iredell Co, which I couldn't envision, had gone to Carolina to undergrad and law school, started selling real estate, got his general contractor's license, and started building houses, forming Security while he was still in law school. I think he took the bar but never practiced law. He had become the premier custom builder in Chapel Hill and was expanding into Raleigh. I assume he started selling real estate with Herb Holland, because Security's offices were joining Herb's on the second floor of a savings and loan building in downtown Chapel Hill. JP was a pretty big guy, 6' or so but pudgy, very gregarious and liked to have people around, but a bit mysterious. He lived in an older, cool, stone and redwood rustic contemporary house, in a wooded, private setting. While I knew him, he built a beautiful swimming pool with flagstone decking and a glass enclosed spiral staircase from his second story bedroom down to it. I never saw him in it or a bathing suit. He could be seen occasionally out with a female, but I strongly suspected that he was a closeted gay, maybe even unconsummated. I never saw any overt signals. He liked having young married couples around. Janet and I were at his house several times and we met several, including the Tom Worths, he a young lawyer who did Security's real estate work in Raleigh, and she the daughter of Charlie Cameron, co-founder of Cameron-Brown, a mortgage and insurance company in Raleigh, that merged with First Union Bank in Charlotte, of which he became CEO. He rented out his basement as an apartment, and Sandy Brenneman, a year or two behind and who played center on the football team with me in college, and his wife lived there a couple of years when he was in grad school at UNC.

I don't remember whether JP suggested or whether I inquired about becoming a real estate agent but I took and passed the real estate exam that summer and went to work as an agent for Herb Holland, which was full time over the summer and continued during my last year of law school, mainly being available to man open houses on the weekends during school. I also worked in a summer school course in federal jurisdiction. Security built a few spec houses and Holland listed them along with others. I sold a couple but not enough to make me want to follow in JP's footsteps. The biggest commission I made was on a fraternity house that Security built on Findley Golf Course, where a number of fraternities, including the one Tommy and his Monroe Hi classmates and buddies, Craig Burris and Eric McDonald, joined and lived in a year or two, located when the old fraternity row, just off campus behind the Carolina Inn, had run out of space, for the pharmacy school fraternity which our neighbor in Odom Village, Wayne Smith belonged to and from whom I learned of its plans to build a new house. The frat's alumni leaders lived in Charlotte and JP and I drove down to meet them when negotiating the deal. I stayed loosely in contact with JP after law school for a year or so but had lost contact with him when, some years later, I learned that he had committed suicide, apparently from not being able to cope when the bottom fell out and he lost a fortune and was facing bankruptcy from a huge development he had started on the Inland Waterway near Wilmington. Some people you never really know as well as you thought you did. JP was one.

'71-a JD degree and a bar exam to pass: That summer was the hardest summer job I ever had, studying for the bar exam. I guess most everyone preparing to take it took a cram course, the most popular one put on by a group of enterprising lawyers headed by Robin Hinson, now deceased. Robin (the only other guy I ever heard of named Robin was Phillie Phanatic Hall of Fame pitcher, Robin Roberts, and well, Robin Williams) was from Rockingham, not exactly a "Robin" kind of town. I'm not sure where he matriculated

but he must have been a heckofa smart guy, because I think at one time, he was general counsel for Carolina Power&Light and Hanes Corp, and maybe some others, and lastly was the Hinson in Robinson, Hinson & Bradshaw, one of the top law firms in NC and maybe now, the southeast, a firm established long before he joined it by Carlton Fleming and Russell Robinson, who wrote the book on NC corporate law and is, with his wife, a major mover and shaker and philanthropist in Charlotte. Carlton was in law school at Duke with my partner, Frank Griffin.

When I was a young lawyer and the Fleming, Robinson & Bradshaw firm had probably no more than 10 lawyers, I went to their office with Ed Gaskins, who I've mentioned previously, president of American Bank in Monroe and one of Frank's close friends and partners in several real estate ventures, who Frank handed off to me to do his legal work after he retired from the bank, though his son was a partner in Terry Sanford's law firm in Raleigh, and a member of First Baptist Church in Monroe, as I was, along with Ed's girl (actually woman, she was probably 50) Friday, Anne Cunningham, who helped him look after the Bank's and his personal real estate holdings, to see Gibson Smith, an arrogant Davidson and, I think, Duke law grad, who represented a client who had some real estate deal going with the Bank. As Ed, Ann and I waited in the lobby, Carlton walked through and recognized Ed and Ed introduced me to him as Frank's partner. He was very suave and personable and told a story about Frank's selective use in law school of the fact that he was hard of hearing and wore hearing aids to his advantage by being unable to hear a professor's questions directed to him if he wasn't prepared, but could always hear the ones when he was. Jim Cobb, another Charlotte lawyer, who I got to know pretty well when I helped Frank with a big case we brought against the Singer Co on behalf of a local textile company for breach of warranty on some textile equipment it had sold our client, and Jim and one of his partners, Ham Wade, both Davidson grads and recently deceased, were representing Singer, said, in a conversation about Charlotte lawyers, that Carlton could walk into a room full of strangers and within a short time they would all know he was a lawyer and he would know which of them had money. I never became very good at that.

Well, back to Robin Hinson and the bar exam. He and his group prepared extensive manuscripts on the various areas of NC law that, based on previous exams, they thought might be tested on, including the questions that had been asked before and when, and focusing especially on questions they thought were ripe for that year's exam. Robin, Mr. Monotone, who my law partner, Jake Helder, who took the cram course via closed circuit TV the summer before in Winston Salem where he'd just finished Wake Forest law school, remembered that he started every session by saying, "Are you all set?", or one of two or three, others, would go over the material from 9-12 and 1-3 in the Institute of Gov't auditorium, next to the law school. It was a grind to concentrate through all 6 hours, so my friend, Gardner Altman, from Fayetteville, and I would take turns each day, one attending the morning session and taking comprehensive notes while the other read the material for the next session, which he attended and made notes from, exchanging notes after the second session for review that night. I think the cram course lasted at least a month. We would rereview the week's notes on the weekends and cram on NC tax law and constitutional law, which weren't covered in the course. One morning I was sitting in front of several black students, probably from NC Central in Durham and they were discussing their disappointing job searches, and a girl said, "Well, if something don't turn up soon, I'm gonna start my

own co-orp-oration” and we all laughed, me silently. I wondered later how they did on the bar and what kind of jobs they got.

The bar exam was a three day affair held in Memorial Auditorium in Raleigh. Gardner, Thad Adams, an NC State man and fellow Odom Village resident and I drove over together each day and agreed that we wouldn't talk about the law on the way over or the day's questions on the way back. The night before the first day, I remember lying in bed and staring at the ceiling till after 1:00AM and I remember being so nervous I thought I might throw up sitting in the huge auditorium waiting for the morning questions to be handed out. We could take the test in the auditorium or sit at some tables in rooms in the basement. I went downstairs and didn't open the test until I sat down at the table. I think there were three questions for the morning, each a set of facts to which we were to identify the legal issue(s) raised thereby and then discuss how NC law would apply. I read all three questions and breathed a huge sigh of relief because I knew the answers to all three. All the butterflies were gone immediately and I wrote my answers in much less than the time allotted. I don't remember where, with whom or what I ate for lunch, but I was ready to go for the afternoon session and I knew those three as well. Man, did I feel great! One down and two to go. We hadn't been in the car five minutes and Adams starting asking how we answered one of the questions. Gardner reminded him immediately of the rules. By then we were out of Raleigh and driving through the sparsely populated country toward Chapel Hill and Adams asked about another one. Gardner was driving and he pulled the car to the side of the road and told Adams to get out, and he was serious, but after I negotiated a peace treaty in which Thad promised no more discussion of exam questions, in exchange for which Gardner didn't throw him out, we drove on, if I recall, mostly in silence. I supposed the three of us drove together the next two days but I don't actually remember.

Janet and I moved to Monroe where I had taken a job with Griffin (Frank) & Clark (Bob) and I started work before getting the bar results. I passed. So did Gardner, who went to work for a firm in Fayetteville and Thad, who took a job with an intellectual property firm in Charlotte. I hadn't talked with Gardner in many years but connected with him on Facebook several months ago and we had a long phone conversation as he was driving from a business meeting in Palm Beach, Fla to a condo he has at Amelia Island, Ga, but I did most of the talking (imagine that) since he has had a chronic vocal cord problem for some years and speaks with very gravelly voice. He got a masters in international law from Georgetown and did a lot of work in the telecommunications business, and had been visiting one of his few remaining clients, a wealthy guy who's trying to sell a radio or tv station. Sounds like Gardner's done very well. Thad opened his own intellectual property law practice in Charlotte years ago and he helped several clients I sent him on those kind of matters over the years. Until he retired, I used to get a clever Christmas card each year from his firm that would be imposed on a copy of the original patent of something related to the Christmas season. I'm sure he's done well, too. Two out of three successful barristers out of a three man carpool ain't bad!

I began practicing law in Monroe in Sept, 1971, and practicing is an appropriate term. UNC law school taught very little about the actual practice of law, other than in a trial advocacy seminar I took. I had never been in a register of deeds office, well, except maybe to get a copy of my birth certificate in Charlotte, or a clerk of court's office, or, except once for a speeding ticket when mandatory appearance

for a minor was required, in a courtroom. I didn't know any practicing attorneys, except for South Meck grad and fraternity brother, Ray Ledford's, who started out selling life insurance, selling me a \$10K Northwestern policy when I graduated from college, and later becoming President of Concrete Supply Co in Charlotte, brother-in-law, Charles Merryman, who Ray took me into Charlotte to meet when I was thinking about going to law school, had no lawyer relatives or neighbors. My folks weren't friends with any. None went to Matthews Baptist. Dad had limited need for legal services, except as co-administrator with his brother, Frank, of his mother's estate, having a little real estate work done when he bought the land to build our house on and the house on Jefferson St where he started Imperial, and having his and Mom's wills prepared. The NC Bar Association, responsible for continuing legal education for lawyers, put on a week practical skills course in Raleigh, to which Griffin&Clark sent me and Ken Parsons, a classmate who they had hired along with me. That may have been the first time I actually saw and read a deed, mortgage, power of attorney, various will clauses and other routine legal documents. The only specific advice I remember from that course was a lawyer telling us to always exude confidence, that when a potential client called to make an appointment, to ask him what it was about, and then to tell him you had a great deal of experience in that area, whether you did or not, and then to read up on it and ask other lawyers what they knew about it before the client came in. But there's a big difference in appearing to know what you're talking about and actually being competent. I could write a book on the incompetence and hubris I saw during my 37 years practicing law.

Though this story is entitled ENTREPRENEURSHIP, as usual, I've strayed often and far afield. Practicing law is a form of entrepreneurship and maybe I'll write some stories about my experiences therein (including, the use of short-cut words such as "therein, whereas, aforesaid", etc), but I'm ready to tie a ribbon on this package, so will conclude with two entrepreneurial stories, one I'll have to back up for chronologically, and the other I'll have to roll forward a little to tell.

I've mentioned heretofore, that is earlier or previously in this story (see how a shortcut word saves words; have I used enough words to make my point, or are further examples and explanations of word savers necessary?) that Imperial added a line of beauty, skin and hair care products, most of which were aimed at the black consumer, my brothers' and my term for all of which was "Grease", as most of them were oily substances designed to leave skin and hair glossy. My freshman year in college, after football season was over and I had a little more time for social activities, all of which necessitated money, and with the needle on my bank account pointing almost to Empty, I decided to start selling Grease literally across the tracks, which meant to the black community, in Davidson. I got some samples from Dad and went door to door, showing my samples and taking orders, a mercantiler in the making. And I did pretty well in sales. My problem was collecting. Often when I delivered the orders, the customers didn't have enough cash, or at least so they said, to pay for them, and that's where I needed a credit manager, because I was a soft touch and not a very good judge of creditworthiness. I should have gotten a deposit when they ordered and required the balance COD, should have been more of a Mr. Potter and less of a George Bailey. And, as any good businessman knows, the staler the account, the harder it is to collect and most of mine went from stale to moldy. I guess it took about two months for me to realize that I wasn't cut out to be a Grease salesman. Thank goodness I had an understanding supplier, Dad, or I

would ended up in bankruptcy, but maybe that would have been educational, my first step toward the Presidency. Oh, what bankruptcy can do for an aspiring leader of men and nations!

After I'd been practicing law for a few years, Jake Helder, who had joined our firm and Bennett Glass, another young local attorney, and I, after seeing some of our clients making money in the rental housing racket, decided that we needed to boost our meager legal earnings, so we dove in. It didn't look too hard. The guys we saw succeeding at it didn't have Harvard MBA's. We formed a partnership, put \$500-\$1,000@ in it, got a loan from the bank and bought a little brick house in Camp Sutton, the WWII army camp, some of which had become an industrial park and the rest, starter home subdivisions (starters can't afford much ambiance), utilizing the water and sewer lines the Army had installed. Janet and I rented a little house on Union St in Camp Sutton our first year in Monroe. We three young and enthusiastic entrepreneurs spent several weekends painting the inside of the house and rented it to an Adams family (I can't believe I remember their name), a couple older than we were, both of whom worked, with several kids. Within 6 months or so, we bought another one and rented it to an older black lady who had a child and grandchild or two living with her. The rent covered the mortgage payments and left us a little surplus each month until Mrs. Adams was in a wreck and couldn't work. It wasn't long before they started being short each month on their rent and we had to start putting money in the pot to cover the payment on that house. Mr. Adams was always apologetic and we sympathized because his wife had been injured rather severely and was hospitalized for quite a while, but they got shorter and shorter on their rent payments. And then the lady in the other house had a kitchen fire. I don't remember how bad the damage was but there was a deductible on the insurance which we had to dig in our pockets to cover and then she started becoming slow on her rent payments. Every month, Bennett, the treasurer, would give us the bad news and tell us how much additional capital we needed to add to the treasury. It began putting such a strain on our personal budget that I began to dread the first of the month, and finally I told Jake and Bennett that if they wanted my 1/3 interest in the partnership, they could have it and wouldn't owe me a dime. They took me up on it and that ended my entrepreneurial endeavors for a number of years.

Whatever Grandpa Caldwell and Dad discovered in themselves that allowed them to venture into and succeed as entrepreneurs eluded me for many years, but after my early fits and starts, I stuck my toe back in in later years, but that will have to be another story.

Well, as Tom and Ray Magliozzi, Click and Clack, the Tappet Brothers, used to say at the end of Car Talk on NPR, you've wasted a perfectly good hour listening, or in this case, reading another of my rambling tales but I hope you got a laugh or two out of it. Stay safe on this, what is it, almost 2 months of the Covid-19 pandemic. Remember, there are many things that only you know and they will be lost forever unless you write them down. This is a good time to do it. If I can, anybody can.

Entrepreneur Tom, May 13, 2020

