

There have been many appreciated loving and heartfelt condolences expressed since last Friday. When someone dies at almost 82 years of age who has cancer, naturally we do not hear the sentiments reserved for the young but rather hugs, and expressions such as “I am so sorry but it is a blessing he passed so quickly”... “he lived a long life” ... and all true enough. I say these things myself.

But this 81 year old, 140lb cancer ridden man is not the dad, brother, grandpa, uncle or friend we are saying our earthly goodbye to today. Rather, we are saying goodbye to a man who for us was much larger both physically and vocally. The man we helped steady on his feet last week is the same man who countless times carried us in his arms from the car - after a visit to grandparents – to our beds. He was the young man who carried his sister Iva across the muddy field during the school day where they could smoke. He was the man who would break apart anything one of his children were hurt by – whether it was a piece of furniture or another man! He was fiercely protective of his family. And yet he was the same man who humbly asked for credit from a local store one difficult Christmas Eve many, many winters ago to have a doll and a truck for his two small children to open the next day, and cried about how difficult those days were as he recounted the event to Jodi 60 years later.

His sense of humor was legendary and he loved to laugh. Even the day dad found out he had incurable cancer, he broke the somber mood as we left the doctor’s office by saying, “well, I hope there isn’t a baseball player sitting in my chair when I get home”. This was in reference to a recent favorite joke of his: There were two brothers who loved baseball. Little league, varsity in high school, triple A – they played baseball all their lives. They had an agreement that when one should pass away he would find a way to get a message to the surviving brother whether or not there was baseball in heaven. When one of the brothers passed he came to the other in a dream. The good news – there is baseball in heaven. The bad news, you are in the lineup for Sunday. Whenever he was asked if he served in the military, he would say he was a veteran of WW2 but would quickly add that he never was in combat. I still do not know if he was being humble and respectful of those who fought or if it was just a lead in to the next line he always added: “When I enlisted the enemy gave up”. Last week in his hospital bed he told me, “I feel like the last leaf on the tree and the wind is blowing”.

Besides his engaging sense of humor, he also entertained many with his beautiful voice. He really was the leader of the band – our home for many years was filled with singing, guitar music – often with amplifiers. Dad and the boys called these “jam sessions” and this summer when a sign up went around my church in the women’s Relief Society organization for those who wanted to participate in the “jam session” I thought they were getting a band together – but it was just going to be a class on canning jam. Dad received his first guitar at the age of 15. The plates at the table were turned over that birthday and under his was the \$15 he needed to order his guitar. In Japan during the war, he played for the USO.

He was handsome and as his daughters we were proud to attend daddy daughter events and the pictures of he and Fawn at the Gold and Green Ball are priceless. He appreciated the simplest of things – a cold glass of water brought to him when he was gardening. He made you feel you had done something really great for him.

Born in Bokoshe, Oklahoma on October 5, 1928 to Ezra Andrew Rogers and Serentha West Rogers, he joined his sister Iva, half brother Lewis and half sister Viola which completed this family unit until the early death of his mother when dad was just 14 months old. After his mother's death, Lewis and Viola went to live with the West family and Grandpa Rogers with his two small children made their way to Imperial, Texas. Grandpa Rogers married Lilly LeGrand Harris who had two children Robert and Thelma. Dad had an almost photographic memory and his recall of the families and events that took place during his years in Imperial gave all of us an understanding that his was a rewarding childhood and the love for his father, step-mother, sister, aunts, uncles and his grandfather was evident in every memory shared.

His dad and step-mother would later divorce and news of her death was one of the few times I ever saw my dad cry. She was his mama and he was her baby.

Stories of his years in Imperial were often about his horse, the men talking story in his dad's store, the work in the fields at home, Aunt Iva talking sweet to him to get him to buy her a watermelon. Eventually his dad sold out tearing up the notes due of those who purchased needed items on credit, saying they needed it worse than he, and the moved to California.

California would be where he would meet our mother. Terrell Leslie Rogers married Virginia Louise McGuire in an elopement trip to Reno, Nevada on March 25, 1946. Dad enlisted in the army and was sent to Japan. Upon his return, the first two – of 9 children - were born in California: Terrell Leslie and Fawn Teri. Later in Washington would the remainder of the children be born: Randall Bruce, Vance Cameron, Robin Glenn, Noel Jason, Ronnelle Rae, Joellen Leora, and Sherrell Glynn. Robby would die as an infant a few days after birth; Fawn passed away in 2002. Mom and Dad were married 62 years at the time of her passing on June 3, 2008. Dad cared for mom tenderly and attentively through the end of her life. He always called her Jin. Besides his 7 living children and 25 grandchildren and 26 – soon to be 28 great grandchildren, he is survived also by his sister Iva Rogers Divelbiss, sisters in law Shirley McGuire, Alene Gibbs, brother in law Jerry Walstrand and countless other family members.

Dad was a veteran of WWII and worked for Boeing for 37 years before retiring in August 1991. He loved to talk about Imperial, Boeing, his horse he raised as a young boy in Texas and brag about how many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He just loved to talk and tell stories. In years past, he loved to play ping pong. He had an amazing singing voice and played the guitar playing in bands for several years in California, Colorado and Washington.

He was a hard working man who provided well for his large family. Because of his work ethics, we were blessed as a family when in the early 70's what is commonly referred to "as the bottom fell out of Boeing" his superiors found a way to "hide him out" in another shop until things evened out and he transferred back. I also recall a time when Boeing was on strike and dad took a security job position at minimum wage to keep money coming in.

Dad's friend and co-worker Eldon Minning introduced dad to the Church Of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and on December 15, 1962 he was baptized. Dad's testimony I personally have heard throughout the years may best be summed up in the First Article of Faith of our church:

"We Believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost"

The scriptures tell us that those who humble themselves as children, the same is the greatest in heaven... (Matthew 18:1, 2-4)

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:1, 2-4).

Last week dad had an episode that left him without most of his memory for almost an hour. He could only recall the names of his children but didn't know them and did not know who he was. He actually sounded like a little boy when he asked "why am I in here? Have I hurt someone?" I had to assure him he had not hurt anyone and he said over and over in a child like was "I hope I haven't hurt anyone, have I hurt anyone's feelings?" And he pointed to his heart... he said over and over he hoped he hadn't hurt anyone's feelings. I thought then and there this is a man preparing to meet the Savior.

Many of you may not realize dad had written countless poems. That is why we included the last stanza of his poem "The Master's Way" in the memorial –

Continuous activity in this world,
For as we people rest in sleep,
The sun moves on another day
Will creep into the lives of others
Surely the Master's way.

I leave this remembrance with you and add my testimony to my dad's that I know my Savior lives and the sorrow of losing him here with us - however deep - is probably not a match for the joy on the other side as he returns to the home from which we all came,

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.