

# ***REFLECTIONS***

December 14, 2008

**By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."**

*John 13:35*

## **Adopted Dad**

Pine trees were not native to my hometown in northwest Texas, but at least one had been planted there. I remember when it was very small, and so was I. I remember the tree not so much for its rarity to the area, but for how it was adorned each year at Christmastime. Jack would string the lights to display the spirit of Christmas for all to see. And while Jack trimmed the outside, Millie decorated the inside.

The home of Jack and Millie was kind of like a second home to me. It was home not because of my familiarity with the dwelling, but because of the relationship I had with the people that lived there. Millie was another mom, and Jack an adopted dad. I loved them and they loved me.

Millie drew most of the attention because of her gregarious personality and the unceasing flow of human interest tales she told. Jack didn't seem to care about attention but his warm personality did not go unnoticed. Jack's character blossomed in the grocery store he owned. He welcomed every customer with a genuine smile and was always willing to help them find what they needed. I watched it firsthand. I worked there a summer or two. Jack gave me my first paying job away from my dad.

Working for Jack helped me grow up. He gave me responsibility I didn't earn, but I would never want to let him down. And I was not the only one Jack cared for. Through the years, Jack nurtured other young men in his grocery store. He also fostered relationships with the football players. Each afternoon after practice, he would shuttle some of them to their country homes because the school buses had long since departed. Jack's gesture was not because he liked football, but because he loved the boys.

I always knew that in time of need Jack would be a person I could turn to for help. I never really had to, but others did. Jack was known for his love for others.

Time moves by quickly now, but sometimes I stop to think about the tree in Jack's yard. Each year it grew a little taller and Jack had climb a little higher to trim it. I grew a little each year too, and with each of them, Jack Hamrick stood a little taller in my eyes. He was a blessing to my life—one of the many gifts God has given. I remember Jack for his warm and caring love to all who knew him.

I hope you can remember someone like Jack in your life too.

*"You are the light of the world,"*

*Richard* +

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