

REFLECTIONS

September 9, 2007

**But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's
love is with those who fear him, and his
righteousness with their children's children —
with those who keep his covenant and
remember to obey his precepts.**

Psalm 103:17-18

Paw-Paw's Legacy

We passed by other gravesites giving little notice to the elderly man that was freshening the burial place of his wife. We found our way to the large Wilson headstone and reflected quietly on the lives that had once been a living part of our own. It was the final resting place of my grandparents—the ones I knew as Munna and Paw-Paw. The quiet was broken when we heard the elderly man say, “I loved that man.” Surprised by his announcement, I turned to him and asked him what he had just said. “I loved that man,” he repeated. All I could say to him was, “I did too.”

I was taken aback by the remark, not because he expressed affection for my grandfather, but that he remembered him at all. At that time, Paw-Paw had been gone for almost 20 years. But the passage of time had not erased the elderly man's memories.

The encounter that day with an elderly man named Sam Bourland has now lingered in my mind for another 20 years. It has stayed with me because at the time it made me feel so warm for someone to have affection for my grandfather—that he was seen by his peers with the same qualities that I knew him to have.

But Mr. Bourland's comment has stuck with me for another reason, and that reason represents a standard that my grandfather set—to be remembered with affection. His was a testimony of life that was memorable enough to be recalled even many years after he departed this world.

In recent times, I have written with some frequency about my grandparents. The way they lived their lives has been such a lasting influence on my own. And Paw-Paw has probably had the greatest influence because his life has been the model for mine.

But today as I remember Paw-Paw, those words, “I loved that man,” describe my feelings the best. He was a man of great heart; and his heart is his legacy that lives on today. He loved and cared for his family and his fellow man, and he inspired those same qualities in the lives of his children.

We can only pray that his heirs will extend his legacy far beyond our own times.

“You are the light of the world,”

Richard +

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