



REFLECTIONS

November 4, 2024

...there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Proverbs 18:24b

Childhood Friend

There is no beginning I can recall. Friendship was just always there. Often, I would spend the night in the Pressley home, and James would spend the night with me. At his house, I remember playing with toys I didn't have and learning games I didn't know how to play. His large backyard hosted games of football, basketball, baseball, and many others. But come what may, Saturday afternoons would find a couple of childhood boys walking to the Palace Theater to see a western movie.

We stood on our tiptoes to slide a dime through the ticket window to Mrs. Ward, then waited for her to slide our ticket with a penny of change before we stepped to the concession for a Coke and a bag of popcorn. Then we were set for the "picture show" as we called it back then. But the movie only began our weekly adventure.

The walk home took us to James' house where we usually stopped to enact our version of the show we had seen. We each chose the hero we wanted to play, outsmart the guys wearing black hats, then rescued the captured girl from their villainous hands. James didn't like the rescue part because he said he didn't like girls. (I pretended not to like them either.)

Little-by-little, time and our maturing minds altered our interests. But sports always held center stage, that is, until one of life's setbacks struck the Pressley home.

Standing with James in our driveway, my heart sank more than a little when he told me his mother, Bonnie, had taken a teaching job in another town and they were moving away. I think childhood crashed to an unwelcome end that day. We tried to console each other with promises to stay in touch; but the promises went largely unmet.

Decades later, Bonnie's obituary awakened my memories and aroused a yearning to reach out to James again. Disbelief resonated in his voice when he heard my name after all those years. And I expressed surprise myself when he recalled how his mouth watered for my mother's chicken fried steak.

Still more years passed before we met face-to-face for a cherished few days, filled with memories and life stories that bridged those lost years after James moved away. Then, ...

October 11, 2024, an email from Linda Kay carried dreaded news, "I'm very saddened to say that James passed away yesterday, October 10th (his birthday!)" But death doesn't end our story. Fond memories keep friendships alive. Someday will find us walking, closer than brothers, to a picture show in our heavenly home, craving a Coke, a bag of popcorn, while dreaming of a mouthwatering chicken fried steak.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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