



My Dad Charles J. Troutman by Charles David Troutman



Dad grew up in Concord NC where everyone finished school and went to work in the mill. Dad's father, Charles Justin Troutman, had been a plant manager for Cannon Mills for many years. Certainly, Dad could have followed in Granddaddy's footsteps but Dad did not see himself as a mill worker. So he enlisted in the army as a paratrooper to get out of town and see the world. He returned to Concord long enough to marry Mom and then the two of them left Concord for Chicago.

What I remember most about Dad is that he could fix anything. I remember as a child saying to my Mom that I wished that Dad was not so good at fixing things. I felt as if I would never have anything new. Among other things, Dad could fix cars. I remember he always had a driveway full of cars, some that he had bought to fix up and many that he would fix for friends. Dad rarely accepted payment for fix it services. Many a weekend I remember him playing chase with those friends. I learned that the game of chase was sticking money in each others back pocket when he would not accept payment.

Fast forward to my middle school years. The environment in Chicago was not very hospitable for our family. We were protestant Christians surrounded by non Christians and Catholics.

We moved back to Concord where Dad bought a 75 acre farm. I learned the meaning of work on the farm. Dad taught me that we could fix anything including a 100 year old farm house, an old tractor and farm equipment that had long since seen better days. He began wood working and made furniture for the rest of his life. I remember that he and I made some bookcases for me that did not have a nail in the entire project. I remember that he would sand wood longer than anyone else I know. He was personally responsible for the success of the sand paper business. When it came to furniture dad was slow and steady but mostly slow.

Things I remember most about Dad include:

He never borrowed a tool. In fact he had 3 or 4 of about any tool imaginable.

He never sold a car. In fact when we sold the farm he had 25 Junkers hauled off

He worked hard to support his family, many times working extra jobs

He never saw anything that he could not fix

On weekends he would take our 62 Chevy station wagon to the dragstrip. He loved to race the mustangs and beat them bad. This was the only new car that I can remember Dad ever buying. Also the only chevy wagon I ever saw with a Hurst 4 speed in the floor.

He was great at softball, ping pong and horseshoes and checkers

He never threw anything away

He always left a clean plate

Dad died a few years ago of cancer. I miss him but I remember the investment he made in me and our family. I like to think about those good days.