

## **A REMEMBRANCE OF CHARLES DRISKELL FROM HIS SISTER MARTHA HAWKINS**

I've sat in the living room thinking about Charlie and growing up, and things do come to mind . Some I cried over a little, some I remembered and laughed about out loud. I've written them as I remembered them. This is the way they came to me, and I may remember others as I am trying to get this down for you all.

Charles Lew Driskell was born on November 2, 1929 in Waycross, Ware County, Georgia, at home. I was born on September 14, 1932, and Mom said I was such a beautiful baby people would stop her on the street to look at me. (Not now.) Charlie became a behavior problem about this time. Mom finally realized why, and every time someone would say something about me, she'd push him in front and say, "And this is my fine, nice looking son Charles." No more behavior problems.

Children had to be age 6 by November 1st to start school in Waycross. He would miss this by one day, so Mom and Dad moved out into the county so he could start - dates were different in the county. After a couple of years, they moved back into the city. I don't remember a lot about the elementary school years of Charlie, but we, as a family, were very active in the First Baptist Church. Charlie joined the church on profession of faith without talking to any of the family, and he was Baptized shortly after that. Mom then joined a new church, and Dad and I joined and were Baptized a few weeks after that. From that day on, we were active in this church until we left home.

Mom and Dad realized Charles was a "big boy" by junior high school standards; they knew the football coaches would be after him to play football. This was a time when so many of the young boys were seriously injured playing football, and they wanted none of this; so they pushed him into music. He studied and played the oboe throughout high school and college. He was very good and made superior ratings in district and state festivals and competitions. He also sang in the school chorus and church choir- large groups and quartets. I believe he sang tenor. As a matter of note, Pernel Roberts, who was Adam on Bonanza, sang bass in the quartet. They were close friends.

One Sunday night, I don't know if the entire congregation was singing or just the choir, Charlie would sit down, then get back up, sit down, then back up. Finally, I saw Mom motion him to leave and she followed him out. His face looked awful, and we were afraid he was very sick. It turned out that he had smoked his first cigar prior to church and it really made him sick - his face was slightly green. In later years, we had a good laugh about this. Mom NEVER thought it was funny!!

When he was in his early teens, Dad brought home a whiskey bottle full of homemade syrup that someone at the post office had given him. He set it on the table in the living room. Our Grandmother Lewis and Aunt Ann were visiting. Charlie came in, saw the bottle, picked it up and put on a "drunk show" that was hilarious. When he set the bottle back on the table, he missed the table. The bottle fell to the floor, broke and syrup went all over the place. He was so sorry, but we all just sat and laughed. He had given us a great show.

In high school, peroxidized hair was in - Charlie was not to be left out. He peroxidized his hair thinking it would at least turn a little red. Mom was appalled that her child would do this. It did not turn red- just more blonde / white, if possible.

During high school, Charles was sent home one day just prior to lunch for smoking in the boys' rest room. No smoking on campus in those days. He ran all the way home, insisted Mom write him a note to get back in school, and ran all the way back. He didn't want anyone to know he had been sent home. (An aside: we all called our principal "Snake" because he was always sneaking around trying to catch you doing something wrong. Needless to say, none of us liked him.)

In the summers in those years, Charlie would sleep late, as we all did. One morning Mom got him up, told him we were having none of that, and that he should get dressed, go to town and find himself a job. (This was easy to do in those days.) He came home in a little while with a job at one of the men's clothing stores. He worked there all summer, and off and on, including holidays. He always did like nice clothes and always dressed well. When he came home from flying all those missions, he had several really nice suits and cashmere sport coats that he had tailor-made in Japan. He also had some made for Jo, and even sent fabric home. He was always very thoughtful.

We had our family reunions at Jay Bird Springs near McRae, Georgia. Mom's family, the Lewises, were all proper, religious, fine, educated people - also some farmers and great cooks. Charlie, as a young boy, school age, walked in at lunch with his pockets full of jingling nickels. He had been playing the slot machines and had made a killing, for those days. Mom was totally embarrassed. However, Charlie and I both enjoyed this part of the reunion every year.

Everyone knows how Charlie loved sweets, especially chocolate. During the World War II years, sugar was rationed along with many other foods. Mom always managed to have something sweet, and she made a cake with chocolate icing and placed it on the table in the kitchen. Charlie came in that night - no one was paying him any attention - and he cut off the entire top of the cake and ate all that icing. No one really minded; we all laughed about it. Such is the way of life in a happy family!

When Charlie was in school in Tallahassee (Peggy was a baby, and maybe Sharlotte), he worked at the post office in Waycross during Christmas holidays delivering mail. As he was going to one house to deliver, he realized there was a special delivery letter that had gotten mixed in with the regular mail. Dad asked him what he did with it, and he replied, "I skipped the rest of the way to the house; I thought that was special enough."

Charlie wanted me to go to college. He told Mom if I stayed home, I would just up and marry someone. He had been to Stetson University for 2 years, and he knew our parents couldn't possibly send us both - they had enough trouble sending one. Anyway, he went into the Air Force, and I went to college. He was stationed in Montana while trying to get into the Cadet Program. He was finally accepted, and after a while, he was stationed in Greenville (I think), Mississippi. That is where he met Jo, and that's why ALL OF YOU ARE!!!

Charlie was my only brother, no sisters, and we were a close family. We did without for each other and helped each other when necessary. He wrote me from overseas - my last letter as a single person. I appreciated his caring so much, and I still have the letter. He was a good son and brother. He loved all of you, and I know he would want you to remember all the good times. Be happy, stay in touch with each other. You will never have anything more important than the love of your family, and your family ties.

One last note, several years ago when we were both visiting Mother in Alma, Charlie told me that if he had received any encouragement while attending Stetson University (which was a Baptist School), he would have become a minister. Life is sometimes strange.

I believe Charlie's love of life and family is the most important legacy he could leave each of you. Remember him with joy and happiness, and look for that bright arch just over the hill that is so well lighted and important. In Charlie's words - that is McDonalds!!

I love you, Charlie.