



A collection of memories and stories to
honor and celebrate the life of

Robert S. Hart, Sr.

February 21, 1918 – December 17, 2004

Acknowledgements

The contents of this packet were originally collected, assembled and produced by Suzanne Hart Snead, Mike Snead and family and were given to Dad at his 83rd birthday party.

Dad and I stopped off at the scenic overlook on Afton Mountain one afternoon. As we stood there, we heard the couple next to us trying to identify places in the valley below. Dad stepped up to them, introduced himself and spent the next 20 minutes answering questions about the features and the history of the region. As we were returning to our car, I overheard the wife say to her husband, "Now I know what they mean when they say 'a Southern Gentleman'". (Jay)

I loved going to the GoLo for anything I wanted in the store. (Brian)

"Don't be like the Jones. Let the Jones be like you." This quote was used when I wanted something that he thought I did not need. It was used quite often as I remember! (Bobbye)

You taught us it was all right for a man to cry. (Suzanne)

Dad was always trying to fix me up with all the guys he thought were "safe". He thought because they came from a good family that they were "good". (Mary)

"Who squeezed the soap?" Dad asked as he walked all over the house. Fifteen years later, I confessed. (Steve)

I remember the many hours spent with Dad in the basement refinishing furniture in the Mt. Sidney house. I'm still a trash to treasures guy. (George)

One reason we love Granddad is because he took the time to take CD and me to the park to feed the ducks and play on the jungle gym. (Aaron)

I recall fondly Dad brushing his teeth in the morning, singing in church, saying prayers at dinner, working in the garden and the wet cigarettes in the ashtray. (John)

I appreciate your great letters that always seem to arrive at just the right time in life. (Mike)

Dad always had an eye out for a possible mate for his kids. "She comes from a good family" meant that they had money. And he didn't let looks get in the way either, if you know what I mean. (John)

I admire that you finish tasks that you begin. (Suzanne)

Daddy Hart loves me. From the first visit to the present, Daddy Hart accepts me as me – never judging me or my actions. ("T", favorite out-law)

"You are a man in a man's world and the rights and privileges of a man are yours." This was used when I was thinking of leaving the Army after about 12 weeks of training. Damned near got me killed a couple to time in the 'Nam, but it made sense at the time. (Bobbye)

Dad had a hairbrush he kept on the bathroom windowsill of the Mt. Sidney house. "What's dog hair doing on my hairbrush?" A voice answered, "I'm sorry, Dad, I forgot to clean it this time." (Steve)

You always get the grandchildren what they like for Christmas. (CD)

Thank you for the record keeping, both written and in photos. (George)

I remember on prom night Mom allowed me to have a low cut dress. I had a date with a guy from Turner-Ashby. I had promised to supply him with booze if he took me to the dance. Anyway, when I came downstairs in the dress, Dad's eyes bulged when he saw me in the dress for the first time. "Clara, I'd like to see you in the next room." He had no intention of allowing a daughter of his to leave the house in a dress like that. After a subdued conversation with Mom, he reluctantly agreed to let me go. (Mary)

I remember taking long rides to nowhere in his pick-up truck. (Brian)

(To a small son) "Of course you're a big help. Every leaf that you rake, I won't have to rake." (Jay)

Your joyful whistling has filled all our homes. (Suzanne)

I always enjoyed the bag of fresh vegetables from the Hart garden that we returned with after a visit. (Mike)

One Sunday at the Waterloo house, Jay, George, and I were walking with Dad through the front yard. Dad was wearing his penny loafers and would wipe his foot on the back of his pants leg if they became dusty. I was mimicking Dad. It was fine until we got into the house and the smell of dog poop was overwhelming. Moral of the story: don't wipe your shoes on your pants if you have a dog. (Steve)

My first car was a 1957 Ford Fairlane 500 which Dad had signed for and I think it had a payment of about \$21.00 a month. I missed the second or third payment and Dad said the car had to go back to the dealer. I followed him to the dealer and turned in the car. Boy, what a bummer! All my buds would know that I had lost my car. I busted my ass and got the money together and caught up on the payments thinking that the dealer was trying to sell my car. About 20 years later I found out he had made a deal with the dealer to hold the car till I got the money together. Taught me a valuable lesson. (Bobbye)

Granddad is a very good person. He never lets anyone down. (Dusty)

I clearly recall hearing my Dad's voice while walking down the hall at school. (John)

Thanks for making sure we attended church – even if Bobbye tried his best to hide the car keys. (Suzanne)

Whenever Granddaddy took me to McDonalds he seemed to know every customer and employee that we saw. (Jason)

He's the long arm of the preacher's pew. He'd turn his ring upside down. I have Wake Forest permanently imprinted in my head. (George)

The pictures you took of us have been worthwhile. We enjoy having proof that we were once young and beautiful. What's more interesting, I even made some money off the copies. By coincidence there was a girl in Playboy Magazine who looked like me. Everyone thought I was the girl and was hiding a great figure under all my loose clothing. (Mary)

No matter how far away from Virginia I have lived, I could always depend on Dad to send me recent newspaper clippings about VMI and people I know back home. (Mike)

I enjoyed Granddad greeting us in French; although I never took French in my life. (Aaron)

Dad taught me how to work. Keep your nose at it and it works out. (Steve)

Dad has always gotten his and Mom's anniversary mixed up with my birthday. Countless times he has informed people that I am 54 years old (example) and then tell them that they have been married for 53 years. He has received some interesting looks till Mom straightens them out. (Bobbye)

"Lock-O-Mocka" ("T")

Dad had a firm grip on health care also. He once told me he smoked but didn't inhale. But, I have to hand it to Dad; when it was time to quit, he quit. Tenacity. (John)

I loved playing in the giant piles of leaves in the fall. (Brian)

I remember the ear thumps in church and "wait til we get home" looks you gave us to keep us in line. (Suzanne)

We love our Granddad because he always brought us out for ice cream and Hardy's anytime we wanted. (Aaron)

I remember Granddad teaching me how to drive the tractor and cutting the same grass over and over again until we had to run to the GoLo for more gas. (Brian)

Here's a lesson in composure. Steve, Jay and I had smoked a pack of cigarettes (Lucky Strikes that we'd stolen from Mr. Bill). We'd lit them at the burning pile at the Waterloo house. We had one left and wanted to take it to Dad. For some reason, we thought Dad would be proud of us. He had guests visiting, and I'm sure we embarrassed him, but he didn't get on us. (George)

You danced everyone else off the floor at Brian and Lori's wedding. (CD)

I remember Dad had planted 30-40 boxwoods that he had purchased small to save money. He instructed George and me to go get fertilizer to put around the boxwoods. Shortly thereafter every boxwood died. Come to find out we had gotten cement instead of fertilizer. (Steve)

You valued education and were interested in my progress – signed those report cards with flourish!! (Suzanne)

When we had moved to the farm, Mrs. Smith had just lost her husband. She was all in pieces. We would pick her up and take her with us. Once we took her to Mom and Dad's where she was asked quite sincerely, "Don't you just enjoy the quiet?" (Mary and Lacy)

Thanks for accepting a person into your family who does not vote the Democratic party ticket every year. (Mike)

Of all the trips we took together I remember going to Charlotte Motor Speedway for the fall NASCAR race the most. Dad said he had never been to one and would like to see what they were like. Mom, Dad, Kathy and I went and had a great time. On the way back home we stopped for dinner and as we were getting in the car, Dad said to Mom as she got in the back seat, "Come on over here, baby". Kathy laughed at the thought of them in the back seat. Mom said to Kathy, "Kathy, it would be just as funny as it sounds. (Bobbye)

You just don't mess with Daddy Hart. Ask a certain janitor and a certain preacher. ("T")

"I always said that I'd rather marry a good cook than a college graduate. But I ended up with both." (Jay)

He keeps his word about stuff. If Granddad says he'll be there, he WILL BE THERE. (Dusty)

You possess incredible determination – like the time you resolved to write me once a week for a year when we lived in Louisiana. (Suzanne)

I enjoyed getting pushed on the tire swing all day. (Brian)

"It was "I" not "me", a state of being verb requires the predicate nominative case." (Jay)

One of the earliest memories of Dad I have is his furniture refinishing in the basement. With seven kids I would sniff paint thinner too. He was always whistling around the house. And he also enjoyed playing the piano in the library. He is very musically oriented. Just pull his finger and listen. (John)

I remember coming out of one of the last family reunions where Granddad had been honored. As tears streamed down his face he said, "I must say we Harts get a LITTLE emotional at times." (Lacy)

I remember helping Granddad pick vegetables from the garden for dinner. (Brian)

"Who gouged the hole in the soap? Somebody deliberately gouged a hole in the soap. Did you gouge a hole in the soap?" (Repeat to every member of the family while holding a used bar of soap.) (Jay)

Granddad makes me feel good about school and stuff. (Dusty)

You were the first person to pay me for mowing the lawn. (CD)

You were great at finding me summer jobs and supplying the transportation to them.
(Suzanne)

"Hey, Dad, how about ole Clinton's fling thing? " Dad, being the Die Hard Democrat, responded, "George, powerful men have powerful needs." (George)

Big Thanksgivings with everyone in the family was terrific. (Brian)

I can't remember Dad being around the house much because he worked two jobs most of my childhood. He spent all his spare time paying for braces and I spent most of mine trying to get my teeth knocked out. (John)

The personal support and praise you have openly extended to me has been so satisfying over the years. (Mike)

"Good night, Granddad, see you in the morning!" He responded, "If you're lucky!!"
(Lacy)

During the time I lived with Mom and Dad in 1998-2000, I got to know him again and would not trade that time for anything – except maybe a new Cadillac. (Bobbye)

Daddy Hart always saves me a chair next to him at those big, formal, sometimes uncomfortable, delicious family get-togethers (which there are so many of). ("T")

"You're the oldest. You should know better." (Jay)

You are known for your great stories. (CD)

After driving past an unusually well-endowed young woman, Granddad remarked, "Lord, look at the hankers on her. You could feed a family of goats with those things."
(Jason)

At the Mt. Sidney house going to the garden to work: "Hey, Dad, how come Samson (our un-neutered dog) barks and whines so much more when Mom, Suzanne and Mary are working in the garden and not when I'm working alone?" Dad said, "Males always get excited when women are working and sweating." (George)

Catching fireflies out back at the Mt. Sidney house is one of my memories. (Brian)

Granddad writes me letters. I keep them all. (Dusty)

I remember Dad working in the basement refinishing furniture, shaving with a brush and cup, grading papers, going to work on Saturday and his little red "LUV" truck. (John)

I admire you for overcoming (with the help of a Bloody Mary) your fear of flying for the FIRST TIME for the joy of holding your first grandchild. (Suzanne)

"You can be as mean as a snake, but I love you anyway." (Lacy at 3-4 years old)

Picture Dad overseeing the disposal of less than legal substances down the toilet in 1973 in Mt. Sidney. I looked at Dad at one point and said, "If I stop now I can recover my investment." Dad's response was, "Continue as you are. I can make you a short term loan." (George)

"Spread it carefully. We've only got another couple of wheelbarrow loads of the "good" stuff" (known to the rest of the world as pony/pig/chicken crap). (Jay)

I remember Granddad pumping water from the hand pump in the backyard for me. (Brian)

Advice while working on the front yard in Mt. Sidney, "It's not what the other people see or say, it's how your accomplishments make you feel." (George)

Thank you for my love of music and for providing piano, organ and voice lessons. It has brought me such joy and comfort. (Suzanne)

Granddad, your fine taste in women have left the rest of us without much selection!! (CD)

"Where did you go to school?" Asked of every waitress. (Jay)

It was the first job I got after my first marriage ended. I'd gone to this long interview and asked the guy if I got the job. He said yes and asked me to tell him a little bit about myself. I told him that my parents were Bob and Clara Hart. "I slept with your father!! Why didn't you tell me? You could have gotten the job without the interview." Evidently he and Dad had attended a teacher function in Richmond and had roomed together. (Mary)

You prove that like wine you do get finer with time! (CD)

While wheeling and dealing to buy a motorcycle for less than asking price, Dad offers, "Oh, George, let me know if you're a little short of cash." (George)

"There are only three true professions: preaching, teaching and doctoring." (Jay)

Old Dogs can definitely learn new tricks...hehe (CD)

All the memories of Granddad are special. (Dusty)

"If everyone will just calm down, we'll cut the damn thing." Uttered to Suzanne and George when the seatbelt on the "new" Ford Falcon jammed on her way to college. (George and Suzanne)

"The only way I'll leave this house is feet first." (Jay)

"When are you two going to get married?" (Said to every boy or girlfriend brought by the house.) (Jay)

As a child I remember Dad going to every church event to avoid the bull work at home. (George)

The treats at Byrd's Dairy Isle were the best!! (Suzanne)

I guess it's not the big things that form our memories.

It's the countless little fragments.

The bits and pieces that make up our past.

The things that make us who we are. (John)