

## Inheritance

I recently received a distribution from the estate of my parents in the form of a check for \$25,000. What should I do? I face the pleasant dilemma of having many choices and the freedom to do as I wish because I have no debt nor expensive desires. It occurred to me I would be wise to ponder what Daddy might do in this situation.

What did he do at age 73 when he received a portion of his parent's estate when his mother passed away in February 2003? At my mother's insistence, the first 10% went to charity, which was probably Sherwood Presbyterian Church where he had been a member since boyhood, an elder, and a reliable advocate for as long as I can remember. He gave his three children (me and my siblings Becky and David) \$1000 each. Back in 2003, this was a most welcome windfall, and I had all intentions of honoring the life and work of Granddaddy and Grannie Davis by conscientious stewardship of this legacy. That money was dutifully deposited in a bank account, but it was gradually frittered away on emerging "necessities" ... childcare, doctor visits, car repairs & tires, and the like such that there remained nothing of lasting material value to commemorate the hard work of my grandparents that had generated this blessing for me.

When I gave \$8000 to each of my three children several years ago, each gift came in a notebook with eighty photocopies of \$100 bills and a strongly worded admonition to carefully record how each hundred was spent, so they could avoid the same regrets I had when I didn't document where money from my grandparents had gone.

Back to the question: What *would* Daddy do with \$25K?

He most certainly would not buy paintings or sculpture or theater tickets or concert tickets. There would be no jewelry for himself or Mamma. No fine clothes or extravagant meals or any form of alcohol, except for 70% rubbing alcohol to disinfect wounds incurred by household chores or working in his shop or in the yard. There would be nothing spent on international travel or vacations outside of North Carolina. No boat (gas is too expensive, and if you're on a boat, you're not being productive.) No kayak (even though Daddy might think it virtuous being propelled by one's own effort.) No jet skis. Not a penny would be spent on fishing, hunting, golf, or guns.

There are lots of things that Daddy would not spend his money on, and lots of things Daddy would not do!

For example, Daddy was completely baffled every time I bought airline tickets to Idaho or Wyoming to spend a week backpacking in the wilderness. I'd have to carry all my food for 7-8 days on my back, sleep on the ground in a tent, filter water from a lake or stream so I could cook and drink, and go without a commode and shower. He simply couldn't see the appeal of such extended contact with nature, perhaps because the camping experiences he'd had in his youth were of necessity. Back when tobacco was cured in wooden barns heated by wood fires or oil stoves, he'd have to take his turn spending vigil nights at the barn to make sure it didn't catch on fire which would result in a summer's work and potential income for the coming year going up in smoke.

In the days before family vacation trips to the beach became common, Daddy's idea of an extravagant vacation was a car trip to the North Carolina mountains. I remember getting a weekly allowance for doing chores. One summer when I was about 12 or 13 years old, I worked in tobacco for our neighbors. I think my pay for the entire hot sweaty summer was \$86, which felt like a fortune to me at the time. Daddy's billfold was where we kids kept our savings. We'd periodically ask Daddy "How much do I have?" He would unfold his wallet and rummage through the folded bills in a special compartment and announce the sum. It was reassuring to know that our hard-earned money was safe. (But, there was the time when Daddy ran over his billfold with a riding lawn mower. He and Mamma spent a long time taping paper money back together with Scotch tape!)

One day long ago, Daddy asked us "Are you ready to spend your savings to go on a trip?" "Oh, yes!" we gleefully shouted. It was decided that we'd go up to the North Carolina Mountains. I remember riding through tunnels along the Blue Ridge Parkway where signs warned "Lights on." Daddy would honk the horn and we'd enjoy the echoes. We stopped at a suspension bridge over a shallow river and listened to the water swirling over the rocks. We went to Ghost Town in the Sky. We were terrified and thrilled to ride a chairlift up to the top of a mountain. We rode the Tweetsie Railroad Train and were startled by a staged gunfight. Western Cancan girls danced and twirled in frilly skirts. At Mystery Hill, we paid to be duped by an optical illusion. We stayed in motels. We ate in restaurants. We got ice cream cones from Dairy Queen that were dipped in chocolate!

I remember asking "How much money do we have left?" and Daddy would give a report after fiddling through his billfold. Money was spent much faster than it had been earned, but what a glorious time we had! Looking back, I think there were a couple of lessons Daddy hoped we'd get from this: 1) Work hard and be careful with your money so that you'll have enough to splurge occasionally. 2) Money that you've earned is spent differently than money received without effort or as a gift.

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Daddy's propensity was to buy tools or other practical items to work more productively and efficiently, but he tended to buy the least expensive items available. He bought the cheapest Chinese tools from Harbor Freight... socket sets, an air compressor, sanders and saws. His string trimmers were so cheap and poorly made that their lifespan was not much longer than the summer weeds they were intended to tame. His several leaf blowers were so asthmatic that animal farts would do a better job of dispersing fallen vegetation. He cobbled together several segments of plastic pipe to make an extension with a U-shaped tip to blow leaves out of gutters overhead while he walked along on the ground. He didn't know nor would he care about Poiseuille's law which I taught every year in my physiology course that reveals that air or blood or urine flow decreases to the fourth power of the radius of the vessel. He had multiple sets of adjustable wrenches that consistently lost their grip. His sockets crumbled under modest strain. His cheap sets of Phillips screwdrivers were so polite that they would rather sacrifice their working surfaces rather than coerce a screw into soft wood. His cordless drills would faint when facing the prospect of exertion.

Daddy “economized” not just on tools, but on supplies. He bought the cheapest black plastic water pipe on the market. These lost their integrity (leaked) when the temperature threatened within ten degrees of freezing. How many times did I see him dig up a muddy section of the yard to discover splits in the pipe? Then he’d patch with the same sorry materials that were spewing water into the ground and his face. He’d return from his workshop with plastic nipples and slip-on hose clamps and have one of us turn the water back on so he could test for leaks, which appeared like those gopher heads that you’re supposed to pound with mallets when they pop up in the arcades at the beach.

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George Rufus Davis was born January 17, 1930 in Clinton, North Carolina to William Bailey Davis and Mattie Mae Sherrill Davis. Cars and trucks were becoming commonplace when Daddy was a boy. Granddaddy Davis apparently foresaw the impact internal combustion engines would have on society and became an accomplished mechanic. There is a black and white photograph of the first school bus in Cumberland County that my Granddaddy (born in 1900) is said to have driven. Granddaddy became the Foreman/Supervisor at the garage that serviced all the school buses in Cumberland County. Meanwhile, Buck (as Daddy was called then) was supposed to do much of the work on the farm, about 70 acres in Grays Creek. They had a mule, some goats and lots of chickens. The story goes that Buck was supposed to lay off some rows for corn or tobacco in the massive field in front of the house. He hitched up the mule to the plow and, as a teenager, manhandled the beast and implement to the field. This may have been the same mule that broke Buck’s collarbone with a swift kick. Anyhow, when Granddaddy returned at the end of the day from the bus garage, he commented that the rows weren’t straight. Buck explained, “They were straight when I plowed them. The sun must have warped them!” Daddy was probably impressed and overjoyed when his father reconfigured a truck chassis with a multi-piston engine to replace that mule they had been using in the fields.

Daddy’s fascination with gas-powered machines (and modifications thereto) persisted through the ages. The first car I remember him talking about was his 1947 (or maybe it was a 1954) Chevy convertible. Two-tone red and white. He came up with his own solution for the family dogs that annoyed him by peeing on his tires. He figured out how to electrify the car so that when a dog peed on the metal, they’d get a strong shock. Then he got a shock of his own when he went to open the door! I heard this story several times. I don’t recall who told it, but I do know that my Daddy liked to come up with original solutions for unusual problems.

Another story in the family lore was that Granddaddy had been asked to repair a neighbor’s car. Buck took on that task. Daddy took apart the defective component and replaced the appropriate parts. He greased it and reinstalled it. On the test drive, he discovered that the car now had one forward gear, and four reverses! At least, that’s how the story goes. I don’t know for sure if that’s even possible, but I do know that it wasn’t unusual for Daddy to “fix” something and then have to redo it. Much to my dismay, I have that same trait! That’s especially true for plumbing. In fact, my idea of hell is an eternity of having to repair leaky pipes and joints.

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I don't recall Daddy ever acting rashly. He always thought carefully about whatever he was about to undertake. He didn't commit to anything without considering options and potential outcomes. That's why it seemed out-of-character for the man I know to elope to Dillon SC to be married on January 26, 1955 after a short courtship. They didn't tell their families until after the long-planned wedding of Daddy's sister Dorothy Mae later that spring. After Aunt Dot's wedding, George Rufus Davis and Hazel Mae Ward Davis rented a small apartment in Fayetteville for a short time, and then a small house on Highway 87 a few miles south of town. They bought 3446 Wilmington Highway in 1958, the year after I was born. It has a sturdy 1700 square foot cinderblock 3 bedroom 1 bathroom house sitting on a rural acre, all of which was to be a lawn.

Daddy spent many hours "sprigging" that acre. Unsure if the term "sprig" is in common use in 2023, I did a Google search. Google defines "sprig" as "a small stem bearing leaves or flowers, taken from a bush or plant." For Daddy, sprigging consisted of inserting small clumps of centipede grass into the ground spaced several feet apart, with hopes that each clump would take root and expand, eventually filling in the gaps between the dozens of sprigs and thus carpeting the entire yard with a low-growing, resilient grass. It was a slow and labor-intensive process, requiring patience that few homeowners today have, with the sod as an option to instantly install a lovely lawn.

Our first riding mower was a Sear Craftsman 4 horsepower model that had a foldable handle atop the engine that was attached to a spring. After turning the handle several times to load the spring, one was to fold the handle, and release the spring, which was supposed to spin the engine and crank it. Daddy's rationale for this newfangled technology was that I, lacking the strength to pull a rope starter at age 8 or so (this was long before electric starters existed on lawn mowers) should be able to crank this mower by myself and thus cut the grass while he was away selling life insurance. Alas, even with Mamma's help, this starting mechanism was not reliable. Daddy would sometimes come home after a long day's work to see uncut grass and an apologetic weakling son who was unable to get the dang thing started. Nevertheless, he showed me how to use this 24-inch cut mower and seemed proud to see me doing my share of household chores at such an early age.

Daddy eventually accumulated three riding mowers. The most impressive was a John Deere 110 he obtained used in 1979. It could pull a trailer. Daddy made me and my younger brother David practice backing that trailer. It made him proud that we were skillful enough to back it wherever he wanted. That John Deere is a sturdy decent reliable riding mower now in my possession. He also had a Snapper that was great for mulching and bagging. His several other models gave him lots of headaches because they seemed to be constructed of the flimsiest materials.

Despite his consistent efforts to achieve a lovely lawn, the yard at 3446 Wilmington Hwy had big splotches of brown grass he literally fertilized to death based on his philosophy "If a little is good, more is better!" However, he did not apply that philosophy to worldly possessions, instead believing that excessive consumption is unbecoming a modest man (although he wouldn't have used those words.)

When I was about 12 years old in 1969, he dusted off his Cushman scooter that he used for a time to deliver fish in the city limits of Fayetteville in the early 1950s. He must have determined that I was old enough and responsible enough to drive a two-wheeler. He got the thing running and splurged on a “chopper” mini-bike with a 3-horsepower engine so that David would have something to ride on the long dirt two-rut “driveway” that disappeared into the woods behind our house. How my brother and I enjoyed racing! We’d start side by side at the big tree at the edge of the woods. On the minibike, David would immediately dash off to a substantial lead, but the minibike reached top speed quickly. I twisted the throttle vigorously on the lumbering Cushman but it had a centrifugal (or was it centripetal?) clutch and accelerated painfully slowly. It gradually gained speed such that as the two of us blasted past Daddy sitting in his springy chair on the front porch, it was often a tie. David could stop the lightweight minibike almost instantly. The Cushman was much heavier and had only a rear brake, which I locked up as I slid in the sand of the driveway. It would have been easy to lose control and end up skidding onto Highway 87 to be run over by a car, which is what Mamma imagined and the reason why she always remained inside during these motorized duels.

David quickly outgrew the minibike, and we were eager for something more powerful than the clumsy Cushman scooter, so Daddy splurged on a motorcycle in 1973, a brand new 100 cc Hodaka Dirt Squirt that David and I enjoyed to the max. It had a distinctive chrome gas tank. It would easily do wheelies. We could go airborne anytime we wanted by launching from a mound of dirt. Daddy loved the sound of that high-revving engine. But I’m sure he didn’t love it as much as the slow idle “chugga chugga chugga” of his two cylinder “tricycle” Model B John Deere tractor built in the late 40’s or early 50’s. That model didn’t have an electric starter. I remember he’d open the petcocks to relieve the compression so he could manually spin the flywheel to get the green beast running. He relished revving the engine and then suddenly closing the throttle to make it backfire as an orange flame plumed from the straight exhaust. On some Saturday mornings, he’d hook up a heavy homemade metal trailer with an axle from an early 50’s Lincoln and we three kids would pile in for the five-mile drive south on Highway 87 to my Granddaddy’s house. We’d each get a turn driving as we stood between Daddy’s knees, with him constantly making corrections as our paths strayed a little too far to the left or right. Come to think of it, Daddy was always concerned about us drifting off course, whether we were driving that tractor or living our lives. He was always there to offer gentle redirection.

Sometimes Daddy would pile firewood into that trailer for us to take home. Other times he shoveled in a load of sand and we’d chugga chugga chugga at maybe 15 miles per hour back home to where he spread that sand to fill mud puddles in our driveway. In retrospect, Daddy spent much of his life filling in low spots.

Daddy accumulated several tractors, and for many decades he had three. Each had strengths and weaknesses. The Model B John Deere didn’t have a hydraulic lift, so he sold it to some fellow who offered him an irresistible amount of cash for the collector item. He replaced it with an 8N Ford from the 50’s that he bought from a man named Eulon. The 8N had a modern lift and power take off which allowed him to run a bush hog. That four-cylinder Ford engine didn’t have that masculine exhaust sound of a John Deere, so Daddy bought another old two-cylinder John

Deere, a Model M, which could talk in that sweet Southern Tractor Drawl that he (and I) love so much.

Daddy's business partner bought the first tractor made outside the USA for Acme Fence Company. It was Satoh. It ran well enough to convince Daddy to take a chance when an opportunity came along to buy a four-wheel drive Chinese-made diesel Tai Chen, which had neither the character nor the reliability of American-made tractors or the Satoh. The Tai Chen would chew up the yard with its massive cleated front tires, so its utility was limited. Daddy used it mainly to level the driveway of neighbors, and bush hog wilderness where the 8N couldn't go.

My favorite was his John Deere Model M. I asked for it when Daddy died in September 2018. Shortly after David delivered it to me, I hitched up my utility trailer and paraded my adult children and two grandchildren through the streets of my swanky Woodridge neighborhood. Kiley and JJ each had their turn at the wheel while standing between my knees as we pattered along. I was surprised at how often I had to redirect their steering. Meanwhile, my daughters were chatting and giggling in lawn chairs on the squeaky trailer as the chugga chugga chugga notes echoed from the facades of splendid two-story brick houses.

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When Daddy was overlooked for a well-deserved promotion based on his extraordinary productivity as a life insurance salesman, his office manager Kenneth Adrian Williams offered to hire him to be the General Manager for KACO Enterprises, which consisted of an apartment complex, the EasyWash laundromat, and an a Robo Carwash. Mr. Williams' philosophy was to live off his earnings as a life insurance agent and invest any excess in businesses that would generate a second income. He enjoyed buying established businesses but needed someone with common sense and a strong work ethic to see that each was operating efficiently. My Daddy turned out to be the right man for the job.

Mr. Williams was good at making money, and KACO Enterprises was doing so well that every year or two, Mr. Williams had the Cadillac dealership deliver the latest model to him, which he billed to KACO Enterprises. We thought it extraordinary that Mr. Williams didn't make any choices about the color or options on his new Cadillacs! When Daddy became the General Manager of KACO Enterprises, the company bought Daddy his first "work truck." It was a red 1966 Chevy El Camino Super Sport with a chrome four-in-the-floor shifter.

I suppose this choice says much about my Daddy. It is not quite a truck but is more practical than a car because it can haul a light load. An El Camino is much flashier than a standard truck, and much more fun to drive. It was eye-catching, distinctive, and powerful, and must have satisfied Daddy's longing for something functional yet flamboyant. On Saturday morning drives on Bragg Boulevard to collect money from the coin operated EasyWash and Robo Wash, I'd sit next to him and, when he pushed in the clutch, I'd use the chrome shifter to upshift and downshift. I was not old enough to drive, but he seemed to enjoy having me learn how to drive.

After Sunday lunch at Grannie's house, he'd give me the keys to our 1967 Buick Special so I could practice driving the long sandy driveway that connected Sherwood Presbyterian Church to my grandparents' front yard.

Between April and July 1969, Mr. Williams and Daddy and their secretary Betty Hogan formed a 50%:25%:25% partnership to buy Acme Fence Company. None had any experience in the fencing business, but all envisioned this as a unique opportunity to grow. Becky recalls that the purchase conveyed a pickup truck with some tools, maybe a wheelbarrow, and most importantly the name Acme Fence Company. Very quickly the Fence Company claimed all their time and effort so that Mr. Williams sold the Robo Wash, the apartment complex, and the laundromat. Daddy's cautious nature counterbalanced Mr. Williams' propensity for grand undertakings and, with Betty managing the books, the trio enjoyed financial success after the first year. In subsequent years, following Mr. Williams's example, the partners reinvested most of their earnings to buy in bulk at deeply discounted prices, which further enhanced their profits. They developed an excellent reputation and attended conventions to learn more about the fencing business and to "network" although I never heard Daddy use that term.

At one of those fence conventions, Mamma and Daddy arrived at the hotel and asked at the desk, "Where's a good place to eat?" They were told of a steakhouse nearby so off they went. It was nothing like they had ever seen. Daddy said, "This fellow came around with a cart of raw meat and you picked what you wanted." According to Daddy, it was a good steak, but the most astounding thing was the bill. By far, it was the most expensive meal they had ever eaten or would ever eat. We asked him the name of the place. He wasn't sure, but we eventually figured out it must have been Morton's Steakhouse.

On the day I turned 16 on July 24, 1973 and got my North Carolina Drivers, Daddy sent me on a delivery in the rusty red 1966 Ford Pick-up with a four-speed manual transmission owned by Acme Fence Company. I recall being both a little nervous and rather exhilarated at being sent out solo on this expedition, but I quickly grew comfortable on streets and highways, and by the time I was 17, I was driving a daily school bus route. I know what you're thinking.... Seventeen-year-olds don't have the maturity or experience to be responsible for driving dozens of other peoples' children back and forth to school. I agree with you! But remember this was 1974 and many things that were routine then are intolerable now.

I was never old enough to drive Daddy's '66 El Camino before it was replaced with a green 1972 El Camino, but I remember being in the bed of that first red pseudo-truck on the long drives to Carolina Beach. I'd sit at the tailgate listening to the purr of those dual exhausts when the weather was good. During rainstorms, Becky, David and I huddled just behind the cab to avoid the stinging drops. Yes, I know... these days who would allow their three kids to ride a hundred miles on busy highways unsecured in the back of "truck?" But those were different times. There were no such things as air bags and shoulder belts. This was before it became commonplace to wear a helmet when riding a bicycle.

Ah, that '72 El Camino! Daddy gave it to me as my main mode of transportation when I got my driver's license in 1973. At the time, I didn't appreciate how splendid it was to have such a fine

new unique ride. I had a little money for gas because I worked Saturdays and all summer at the Acme. Daddy noticed that the rear tires were quickly going bald whereas the front tires of the same age had plenty of tread. He rightly reasoned that I was abusing that hot rod and taking advantage of that 350 cubic inch engine to smoke those rear tires. It wasn't long before he traded in that '72 El Camino for a 1974 Buick Century of the ugliest green and most hideous body style ever made by General Motors. My daily driver became the unappealing brown four door 1967 Buick Special that didn't have air conditioning. In retrospect, if I had proven more trustworthy, I would have had the privilege and pleasure of driving a really nice "truck" through my high school years.

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Great Aunt Ruby and Great Uncle Pat had a tiny ground-level cottage nestled just beyond the dunes at the southernmost end of Kure Beach. Theirs was the last private lot before the gates to the military base on Treasure Island. Some of my earliest childhood memories from 1960's are of aunts and uncles and cousins converging upon this little place. The cottage probably had no more than two microscopic bedrooms and a single bathroom, yet if I remember correctly, there'd be as many as nine adults and eight kids there at a time. We'd stay in these cramped conditions. It was splendid! The best part of all was sleeping on the screened back porch where the crashing waves could be heard all night long. Through sleepy eyes one could see moonlight reflecting off the foaming crescents as they fizzled onto the white sand that glowed gray at night. There would always be a communal family feast at Big Daddy's Seafood Restaurant where the prices were so astronomical that, for these families of modest means, such a feast could be afforded only once a year!

The good times we had there at Aunt Ruby's beach house provoked Mamma and Daddy to buy a 50 x 100 foot lot four blocks from the shore a few miles to the north in Wilmington Beach in 1968 or 1969. The parcel was completely overgrown with snarls of oak trees and vines. We'd make the two-hour drive from Fayetteville to 1413 Swordfish Lane to cut limbs and trunks and pull roots out of the sandy soil. Daddy would not or could not pay for someone to bring in motorized equipment to clear that lot in a few hours. Rather, he seemed to enjoy the manual labor that slowly revealed a parcel of land where he could set up a house trailer (as we called them back then.) Back in Fayetteville, he located an older model 12 x 64-footer that needed lots of remodeling. He had it towed to our back yard where he and his carpenter buddy Fred Comer set about making it livable. They savored this work of salvaging an already ancient "mobile home." It had tiny bedrooms on either end, each with just enough room for a full-sized bed. A short hall with a wide spot connected the kitchen/living room to the back bedroom where Mamma and Daddy slept. Becky got the front bedroom. The wide spot in the hallway wasn't long enough for a standard bed, so Daddy scrounged two cots from an Army surplus outlet that could be stacked as bunkbeds. He had a welder shorten them so they fit in that space. Of course, no standard mattress would fit on this truncated metal skeleton, so Daddy had two pieces of foam custom cut. David and I were supposed to sleep in that bunk bed, but we rarely spent the night inside. The trailer was too small and stuffy in the warm weather, with a single window unit air

conditioner located in the living room that might have kept that trailer cool if we had been north of the Arctic Circle.

The bathroom was even more interesting. Situated between what could never have been called the master bedroom and the bunkbeds just described, one could sit on the toilet and lean forward so that one's head would hover over the sink. This would be an ideal configuration for one suffering simultaneously from diarrhea and vomiting. Nothing more than accordion curtain of the flimsiest fake wood separated this tub, seat and sink from the narrow hallway. In the days before exhaust fans, there was no way to disguise any noises or odors emanating from that tiny space.

Shortly after that trailer was in place, Daddy had a cement slab poured that ran the entire length of the front of that vacation getaway. Soon a sloping metal roof was attached to cover the porch. Eventually Daddy screened in the porch and added ceiling fans. My brother and I always slept outside, even in cold weather. The back side of the trailer might have been 5 or 6 feet away from the neighbor's chain link fence. It was in this narrow space that Daddy built the most marvelous feature of this venue: an outdoor shower! The floorspace was maybe three feet by three feet. Wooden pickets from the fence company formed the walls. Spaces between the pickets assured that total privacy was not an option. Daddy rigged up water lines through the aluminum trailer wall so that hot and cold water from the kitchen was directed to this outside shower. In a display of his plumbing prowess, Daddy even cobbled together a series of valves so water could be directed overhead for showers or diverted to a lower hose to rinse beach sand off your feet. There was no drain; soapy shower water simply trickled through the crevices in the wooden floor and soaked directly into the sandy ground. Oh, what a treat it was to return barefoot the four blocks on hot pavement after several hours of body surfing to step inside this space, peel off soggy gritty swimwear, and twirl round and round in the warm water with the sun overhead and the tantalizing possibility that neighbors could study adolescent anatomy by peering across the fence into this semi-private shower. How nice it was to have the bright sun assist as we dried off with towels warmed by those very rays! But showers always had to be short! The tiny hot water tank did not permit extended enjoyment of this sensual pleasure, and there were siblings anxiously waiting for their turn.

This modest lodging sufficed quite nicely until we kids grew up, married, and recreated ourselves. That abode which had been dubbed "The Fuddy Duddy" was a bit intimate even for a nuclear family of five, so in 1988 Daddy found a bargain on a much larger (14 x 72) repossessed mobile home with three real bedrooms and two full baths to replace the original Fuddy Duddy. The porch was lengthened, and with central heat and air, 1413 Swordfish Lane could happily host the extended family year-round. The outside shower persists and remains my favorite feature of that property, now owned and superbly maintained and updated by my sister Becky and her husband Vance. Now in my sixties, I join my kids and grandkids for a week during July at Swordfish Lane. Neighbors probably aren't keen to peep across the fence at my pale skin, graying hair, and expanding belly. For me, twirling away the sand and salt in hot water from a much larger tank is still a sensuous pleasure.

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Over the years, 1413 Swordfish Lane became a burden for Mamma and Daddy. Our growing families used it less often. Frequent coastal storms would dislodge the porch screens and let bugs in where we spent most of our time. Months of living under threat of hurricanes created an undercurrent of stress and worry. Not wanting to be “those” neighbors, Mamma and Daddy would often drive round trip 200 miles in one day just to mow the grass, which required less than an hour. Daddy refused to contract some local lad to do that chore on a regular basis, so, whether at the beach or back at home, he imposed the burden of yard and household maintenance upon himself.

The roof baked day after day under the relentless blazing sun. Seams would crack open. Leaks appeared. Daddy dutifully got on the roof and optimistically mopped it with sealant, but his 200+ pounds would further stress that roof. Leaks multiplied. Mamma and the rest of us worried about his being up there over and over to no avail. That is, our worries didn’t seem to alter his behavior, nor did his patch work result in waterproofing. We begged him to have the roof fixed by professionals but as always, his insistence on economy superseded our suggestions.

I have inherited Daddy’s insistence on economy, but half my alleles belonged to my mother, who was considerably less frugal, though rarely frivolous. For example, she often insisted “Why don’t you get rid of all those pieces of junk that aggravate you so much, and which require constant attention and repair. “Buy yourself one good lawnmower. Get one that does what you need it to do. One that will crank when you want it to.” For any purchase, she would remind him, “George, you don’t always have to buy the cheapest thing available.” But she never went so far as to quote Ralph Villars, the spendthrift welder at the fence company who always said, “It only costs a nickel more to go first class.” (Ralph showed up to work one day beaming with pride. He had just bought an old Cadillac and was eager to show it off. I asked him “Why did you get a front-wheel drive car?” He swore that Cadillac only made rear-wheel drive cars. He lost a small bet with me over that claim when we peered under the hood!)

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In the early 1980’s it became possible to get subscriptions to television channels broadcast from satellites orbiting the earth. In 1984 Daddy splurged on a huge satellite dish maybe six feet in diameter. In those days, the dish was motorized so from a control panel near the TV you could aim it toward the satellite in the sky that was broadcasting the channels you wanted to watch. Daddy watched boxing and wrestling and, later on, mixed martial arts when that “sport” became popular. It seemed so out of character for such a peaceful man to be fascinated by physical violence, yet he’d watch grown men bash each other for hours and hours, this most savage behavior beamed using the latest technology from earth to space and back again.

Daddy ignored more civilized entertainment. He never showed much interest in movies or documentaries whether on satellite or cable TV even though those options were plentiful. He did watch Bob Villas on “This Old House. He’d watch dirt track racing weeknights and NASCAR races on Sunday afternoons. Often, I’d begin a Sunday night phone call with “Did you watch the cars go in a circle?”

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Daddy retired from Acme Fence in November 1997, but many years earlier 3446 Wilmington Hwy had expanded to about 3 acres with the purchase of adjacent property. He fenced a large area where he kept several goats to keep the grass and weeds under control and to entertain his grandchildren. Something always seemed to be amiss with Daddy's troublesome trios of tractors and riding lawnmowers. None had power steering, and as Daddy aged, the vibrations aggravated the gout in his hands, wrists, and elbows. With such a big yard to maintain, it became painful to drive, so Daddy finally relented at our insistence and Mamma's persistent nagging. In 2016 he bought a brand-new Kubota three-cylinder diesel tractor with power steering, a front-end loader and a finishing mower. Mowing the grass instantly went from a tedious four-hour chore to maybe forty minutes. Perhaps "tedious" is inaccurate. Becky speculates that time mowing the grass in solitude was precious time for Daddy; a time and space where he could be alone with his thoughts, yet completing what to others seems a burdensome task.

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Like my Daddy, I tend to hang on to things long past their prime if they are still functional in some way or other. Presently in 2023, my main mode of transportation is a 1998 GMC Savanna conversion van which is shedding white paint like dandruff. I use it as a work truck. My toolboxes are safe and secure inside. With the back seat removed, I can easily transport full sheets of plywood, pressure washers, and all manner of yard implements. Rain is no threat at all. "Vanna White" can tow 10,000 pounds which means I can haul mulch or any of my three lawn mowers or Daddy's Model M John Deere tractor on one of the three trailers I own. In June 2022 Vanna and I went about 2000 miles from Spartanburg to Phoenix Arizona to gather my bonus-son's furniture from his apartment there. Traveling solo and in no hurry on the westbound leg, I stopped in state parks and visited art museums in interesting cities along the way. Most nights I slept on a sheet of plywood resting on milk crates in the back. I cooked my oatmeal breakfast on a JetBoil propane camping stove. My kitchen was a little plastic folding table. I dined while watching the sun rise or set as I reclined in a folding canvas camping chair. Driving cross country was something I'd always wanted to do, and it was even more enjoyable than I had imagined. Shortly after I retire in May 2023, I intended to "go all the way" with Vanna White ending up in California or Oregon or Washington, or maybe all three! Clearly, that's not the kind of traveling that Daddy would like.

In warmer weather, I drive a 1984 Nissan pickup which was given to my son when he was in high school by his other grandfather (Joseph Phillip Palmisano.) This is a warm-season vehicle; I disconnected the heater years ago when the heater core leaked slimy green antifreeze on the cabin floor. Although I've tried in recent years, I've been unable to find a replacement heater core for this 40-year-old import. This "Little Blue Truck" as we call it doesn't have a defroster, so it can't be driven on days when the windshield is iced over. But it gets great gas mileage and can accommodate 1.5 scoops of mulch from the local landscape supply. The odometer stopped working at 166,046 more than ten years ago. It is small and light enough to drive in the yard, like a motorized wheelbarrow, which is how I use it to gather leaves and limbs in the fall. It has a two-tone paint scheme: blue in regions where the paint still adheres, and orange-brown where rust is slowing expanding. Mary Helen replicates my mother when she suggests that I get rid of

Vanna White and the Little Blue Truck and buy one vehicle that is reliable and satisfies my needs and wants. I suppose my George Davis Sr. alleles are dominant in this context because I'm happy with these two misfits and would not enjoy paying higher property taxes and insurance on one nicer vehicle.

I already have a really nice vehicle. Mary Helen and I bought our 2017 Buick Cascada convertible shortly after we married in 2017. By then I had passed my 2002 VW Cabrio on to daughter Alicia. The Pearl (as we called the Cascada) is the fourth convertible I have owned. The first two were rough red leaky VW cabriolets that were dysfunctional in multiple ways, but joys to drive. My rule has always been "If it isn't raining and the temperature is 34 degrees or higher, the top must be down!" I have gloves and earmuffs and enjoy the brisk air, which couldn't be worse than riding a motorcycle in chilly weather. I suppose The Pearl and these other convertibles are the same combination of flare and fun and functionality that Daddy's El Caminos were.

David bought a sweet talking '57 Chevy Bel Air with some of his inheritance money. That purchase makes good sense to me. A '57 Chevy was Daddy's favorite car and is also Davids favorite model. Daddy bought his '57 brand new. It was brown with a white roof. Although I'm sure he preferred the sportier two-door, Daddy compromised when bought the practical four-door model where we three small kids fought in the back seat. David's '57 is a spectacular factory blue two-door with a powerful V8 engine embellished with lots of chrome that rumbles through dual exhausts. I'm sure every time David fires up his '57, it reminds him of our Daddy who loved gas-powered machines in general and this model of car in particular. So do I. Like real estate, David's '57 will retain or even increase in value as it ages and he and Kathy and their daughters and all their friends enjoy motoring around North Myrtle Beach.

Maybe I should spend a little inheritance money to get my old '66 Ford F100 pickup back on the road. I bought it at a yard sale from a teenager for \$350 in 2002 and drove it all the way home in first gear because I couldn't make the floor shifter work. My mechanic showed me how to tug on that makeshift aftermarket shifter such that I could use all three forward gears. Since this truck didn't have lockable doors, that quirky shifter doubled as a primitive anti-theft device! I had tags and insurance on it for a few years. It became known as "The Mulch Truck." It has been sitting for the last ten years or more. It needs a new gas tank and a few other things. The timing might be fortuitous for me to get it back on the road. It is now fashionable to leave the bodywork on older models in a rusty state and simply spray over all the imperfections with clear coat. There is plenty of patina (=rust) to enjoy on The Mulch Truck.

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In the mid-80s Tia and I would make the drive from Chapel Hill to Fayetteville to visit the grandparents. On one of those trips in 1983, I spotted a home-made dune buggy for sale on the side of the road. Someone had removed the body from a 1966 WV beetle, welded a tubular frame around the perimeter and overhead, bolted in two bucket seats in the front, and created a back seat by covering a plywood slab with foam and Naugahyde. The Bune Duggy had ginormous ("gigantic" + "enormous" = "ginormous") N50 rear tires on Cragar Super Sport

chrome wheels. It had the original narrow VW rims and tires in front. Four exhaust header pipes converged in a pyramid with a skimpy muffler above the rear engine. I figured Daddy would love pattering around in this “recreational vehicle”, so I bought it for about \$850 and delivered it to Daddy who sure enough enjoyed blasting around the yard with multiple grandchildren squealing and hanging on like monkeys for dear life! Pure frivolity! Pure fun!

When El Caminos were no longer made, Daddy switched to Chevy Silverado Pick-up Trucks. He’d get a nice truck, with the extended cab, but not the fancy model. He didn’t see a need for four-wheel drive. Functional with a toolbox in the back. And he replaced Mamma’s four door Chevy Caprice with a Town and Country minivan. Practicality and versatility. Decent gas mileage. Plenty of space for his now-adult children and their families to cruise out to Hudson Bay on the north side of town in the minivan for a feast of fried sea food. Mamma and Daddy often used the minivan to bring covered dishes to special events at Sherwood.

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This meditation started out with a question: “What would Daddy do with \$25,000?” Well, maybe I have an answer or two. His first inclination might reflect his cautious nature. He might stroll into a bank and find a safe investment like a certificate of deposit. Always worried that he wouldn’t have enough money to propel himself and Mamma independently through old age into their 80s or 90’s, he tended to save more than spend. But he might take a portion to buy tools or something with a gasoline engine that could do chores (lawn mower, gas blower, tractor, El Camino) or something for pleasure (a home entertainment system -recall that satellite dish- or a go on a bus trip with Senior Citizens to the North Carolina Zoo. There was time when he and Mamma would join Uncle Bailey and Aunt Velma for trips to the gambling boat that leaves from somewhere along the Carolina coast.)

Here's what has actually happened since I first started this essay many months ago in April 2023. Sure enough, I deposited \$25,000 in CDs at Fidelity.com. Over the months, I’ve spent it in increments small and large. On Brandon’s advice, I bought a low-profile Daytona floor jack from Harbor Freight for \$139. For about \$850 I bought four used kayaks (three from a vendor on Facebook Marketplace and one in Danville VA from a roadside “for sale by owner) to go with the one I already had so that now, with seating for nine (two are tandem kayaks), the whole family can enjoy time on and in the water! I bought a used 5x8 utility trailer for \$400 which is much lighter than the 6 x 10 trailer that has served me so well for the last six years. I replaced the original 20-year-old tires on my 2004 Honda Shadow Sabre VT1100 motorcycle (purchased in June 2018 with 3291 miles) with new Dunlops D404s (\$550 installed). Mary Helen and I had a fabulous week-long vacation, a second Moneyhoon, in Maine and New Hampshire to commemorate our sixth wedding anniversary, which was good for our relationship.

Vanna White has not been good for our marriage, even though Vanna was instrumental in relocating Jordan Earle from Phoenix to Chattanooga and towed a UHaul trailer to Silver Spring, Maryland in June 2023 when I helped our friends Bob and Heidi Moss set up an apartment there.

It is difficult for me (but not for Mary Helen) to part with Vanna, who became part of the family when David sold her to me and Tia for \$2000 in 2013 when she had only 100,545 miles. Neither

Tia nor Mary Helen liked Vanna. She's too big. She's difficult to drive and park. There have been some expensive repairs (intake manifold gasket replacement, and transmission rebuild.) And she's rather dated. None of those are fatal flaws in my opinion. What I love about Vanna is her versatility; she can seat four adults in super-comfy captain's chairs and 2-3 passengers in a removable third row seat. She's a work truck, she can tow a heavy trailer, she's an impromptu mobile camper, taxes are only \$19 a year, and she's a great companion on a long trip. But her ageing systems are increasingly less dependable. Although she has never smoked, she's a heavy drinker (11 – 15 mpg). And her good looks have abandoned her. She has wrinkled scaly skin and sagging body parts that would keep an automotive dermatologist (body shop) busy for a long time. She's developed incontinence: power steering fluid seeps from a site I cannot discern though I've tried diligently for weeks. Recently, the "Service Engine Soon" light came on. It was decoded as a misfire on cylinder # 4. At age 25, with only 154,000 miles, but with mechanical issues that will only get worse like a geriatric's health, I'm finally ready to let go of this good and faithful servant, so I intend to sell Vanna to another Master now that I have replaced the spark plugs, wires, distributor cap and rotor in a mechanical adventure that extended across three days, which may not be surprising from a man unaccustomed to this type mechanic work.

Based on a very positive experience with a Chrysler Pacifica rental van when Phillip and I backpacked in Idaho in summer 2022, I bought a new travel partner I named Miss Fortune for \$21K "out the door" from Spartanburg Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram. She's a 2018 Chrysler Pacifica Touring Sport minivan with 81K miles. Miss Fortune has the "blackout" option, which means there is no chrome on her exterior. Her sporty oversize wheels are dark gray. I'll be able to camp in her inconspicuously whether in a Walmart parking lot, or at a roadside pull-off when I drive cross country one of these days. She's in excellent physical condition and has no cosmetic blemishes. She's had only one previous local master who kept her meticulously groomed. She has a strong heart (3.6 liter V6 engine.) Her two back row seats quickly fold flush into the floor, creating a space that is nearly 8 feet long and almost five feet wide. Thus, I have a stealth camper and a space to secure tools and implements. To take advantage of 1500 pounds towing capacity, I ordered a Draw-tite hitch online (\$260) that was installed along with a wiring harness at Joe Cruisers (\$322) so my new girlfriend can pull her fair share. According to the internet, she's a moderate drinker (28 mpg hwy.) On our first 700 mile round-trip to Nashville GA, we got 25-29 mpg! Mary Helen, long annoyed by the unsightly and costly Vanna White, seems to get along well with Miss Fortune, who is much easier on the eyes and who hopefully will be low maintenance!

I imagine that Daddy would nod in approval of these purchases, even the motorcycle tires, which cost an exorbitant amount! Although he was never an advocate for riding motorcycles on the road, he would nevertheless want me to ride as safely as possible on good tires. Most people and certainly Mary Helen will disagree, but Daddy and I claim, "You can never have too many trailers!" He'd be pleased that I repacked the wheel bearings and installed LED lights and wiring on my "new" 5 x 8 trailer. Daddy would have no issues buying a floor jack from Harbor Freight, and he'd approve of kayaks because they are low-cost opportunities for fun family times together. Daddy would appreciate the practicality and good gas mileage of Miss Fortune.

But something bothers me about spending inheritance money on things that will depreciate over time. Way back during my first years of teaching at Wingate College (1986-1991), a student's father passed away unexpectedly. That 19-year-old was devastated by his loss. I've forgotten his name (let's call him Kevin) but I have not forgotten what happened in the following weeks. Kevin was not from a wealthy family, but shortly after the funeral, he drives to campus in a brand-new sporty car purchased with inheritance money. Maybe he reasoned "I'll feel better if I have the car of my dreams. A car could never replace my Dad, but the pleasure of driving this car will offset some of the pain and grief." I was thinking "You just spent \$30,000 on a new car that in a few years will be worth only several thousand dollars. That's not the way to honor your Dad and his lifetime of hard work." It seemed to be an impulsive decision! How ironic it was that, of all the makes and models on the market, Kevin had bought a Mitsubishi Impulse!

I did not approve of Kevin's use of his inheritance money in the late 1980s so how can I justify buying a used car with some of my inheritance money in 2023? Surely, Miss Fortune will depreciate. Unlike David's '57, in just a few years my minivan will be worth only a tiny fraction of the purchase price. Meanwhile, there will be yearly property taxes and insurance and maintenance costs. However, I didn't make an impulsive decision, unaware of these consequences. Rather, I made a deliberate choice, with a specific plan in mind....

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Tia and I moved to Spartanburg in 1993. We had a 1986 Ford Econoline van that we had bought in 1988 when Phillip was born, and our 1982 two door VW Rabbit was not big enough for a family of five. We also had a tiny blue four-door Chevy Chevette. On the weekends, I'd take the kids up to the mountains. If Tia came along, we'd take the Econoline. If it were just me and the kids (aged 8, 7, and 5) I'd drive the Chevette. We'd explore hiking trails at Ceasar's Head and Jones Gap State Parks. Hooker Falls in Dupont State Forest was only six tenths of a mile round trip along a sloping trail. We discovered a trail to Bradley Falls that required us to take off our shoes and wade across a creek. We'd drive up to Lake Lure and play on the rocks and boulders in the stream that flows at the foot of Chimney Rock. A few times we floated down the Green River on inner tubes. We had several camping trips for white-water rafting on the Nantahala River. Closer to home, we'd stroll the trails at Croft State Park. We'd take our time and enjoy nature, especially the fall colors along the Blue Ridge Parkway in October. All these adventures and the precious memories we have of them depended on gas-powered transportation.

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On October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Alayna, Barry, Kiley (age 7) and JJ (age 6) arrived at my house (209 Longleaf Road) at 8:30 a.m. just as we had scheduled. We loaded up Miss Fortune for a day trip to enjoy the fall colors in the North Carolina Mountains. We hiked to Triple Falls and Hooker Falls in Dupont State Forest. Miss Fortune tiptoed her way along the single-lane gravel Forest Service Road 475B in Pisgah National Forest where we stopped so that Kiley could lead us up the Sun Wall Trail to Looking Glass Rock. JJ took his turn at the front coming down. Kiley and JJ collected colorful leaves from those trails that they brought home. We took in some spectacular scenery at an overlook on the Blue Ridge Parkway where Kiley, JJ and T-Pa (that's

what the grandkids call me) sat on the grass and snacked on some Belvita cookies and grapes. As we drove through the many tunnels on the Parkway heading east, I rolled down the windows and honked the horn so that JJ and Kiley could hear the echoes, just like Daddy did when he drove us along the Parkway five decades ago.

Miss Fortune will grow old and unhealthy. She will eventually end up as scrap metal. One day I hope my carcass will be dissected by medical students. Meanwhile, my plan is for that van to transport us to many happy family memories that will persist long after she and I have expired. That's one way I intend honor Daddy.

Thank you, Daddy, for living and spending so carefully and cautiously, and for passing along to us, not only money, but a sense of frugality, functionality, with just enough frivolity to make life the joyful adventure that it is!

G.R. Davis Jr, November 2023

Who knows if I'll ever get around to sifting through boxes of family photos for pictures that illustrate the contents of this essay, so I'm including these from the internet so you'll have some image of the things I described.



An example of a mule pulling a plow of the sort that Buck used as a teenager on the family farm in Gray's Creek.



Daddy's first riding mower was a Sears Craftsman Model that looked similar to to this one. Notice that funky "steering wheel." Tires came from the factory with absolutely no treads at all. Consequently, several times when Daddy was mowing a little too close to the ditch in the front yard, the mower slipped over the edge and landed upside down. Each time Daddy escaped without injury!



A "chopper" minibike like the one David rode as we raced on the dirt driveway next to the house.



An example of a Cushman scooter that Daddy stored in his workshop until he thought I was old enough to handle it.



An example of a 100 cc Hodaka Dirt Squirt.



An example of a Model B John Deere. As a grown man, Daddy enjoyed riding his “tricycle” with that distinctive “chugga chugga chugga” exhaust sound!



An example of a 1966 El Camino Super Sport. Daddy’s looked like this!



Daddy with his 1966 El Camino in the driveway of 3446 Wilmington Hwy.



Our 1972 El Camino. Ours was a light green with a darker green vinyl top. In the background is the first trailer that Daddy had towed to our back yard so he and Fred Comer could freshen it up before it was hauled to the lot at 1413 Swordfish Lane, Carolina Beach.



Mamma and Daddy with our 1967 Buick Special. It was the base four-door sedan without air conditioning.



An example of a mid-1980s Chevette. Ours was this shade of blue.



GR's mid-1980s VW Cabrio didn't have heat but it sure was fun to drive!



David's 1957 Chevy Bel Air two-door hardtop.



Mamma and Daddy with GR and their 1957 Chevy, probably in Bladenboro, NC where Hazel grew up on a farm.



George, Hazel, David, Becky and GR at Tweetsie Railroad Jail. We had saved our allowances for months to make this trip to the North Carolina mountains.



GR, Daddy, and Mamma camping at the Outer Banks. Notice Daddy with the “thumbs up” sign, which I don’t think was really how he felt about camping.



The lot at 1413 Swordfish Lane when purchased. We cleared the property ourselves. Mamma is at the trunk of the 67 Buick. David has a shovelful of roots. Daddy is raking along what would be the fence line. Becky in the background was doing something when GR took a break



Daddy had this bigger trailer towed to 3446 Wilmington Hwy where he and Fred Comer got it ready to replace the smaller trailer at 1413 Swordfish Lane.



1413 Swordfish Lane after the front screened porch was complete.



GR helping Daddy install the back porch and outside shower at 1413 Swordfish Lane, Carolina Beach



Alayna near the outside shower at Carolina Beach



GR installs the channel where the panels of the aluminum porch would be inserted. 1413 Swordfish Lane, Carolina Beach



The Davis Family at 1413 Swordfish Lane. This is before Erica and Victoria were born.



Alayna driving Granddaddy's John Deere 110 Mower



Granddaddy with Phillip on the John Deere mower.



Phillip rides in his Granddaddy's heavy trailer built from the Lincoln rear end while GR drives the John Deere mower. This is the trailer Daddy hauled behind his tricycle Model B John Deere tractor five miles south on Hwy 87 to the farm where he grew up. We three kids would ride in this trailer on Saturday mornings!



Daddy kept a garden plot in the side yard of 3446 Wilmington Hwy. Here he's using his plow behind the 8N Ford. We grew butter beans, peas, and tomatoes (fertilized by rabbit poop when GR had a group of New Zealand white rabbits.) Our one buck we named Hobart had a harem of females which he happily kept pregnant. Hobart had a good life!



Granddaddy with Phillip on the 8N Ford.



Daddy using his Tai Shan tractor to spread dirt in the back yard of 3446 Wilmington Hwy.

The grandkids enjoying the Dune Buggy!

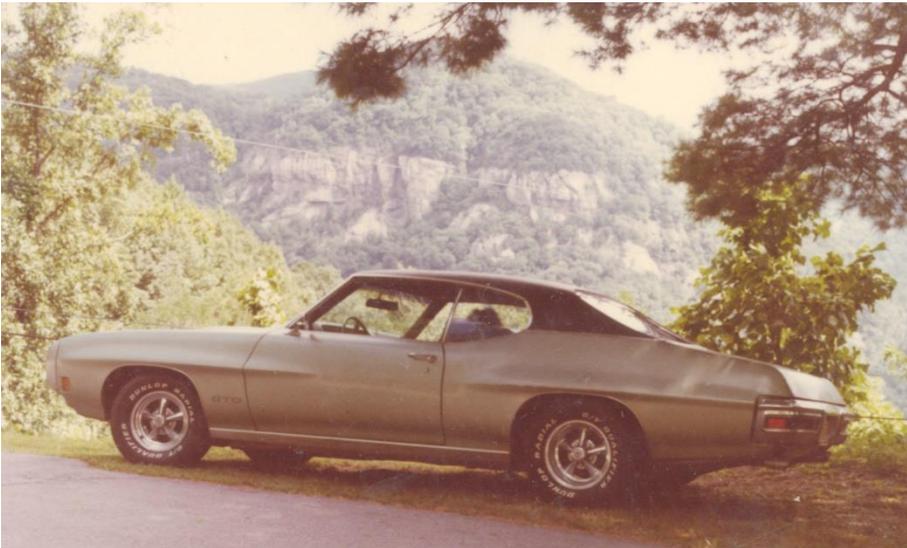








First school bus in Cumberland Co.  
Believed to be 1915 Kistler Truck  
W B Davis, Sr. -Driver & Mechanic  
Estimated pay \$6-7 per month



GR's 1970 GTO. Of all the cars GR ever owned, this was his favorite. He bought it for \$650, drove it to Campbell College. He took his suite mates for a very fast and impressive joyride. When he returned to dorm parking lot, the 400 cubic inch small block engine sounded like someone had

tossed in a few rocks inside. GR had to call Daddy to bring a trailer so The Goat, as this car was called, could be hauled to cousin Bobby Ward's shop. Bobby rebuilt the engine for \$700. Note that the repair was more than the purchase price. In 1982 when he was a poor graduate student at Chapel Hill, GR was sad to part with this car for \$1500. It was replaced with a 1982 VW Rabbit, the first new car GR ever bought,. Daddy was astounded when he found out the monthly payments on that Rabbit was \$65, which was about what his mortgage payment was on 3446 Wilmington Hwy. Sticker shock persists over the decades. In December 2023, 1970 GTOs are listed for sale on Classic Cars.com for \$44,000 and more.



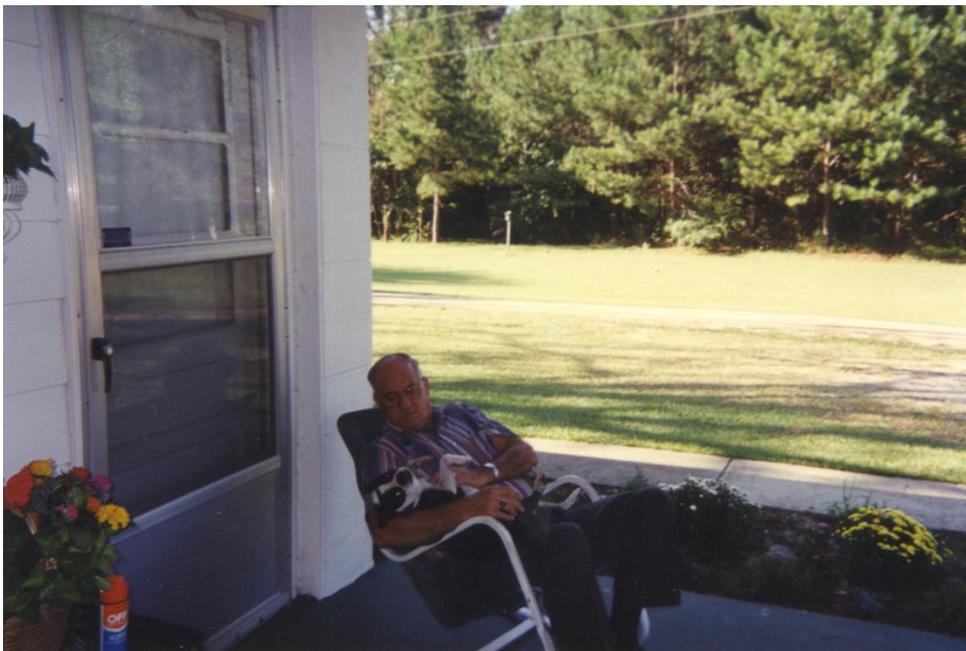
Daddy traded that 1972 El Camino for this 1974 Buick Century. This became the family car. It was a most hideous shade of green, but it was our first family car to have air conditioning.



The 1967 Buick Special that GR drove after Daddy traded the 72 El Camino. On the right is the Ford Pinto wagon that was the first car GR bought and paid for. Daddy seemed proud that GR had established good enough credit to get a loan to buy this used car.



Mamma and Daddy with GR's Ford Pinto Wagon, which Aunt Dot named "The Mean Bean." GR did the pinstrip flames coming from the front wheel wells. Incidentally, Pintos had a reputation for exploding during rear-end collisions!



Daddy spent countless hours in his favorite chair on the front porch. From this spot he could watch GR and David race the Cushman scooter and the Minibike on the sandy driveway.



The 1966 Ford 150, known as The Mulch Truck in the back yard of 102 Carrollwood Lane, Spartanburg.



Our 1984 Ford Econoline 150 we bought just before Phillip was born in 1988. We transitioned from a two-door VW Rabbit to this spacious warehouse on wheels. This was our first van. It made many trips between the Carolinas and Columbia, Missouri where we lived from 1991 to 1993. Tia would “administer justice” from her captain’s chair where she had a mirror to monitor the misbehavior emanating from the back seats.



Phillip riding the Hodaka Dirt Squirt in 2003. Nanny and Granddaddy look on from the back yard at 3446 Wilmington Hwy. The chrome gas tank had been removed to be treated for a rusty interior.



Daddy couldn't understand why anybody (including GR) would want to hike several days into the wilderness just to see scenery like this in the Middle Fork region of the Wind River Range on this summer 2011 trip.

