

# Autobiography

## Ancestors – Father's Side

- My Grandfather
  - Ran lots of small business, including a grocery store
  - Never knew him – died long before I was born
- Uncles (Father's four Brothers) – all ran business's at one point in their career
- Father
  - Grew up in same small town as I did
  - Due to his father's polio he had to drive him around when only 10
  - His father died when my father was in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, he was youngest of 5 boys and only one still home so he had to take care of his mother.
  - He and my mother met in the 8th grade
  - Because he had to take care of his mother he had to turn down a college athletic scholarship
  - He worked at Caterpillar out of high school
  - He was then drafted into the Navy during WWII & I was born while he was gone
  - After WWII he went back to Caterpillar
  - He then quit & went to work for a small Heating & Electric business
  - Soon the owner died & he bought the business
  - He has been running that business ever since
    - He does such high quality work people search him out
    - I worked for him for 4 summers – 5 ½ days/week
    - Working with him had a huge influence on how I treat customers
  - Quiet, doesn't express feelings

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## Ancestors – Mother's Side

- My Grandfather
  - Gone during WWI when my mother was born
  - Farmed for many years, owned a trucking company, carpenter
  - Lots of fun to be around
- My Grandmother
  - Lived in very small (200 people) town, but always at our house or we went to stay with her
  - Was postmistress (our first home)
- Uncles/Aunts – None (my mother was an only child)
- Mother
  - Grew up on farm with no electricity or running water
  - Early education was country one room school
  - She went to the University of Illinois
  - Taught in Peoria for a year until Principal saw she had gotten married and she had to resign (married women couldn't teach)
  - After my sister was in 4<sup>th</sup> grade she started teaching again
    - First it was girls PE
    - Then English
  - She is very active in our church
  - Outgoing, expresses her feelings
  - Has a huge positive influence on me
- Sister - 5 years younger than me
  - Never in the same school at the same time due to 5 year difference
  - Wants to marry a minister

# Autobiography

## Personal – Elementary through Junior High School

- Pre Elementary School
  - Very Small Town (200 people)
    - Living behind the post office – Mom's Mom was Postmistress
    - Sister being born (I was 5 years old)
  - Small Town (400 people) – 3 miles away
    - My dad buying the Heating & Electric business
    - Buying our house – in town with corn fields on two sides
    - Great grandfather, grandfather & father lived there
- Elementary School (small 400 person town only – 13 kids)
  - Coming home for lunch with family
  - Pickup sports (not having enough kids)
  - Riding our bikes around town
  - Playing Little League baseball
  - Winning Area Little League Championship
    - Hitting a grand slam homerun to win one of the games
- Junior High (our 400 person town & a 2,000 person town combined – 40 kids)
  - Having to ride the bus to the 2,000 person town every day during Junior High (High School was in my 400 person town)
  - Mother started teaching girls PE when I started in Junior High
    - She taught Jr High in the morning & Sr. High in the afternoon
    - Hard to have your mother teach in your small school, raised expectations for me
  - Taking individual academic classes
  - 7<sup>th</sup> Grade
    - Merging with other town kids (27 of them and 13 of us)
    - Becoming friends with Bud because I missed the bus (now my closest long term friend)
    - Having Sally asking me to be her boy friend
    - Finishing 4<sup>th</sup> in State Baseball Championship
    - Playing first serious basketball
  - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade
    - Winning State Baseball Championship
    - Continuing loving basketball
  - 9<sup>th</sup> Grade
    - Little serious basketball because most 9<sup>th</sup> grades were part of senior high & played on JV teams
    - Winning American Legion Award
    - Attending Boys State during the summer
  - Being on the Honor Role every year

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## **Personal – Senior High School**

- Senior High (40 kids)
  - Sophomore
    - Hitting a triple my 1<sup>st</sup> at bat
  - Junior
    - Winning league in baseball during junior year
    - Working really hard to become the best player on the JV basketball team
    - Loving basketball more than baseball, but realizing I was not as good at basketball
    - Being in Jr Play
    - Playing baseball with 20 year olds during summer & having a game inside the Joliet Maximum Security Federal Prison
  - Senior
    - Having the top batting average during senior year
    - Being in Senior Play
    - Falling in love for the first time
    - My college process
      - Wanting to go to Air Force Academy and be a jet pilot – had an alternate appointment, but flunked physical
      - Math & Science teacher (only one for entire high school) said I should be an engineer, so I did
    - Loving to play basketball, but not as successful as in baseball
    - Getting very good grades with a modest amount of work (2<sup>nd</sup> in my class)

## **Professional – Junior High & Senior High**

- Junior High
  - Working on farms bailing hay & cutting weeds out of fields
  - Mowing yards
  - Starting youth church group & kids making me leader for 3 years
- Senior High
  - Town choosing me to coach the Little League team (never had a high school kid do that – we only won one game)
  - Being chosen as President of the Letterman's Club w/o running for office
  - Being chosen as Senior Class President w/o running for office
- Worked for my father – 5 ½ days per week
  - Summer after: 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>
  - Apprentice electrician, plumber & heating/air conditioning
  - My father was a master at all these trades

# Autobiography

## Personal - College

- College – Freshman
  - Living away from home
  - Shock of engineering school vs. small farm area high school
    - Look to your left & your right – they won't be here when you graduate
    - Other kids had freshman Calculus, Physics, Chemistry
    - I had never heard of Calculus
    - Getting B's & C's my 1<sup>st</sup> semester – feeling like a failure
    - My roommate dropped out after 1<sup>st</sup> semester – background just like me (including my name)
  - AP Calculus to Regular Calculus - 1st decision of my own
  - Learned how to study
  - Making friends in dorm was easy
  - Playing on intramural basketball team – realized I was really good (for a small engineering school) and could be playing on the varsity, but it takes too much time.
  - Joined fraternity in Jan – those guys turned out to be my college friends
  - Starting catcher on baseball team in Spring
- College – Sophomore
  - Switching from Civil Engineering to Electrical Engineering
    - Half way through 1<sup>st</sup> Semester
    - Way behind rest of EE class
  - Tough group to be on a curve with
  - Moved off campus into fraternity house
  - Fraternity sports was a big thing – our fraternity won all 3 that year: football, basketball and softball
- College – Junior
  - Lived in officers room in fraternity house
  - Now heavily into Electrical Engineering course work
  - Realizing how much of a grind engineering has become
  - Can see light at the end of the tunnel – senior year not so bad, last semester is almost no work.
  - Outside work (Newspaper, VP Fraternity projects) hurting my grades so I drop baseball
  - Fraternity won all 3 again that year: football, basketball and softball
  - Big flap over going to fraternity national convention
  - Decided to move out fraternity house into an apartment for senior year.

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## Professional - College

- College – Freshman
  - During Year – no roles
  - Summer job – two choices & took going back home
    - Civil Eng. type job – surveying high water marks for flood control
    - Going back home & working on county road crew – blacktopping roads
- College – Sophomore
  - During Year
    - Elected VP of Fraternity in Spring to serve for my junior year
  - Summer Job: Detroit Edison - Generating Equip Purchasing
    - Lived with a family who had son my age
    - Became really good friends with all of his friends & had a ball
    - Fell in love with one of his friend's older sister
- College – Junior
  - During Year
    - Founding college newspaper - Loving being the publisher & finding creative people
    - Managing Homecoming Display Project
    - Managing Rush Brochure Project
    - Elected President Student Body in Spring to serve for senior year
  - Summer Job: Indianapolis - Indiana Bell - Field Training
    - Told I did not have personality to be in sales – trying to figure out what that means
    - Lived with fraternity brother's family
      - Had to move out mid summer when fraternity brother got married and moved his new bride into the house
      - Made new group of friends