John D. Handley

**Life Story of John Daniel Handley**

*Born August 30, 1954*

**Early Life**

I was the first Handley to be born in a hospital. I am the fourth child from the bottom—it’s too hard to count from the top.

From a young age, I loved helping Daddy work, so the family nicknamed me *Cutter*. At the age of seven, I was outside helping Daddy cut wood for the heater. When I went inside to warm up, I stood too close to the heater, and the flame jumped on me. I began to run, and that was the last time my brother Joshua was able to catch me. I was severely burned on my left leg and could not return to school that year, so I was retained in the first grade.

I can still remember seeing my brother David for the first time when he came home from the Marine Corps. That same year, we had the best crop.

**Moving to Pine Bluff**

Our family later moved to Pine Bluff, Arkansas. What intrigued me most was that we had a telephone and a toilet that would flush. I also remember having two beds in each room, with three people sleeping in each bed.

Momma and Daddy even took in one more person—Bob Ware—who lived with us until he finished college.

**First Jobs**

At the age of fourteen, I started my first job at Jefferson Regional Medical Center, making $1.75 an hour. At that time, you had to be sixteen to receive a Social Security card, so the hospital kindly put my hours on Daddy’s check. When I turned fifteen, the law changed, and I began receiving my check in my own name.

I gave my parents everything except $25. I worked at JRMC until I was eighteen years old. At that time, while still a junior in high school, I began working at Standard Brake Shoes—school during the day and work in the evenings from 3–11 p.m. I worked there for two years.

In 1976, I began working at International Paper Mill. Thirty-eight years later, I am still there.

**Family Life**

At the age of seventeen, I met my wife, Brenda. I married her two days after her high school graduation. To this union, we had three daughters: **Taneisha, LaShunda, and Jerricka Rose**, and were later blessed with two beautiful granddaughters.

**Faith and Service**

I was baptized at an early age and was a member of Union Hopewell Baptist Church. In 2000, I joined Mt. Harmony Missionary Baptist Church.

I was ordained as a Deacon on August 3, 2014. I also serve as Sunday School Superintendent and as a member of the choir.

**Work Ethic and Legacy**

Now you can see why they nicknamed me *Cutter*. I have worked for forty-six years and have only been laid off once, for nine months.

If God continues to bless me with health and strength, I will continue to work and serve. This is my story, this is my praise.

To God I give all the glory for blessing me with my family—the Handley family.