

# LAMENTATIONS

Issue 55

M.I.D.D.L.E.

April, 1997

When our nephew, Wayne Perkins, wrote about the *middle* last month, it has revolutionized my way of thinking about the process of grief and how we deal with it. I have now changed the subtitle from **S.U.C.C.E.S.S.** to **M.I.D.D.L.E.** It has made me realize that striving for success may be impossible, but finding the middle is more realistic.

*Middle* is defined as: equally distant from extremes or limits; central; being at neither one extreme nor the other; intermediate; intervening between an earlier and a later period of time; an area or point equidistant between extremes; a center; in between; intermediate between active and passive; the position of being among or in the midst of something.

When we are in the *middle*, we are between the known and the unknown. That is true with our grief. We have known the joy of our child, now we have to find the middle in the unknown of our grief and where it will take us. It will not leave us where it finds us. We will be different, and that difference can be enlightening.

In Gerald Sittser's book, **A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows Through Loss**, Sittser's wife, daughter and mother were killed by a drunk driver. Sittser believes that *"recovery" from such loss is an unrealistic and even harmful expectation, if by recovery we mean resuming the way we lived and felt prior to the loss.* But he feels that it

is possible to live in and be enlarged by loss, even as we continue to experience it. Sittser also feels that now *life is a little less sweet, death a little less bitter.* That is finding the middle.

Charlie Walton has written a new book, **Packing for the Big Trip: Enhancing your Life through Awareness of Death.** His other book, **When There are No Words**, taught us to share each other's grief by hugging. Mr. Walton's two sons, Tim and Don, died 12-15-86.

In his new book, Walton stresses that *our own death is a certainty, and our quality of life is going to be tied directly to the degree to which our philosophy of life includes a philosophy of death. An honest perception of life and death has the ability to change what many consider life's ultimate catastrophe into one of life's most creative and constructive motivators. Death awareness is about living, not dying.*

Walton told of a Buddhist parable explaining how death touches everyone's lives. There was a woman who could not accept her son's death. She begged the Buddhist priest to perform a miracle and return her son to her. He agreed to do so if the woman could bring him a handful of mustard seeds which she must collect from families that have not been touched by death. She was unable to obtain any. She then realized that she must give up the hope of a miracle and must accept his death and accept her own journey of grief. (Finding the middle of acceptance)

How much better if we could look at death as a successful completion of one phase of existence and the loving departure for the next phase.

Mr. Walton described our view of death as a pendulum. When a death occurs in someone else's family, the pendulum is at one extreme, when it happens in our family, the pendulum swings to the other extreme. *Perhaps the most common factor of human empathy is familiarity with the experience that the sufferers are going through.*

*It is by overcoming the fear of losing that we gain the emotional security required to take life's big risks. It is our philosophies of death that will enable us to live decently and die well. We should have the philosophy of living without hesitancy... loving without reservation... facing death without regret... a philosophy that life extend, beyond the grave makes possible victorious life even in the face of apparent life tragedies.*

Mr. Walton ends this thought-provoking book with this statement:

*As I made death a natural part of my life... I was better prepared to live my life to the full... putting more life in my years and worrying less about the years in my life..*

I feel relieved that I now only have to find the **middle** of acceptance of Young Jim's death. That is enough. How about you? Does this make sense to you?

**Tempus ebar rerum**  
(You will be safest in the middle)  
Ovid (43 B.C.-A.D. 18)

## Grief Grafts

I highly recommend Charlie Walton's book. If you are interested in ordering it, you may call 1-800-977-2282. (The Pathfinder's Publishing Company is in California so they are 3 hours behind us.) The price is \$9.95 plus shipping.

Marcia Carson's son, Dell (12-22-69), was murdered 12-15-91. Marcia shared her thoughts about time:

*While lying in bed last night, I was thinking, as usual, about Dell. I wish the whole world could have known him. As it was, more people knew him than I imagined.*

*While sitting in bed and feeling sorry for myself, I began to read some poems that I had written that were not so sad. Here is one about time. Since my son's death, I have discovered the many different phases of time. There is the time that seems to take forever; when my grandson is waiting for his birthday party. There is time one waits in line; there is the time spent napping, but there is no time like the time after the death of a child..*

### Time

*He was here like a mist in the night  
For a little bit of time-  
It's just not right.*

*Time is a liar-- Time is a cheat  
You try to beat time-  
But you get beat.*

*Time is a fooler  
Time is an "it"*

*Time is a string, just a little bit.*

*Time is not happy-- Time is not glad  
Time steals memories  
And keeps you sad*

*Time is a thief that comes in the night  
Time is a mad dog-hunting a fight*

*Time is a healer-- Or so they say  
I do not have time to see it that way.*

Marcia also wrote this poem on the fifth anniversary of Dell's death:

## IN MEMORIAL

*They tell my head that you are gone  
But my heart says you are at home  
They made me sit in that church one  
day  
They all pretended you had gone away.*

*It is five years since I have seen your  
face  
Five long years without your sound in  
the place  
Without your smile to brighten the  
gloom  
Without your music in your cluttered  
room.*

*Five years, Son, I have to go on  
Waiting and waiting, knowing you are  
gone  
I gaze at your pictures, so handsome  
and fine  
I am so proud of you, Son of mine.*

*I know God called for my firstborn  
child  
You were here only a short while.  
I try to smile, I try to be brave  
I still sit daily at your grave.*

*We will be together, This I know  
One day soon, He told me so.  
Until then, sleep on, my Son  
Your time in heaven has begun.*



*Love,  
Your Mother*



Dell's symbols are boxing gloves and a unicorn.

Jeff and Karen Jensen's 4 children, Jason (8), Jeremy (7), Ann (5), and Brian (3), died in a house fire, 1-17-92. Karen shares:

*My husband and I are self-employed dairy and beef farmers. Five years ago we lost 4 of our children in a house fire. We had a kerosene heater that was given to us a year and a half before the fire. That morning, Jeff and I left the house to go milk cows, leaving our 4 children in the house, sleeping, until it was time for the oldest 2 to get ready for school.*

*While Jeff and I were outside milking, the heater malfunctioned, causing the house to catch on fire. We could not get in to save our children. The fire department rescued all 4 children;*

*all unharmed from the fire except for the smoke.*

*Today we are still farming and still living on the same place with a new house that is only filled with memories of our 4 children. We now have 2 sons, Scott (2 1/2) and Travis (3 mos.), and a good possibility of another on the way.*

Regina (2-8-63), the daughter of Charles and Betty Morgan was killed in an automobile accident with her cousins, Ronnie Adams and Kristy Adams, 12-8-90. Betty described Regina (Darlene):

*Our daughter was born on a cold winter day. From day one, she was a joy to us. As she grew and matured in life, her goal was to help and work with children. This love and compassion she had for kids in need led her to become a social worker, to which she freely gave of her own time.*

*She was a graduate of South Laurel High School ('81), Sue Bennett College ('83), Cumberland College ('86), and would have graduated from Kentucky State in 1991.*

*Our daughter's life was ended on December 8, 1990, along with her two cousins, Ronnie Lee Adams (7) and Kristy Adams (11). Their lives were ended in a car crash due to a drunk driver.*

*Darlene was a loving and caring person. She was always willing to give of herself and made time for anyone who needed her. Not only was she a special person to all who knew and loved her, she was my daughter and best friend.*

Janet Barrett, a friend, wrote:

*We were acquaintances at first, and later became best of friends. She was always there for her friends and made time for each of them. Her job took her away from home, but we kept in touch by phone, cards and letters. Just a phone call from her could make my day brighter.*

*I miss being able to share special happenings in my life with Darlene, and when times are tough, not being able to talk with her.*

*I wish she could see how my son, Travis is growing into a young man. They adored one another. They used to play a game called "tackle," where he*

would dress in a football uniform and charge at her. Darlene would take Travis "cruising" and they would listen to the latest music. Travis was six years old when Darlene was killed and he remembers Darlene as "a caring and loving person, who was never mean and seemed as if she would never hurt a soul."

We think of Darlene from time to time and we miss her.

Darlene's symbols are an angel and a rainbow.



Ronnie and Mary Adams' son, Ronnie Lee, Jr. (11-29-83), was killed by a drunk driver with Darlene Morgan and Mary Adams, 12-8-90. Ronnie Lee's symbol and his life are explained:



I chose the star as his symbol because he shined so brightly through eyes and his smile, as well as his laughter. Now he shines brightly up in the sky. The angel was chosen because he is my guardian angel watching over me here on earth as well as in the heavens.

Ronnie was in the first grade at London grade school. He was so loved by his classmates and his teacher. He was like the class clown of the class. He seemed to make people love him. There was something so special about him, people enjoyed being with him. He cared for people as well as life. But, if he did not like you, he would tell you why.

I miss him so badly, he was more than my son, he was my best friend as well. I miss him coming out of school with smile on his face, handing his school work to me, saying, "Are you proud of me?" I miss his laugh, his cry, even when he was silly. He always made me laugh. He would put his arms around me and tell me he loved me. We would always do things together. We played together. I would watch him do his homework. We would go places together, sit and watch TV, movies, cartoons. We would sit on the front porch together and talk about things that happened that day. I taught him his colors from the outside, and his

numbers, too. I taught him to care for other people and their feelings. We always told him we were proud of him and we loved him. We also told him we would be there for him, always. I remember him telling me at night, as I put him to bed, "See you tomorrow. Don't let the bed bugs bite you. I LOVE YOU, MOMMY." Every day is so hard to cope with, but the holidays...I can't handle them; the pain is so great. Then I will think of something he said and it seems to make me smile.

Ronnie wanted to be a policeman like his uncle, Tim. But his dreams were scattered because of a drunk driver. The hate and the anger I feel for this boy; wishing he were dead. He said it didn't bother him a bit because he didn't know them. He took three peoples lives... their dreams and the families' hopes and dreams. I died the day my baby was murdered, he had just turned 7. The jury gave him 20 years in prison. The funny thing is, he only spent 6 months in jail. The judge gave him shock probation because he was being mistreated. The judge said he didn't mean to do what happened. He was released May 25, 1992, Memorial Day, the day you are supposed to respect and honor the dead. He was freed from 3 murders... this was a sign for other drunk drivers that it is okay to murder and drink and drive. This decision was made in our Capitol where the law is made.

Kristy Nicole, the 11-year-old daughter of Debra Adams and the late Randall Adams, was killed by a drunk driver in an automobile accident with Ronnie Adams and Darlene Morgan, 12-8-90. Kristy's aunt, Louise Wilson wrote the following:

What started out as an exciting time for Kristy, and Ronnie, ended in their deaths, along with their cousin, Darlene. We had just left the State Capitol, where we had taken them to see the Christmas Tree. They were hit head on by a drunk driver, ending the lives of three really special people.

Kristy was the only child born to her parents. Her dad passed away when she was four. She became her mother's reason for living. After Kristy's death, her mother became a nurse so she could be of help to others..

Life hasn't been easy since Kristy's death. But like all mothers who have lost a child, there are good days and bad days.

Kristy was a fifth grade student at Johnson Elementary. She attended church at East London Pentecostal, where she enjoyed going.

Kristy was the light of her mother's Life, and her death has not been easy for Debra to deal with.



I chose the Cabbage Patch Doll for Kristy because she loved them, and had so many.

Ed and Brenda Harvey's 23-year-old daughter, Shalana Lee (Shay), was killed in an automobile accident, 1-4-93. The family shares Shay with us:

Shay had been a student at Samford University School of pharmacy in Birmingham, AL. She was to graduate in May and was an excellent student, maintaining a grade point average of 3.974.

The 1993 Samford Class had just finished up Christmas Vacation. We assumed this would be the usual routine of getting back to the books, and looking forward to our last semester. At our class meeting on January 4, 1993, our President, Michelle Scoggin, announced to the class the tragic news.

Dr. Tony McBride, the Associate Dean, described Shay, "She was always happy, and she really loved life." Adjectives Dr. Robert Moore used to describe Shay... "Living life to its fullest; exuberant; personable; bouncy; positive and intelligent."

Cathy Cunningham, Shay's friend and roommate, stated that Shay was a very unique person with a quality that is hard to put into words. Quoting, "In the three years I have known her, she brought happiness to all. I feel as if I had known her longer, but am very thankful for the time we shared together. They day I helped her father move her belongings out of her apartment, he remarked, "Cathy, you are going to have to put out enough effort for

two pharmacists instead of one." I replied to him, "In my eyes, no one could ever replace the abilities and professionalism that Shay had. She would have been a great pharmacist for she truly cared about the patients and watched out for their well-being." Shay's mom, Brenda, said to me, "Why my daughter?" I could only reply that God probably felt that Shay had a more important job in heaven.

Kelli Tierce, another roommate said, "Shay was always willing to listen to other people's problems and was always there to comfort."

Cathy and Kelli, plus many other friends, are grateful for the time they had with Shay. They miss her dearly, and are constantly remembering the fun and feel lucky they can look back through pictures and laugh at all their crazy moments. She was a special and irreplaceable person who will always be remembered and missed.

This poem was written on Shay's 25th birthday:

*Birthday angel on a cloud  
Birthday angel laughs out loud...*

*Looking down as if to say  
"Hi Mom-- Hi Dad! It's me-- It's Shay!"*

*Birthday party in the sky  
"See Mom! See Dad! Now I can fly!"*

*I miss you guys  
But please, don't cry  
My 25th Birthday is in the sky!*

*This is the way we see you, Shay  
Celebrating your birthday.*

*Forgive us, Dear  
But we will cry  
But you know us, we'll get by.*

*So Happy Birthday on November  
Seventh  
To our girl, Shay, up in Heaven!*

Love,  
Mom and Dad



Shay's symbol is a mortar and pestle.

Kathy Upchurch's son, Chris (9-8-74), died in an automobile accident, 3-23-95. Kathy shared her frustrations:

It has been almost two years since my son was killed by a drunk driver and the trial is over. The drunk driver has contacted me. I received a registered letter last week that is still unopened, I might add, along with the ones that my parents and my daughter received. Each one was sent separately so I was told what each of their letters said, which was the same thing as before. It basically said that he wished it hadn't happened to Chris, but not that he was sorry or that he has quit drinking. I personally don't think that justice was done, nor will I forgive him for what he did. People have told me that not to forgive him will eat me up, but I don't feel that I hate him. It is my grief and my son and no one has the right to tell me how to feel. At least that is how I can best deal with what I am going through. I don't mean to sound hateful or sarcastic, I'm sure you understand what I am going through.

I am currently exchanging letters with another mother who is in a similar situation with the loss of a child, but I would like to communicate with other mothers (that have had a similar situation). It is such a help to me to be able to relate my story and some of the day to day trials and tribulations that I go through that I hope I can help someone as much as they help me.

Chris' symbol is an angel.



If you are interested in writing Kathy, her address is:  
2609 West More Drive  
Rockport, IN 47635.

Linda, the 22-year-old daughter of Sue Benson, was killed in a tragic accident, 8-28-96. Sue had some very insightful views about Bill Cosby and his method of grieving, and it is somewhere in my disheveled office; when I find it I will share it with you. Sue wrote another letter that I would like to share with you:

*Linda was born 5-15-74 and died 8-28-96. I do not look forward to her birthday. Not so much for myself, but for her twin sister, Anne. Her symbol is*

*most definitely a paint palette as she was a gifted artist, and a VW bus-her most prized possession (olive green-- very 70's)*



*She also loved her 2 dogs, Roscoe and Samson. Roscoe went with her and I am raising Samson. I love having him, as he is a living reminder of her.*

*I have very few recent pictures of her. She declined to have a senior picture taken- one of her teen-age rebellions.*

Meredith Peters (11-19-76), the daughter of Mike and Maggie, died from osteosarcoma, 9-24-90. Maggie shared her feelings about Bill Cosby and had a prayer request because the family is relocating in Raleigh, NC:

*I have been saddened by Bill Cosby's outward comments on his loss. Men are odd like that, they often feel the need to be strong. Him being such a "funny man" it must be especially hard and a bit of an identity crisis. I expect his wife, Camille, is not having as "easy" a time of it--not having a TV "family" support group and busyness of job to distract her. We should pray for the Cosbys and the killer to be found and convicted*

*Please pray for us in the transition to cope (so much to do with so little time...for physical safety for the kids skiing in Colorado; for travel mercy; for us to buy a well-built house in a friendly neighborhood and at the high school that'll work best for our two youngest.*

Meredith's symbols are a cross and a heart.



Psamantha (8-10-82), the adopted daughter of Gary and Diann Foster, died from an asthma attack, 3-17-91. Diann shared her opinion about Bill Cosby:

*I read what you wrote about Bill Cosby's son and his public reaction to grief to Gary. He agrees with you totally. Me too. I do not know how I*

would do if my grief was also public, but when Psamantha died so suddenly, I remember on the way home from the hospital thinking that I was going to have to take care of me first. I said, "Self, you have always been a helper, but now its time for you to step back and receive." Maybe it was selfish, but for many months it was how it was. Slowly, God placed people in my path to help, but it was slow progress. No one knows how Bill or his families react in their private life. Most of us returned to our jobs and life and no one told us how brave we were. That is sad. We do what we have to and what we need to do without TV cameras watching our every move.

I wrote a poem. It will be six years March 17, since Psamantha left us:

### SIXTH YEAR

The missing Times  
are different now

Not constant  
but sneaky  
unexpected  
poignant.

Dropping like an unripe apple  
stinging  
paralyzing me with sudden pain  
which I hold tight to my heart and  
hide from most.

--Diann Foster 2-9-97

Psamantha's symbol is a  
butterfly.



John and Gail Toye's daughter, Kim (2-28-69), was killed when a tree hit her while she was at camp, 6-7-94. Gail sent an article that was about Bill Cosby and his grieving. Some of the quotes:

Cosby told a friend: "I feel like I'm losing contro.l My mind is going in 18 different directions and it's hard to concentrate on anything."

Cosby hates funerals. Ever since his brother died when he was 6 years old, he has tried to celebrate life, not to mourn.

Bill Cosby said that his son, Ennis, was his hero.

Kim's symbol is a rosebud.



Chaps and LuAnn Burnett's daughter, Anna Beth (12-19-84), was killed in a tragic accident, 5-9-93. LuAnn wrote these observations last May:

*I'm sitting here watching the rain and looking out of my window at the colors of spring; the lush green shouts back! "It's time to renew, the rebirth is now, the cycle of life goes on!"*

*Bittersweet sadness touches my soul as I stop to think about our loved ones gone too soon- we miss them so- if only we could use our earthly senses to "know" their presence.*

*Time teaches us the true meaning of love- the emotion that never dies.*

*Do you suppose our children in eternity have made friends with one another? It makes me smile to imagine it!*

Anna Beth's symbol is  
a rainbow-colored cat.



Billy and Trish Barton's son, Michael (12-5-63), died 4-3-96. When Trish saw the duck symbol in the February newsletter, she thought they looked like praying hands. She shared some memories and a poem:

*Our Michael had written his Dad a letter from college that quoted the entire chapter of 1 Corinthians 13 – the Love chapter. Today, as I thought of my love for Michael, I wrote this poem for him. I pray that other parents will find comfort in these words:*

### Always Loving You - Michael

*You are one great joy of our life  
You- our son who is gone.  
Our shining star in heaven,  
Beside the brightest one.*

*No- You are not alone,  
Our Jesus led you there;  
Showing you the way  
With love we can all share.*

*Perhaps grief is a way to reveal His  
mighty will  
That we must seek His face  
In everyone and every place*

*So now, each and every day  
We come before the Father  
Thankful for your life;*



Always loving you and others.



Mom and Dad

Michael's symbols are a duck in flight, an elk bugling, a fish jumping, a horse running, and Michael the Archangel.

Rhonda, the 24-year-old daughter of Don and Marilyn Drokes, was killed in a truck accident, 11-26-93. Marilyn shares the family's progress in their grief:

*I believe our family is healing and progressing quite well. It seems odd to say that we're doing well-doesn't it? But, we have learned to live with the fact that our daughter and sister is gone from us.*

Marilyn sent an article that quotes Dr. Penny Kris-Etherton, professor of nutrition science at Pennsylvania State University: "It's important for people to realize that chocolate can be incorporated into a healthy person's diet, and one doesn't have to give it up." Isn't it strange that somehow I knew this?!

Rhonda's symbol is an angel.



G.B. and Carolyn Bowman's <sup>three</sup> children, Ashley (4-23-87), Courtney (4-8-84), and Daniel (3-17-79) died from an automobile accident, 6-24-96. The following article, written by Mitch Howard, was in **The Whitley Republican**:

*What Courtney Bowman could have accomplished on the basketball court will never be known.*

*A world of talent wrapped inside a ball of energy, her life cut short by an auto accident in late June of last year.*

*"I was looking at Courtney to be my starting point guard as an eighth grader," Lynn Camp coach, Richard Jones, said*

*Jones said he couldn't predict the future, but Courtney Bowman possessed all the tools to be an outstanding basketball player.*

"With her work habits, that much ability and where she was at the time, I would have predicted she would have been the best basketball player to come out of her," Jones said.

Ashley, a fourth-grader last year, played on the junior high basketball team.

Jones and the Lynn Camp basketball players didn't want the Bowman children or their parents, Carolyn and G.B., to be forgotten. Friday, they made sure they weren't.

The tournament, originally titled the Lynn Camp Holiday Classic, became the Bowman Memorial Tournament.

After Friday's Williamsburg-Corbin game, an emotional memorial ceremony was held for the Bowman family.

Members of the Lynn Camp team presented the Bowman family with portraits of the children, a game ball and Courtney's original jersey.

Another jersey was framed and now hangs in the hall at Lynn Camp High School. The jersey will hang there until a new school is completed next year.

Then Courtney Bowman's No. 10 will hang in the new Lynn Camp gymnasium. Her number retired, never to be worn again.

Courtney Bowman would have been in the seventh grade this year, but she would have played with the varsity team. As a fifth and sixth grader, Courtney, 14, was good enough to contribute to the junior varsity and freshman teams.

Courtney Bowman left her mark with much more than basketball, Jones said

"If somebody was laughing on the bus coming home from a game, you knew Courtney was involved in it," James said.

"Everybody loved her. Everybody knew her. She was just an outstanding person. She probably effected more lives than any sixth grader I could think of or any 12 year old girl could," Jones said

The tournament's **Most Valuable Player** was Amanda Brock of Corbin High School.

For Brock to win the trophy carried a little extra meaning to Carolyn Bowman, she would tell Jones that night.

The day after the accident, Brock expected Courtney Bowman at her house.

They planned to go to a basketball game. She didn't show.

Courtney went to camp with Ashley last summer. She played in the Corbin Little League.

"That was one of the reasons I really wanted Corbin in this tournament. She was really close to the Corbin girls," Jones said.

The children's symbols are angels.



Steve and Janice Tulley's son, Todd (5-8-78), was killed in an automobile accident, 10-12-96. Steve tells us about Todd:

Todd was so impatient. May 8, 1978, 8:30 AM, Janice called and said I need to get home; he was here. "I'll be there in 30 minutes or so to take you to the hospital." "Now! Now!" Lillie Mae (Toddy's grandmother) was coming to watch Jennifer. She was on her way. Now! I rushed home, got Janice, and headed to the hospital. We got there at 8:45. At 9:00 AM, Todd was born. No labor room for Todd, just get me into this world I have a life I want to live, and don't slow me down. Travis was here. Travis? That was to be Todd's name, but I wanted a Steven Todd. Did we want to abandon the name we had chosen for all these 9 months? I did I wanted a Steven Todd. I wanted a Todd. Caught Janice by surprise, but I wanted a Todd and she let me home him. Our baby boy, our last child, there would be no more. On that, we had agreed. We had our son to go sided by side with his wonderful older sister. We were so happy. By pure chance, Todd was born at the very second Ducker and I were to open a new "off road" store. Two new ventures at the exact same time. Todd was impatient. We should have known, his sister was the very same way. Jennifer was born instantly also.

Both our children were born "not perfect," but they were to us. Both were beautiful. Jenn had a bad foot and pulled muscle in her neck. Todd was born with one crossed eye. With much love, attention, and pain for Jennifer, we were able to work through her obstacles. For Todd, we had to wait for his second birthday for the doctors to "straighten" his eye.

Todd loved the Dukes of Hazzard television show. We took him to Lexington to see Bo Duke before he was two. We have a photo of Todd in Bo Duke's arms, and it became very obvious from that photo, that we had no choice but to work on that eye. He walked around, for what seems like months, with a patch on one eye, trying to strengthen his "bad" eye; but I never remember him "complaining," if a 2 year-old can complain. He was strong-willed enough, even then, to do what he had to do.

Todd loved to read Before he was two, we had purchased all kinds of reading materials. games, and anything to teach him to read. Jennifer was the same. We were so proud that both our children were "advanced" for their years. There was never a problem with Todd doing his work or reading his lessons in school; his only problem was that he loved to talk. Talk in school! How many times we were told how good a student he was, but they just couldn't keep him quiet. When Todd was home, every time I went by his room, I always looked in to see what he was doing or who he was talking to. I have no idea how many times I found him just lying on his bed, reading. Again, the subject matter changed with age, but always, Todd read He became infatuated with Jim Morrison and the **Doors**. Apparently this had an impact on Todd. We found a few poems he wrote, and learned of others he had written. As much as we would love to see these, we are very afraid they were in his car, and we will never get the chance to see them. Of course, we will keep searching. Many were written to and about his friends. We always knew Todd was sensitive, and feel as if he felt the necessity to put it on paper and make his friends lives a little brighter, also. We hope so.

Todd was so smart. Intelligent. Nothing he wanted to know escaped him. I was mad more than once that his grades weren't what they should be in some subjects; but those subjects simply did not interest him. I told him over and over that he was way too smart to let his grades keep him from doing what he wanted Jennifer states it best when we talk about what Todd

could have done. Her answer is always the same. "Anything he wanted to do." Todd was so smart!

Todd was a computer expert. He never took a class, other than Word Processing in High school, which has nothing to do with the way computers work. He did win the High School Award for Word Processing his Senior year. His hands just "flew" across the keyboard. Many, many times we have wondered just how many words he could type a minute. We probably will never know, but the words just "appeared" on the screen faster than they could be read. No secretary I have ever seen could put words on paper as fast as Todd could. Easily, we think, in excess of 100 words per minute. Todd taught himself everything there was to know about computers, and was very accomplished with any type software, especially games. He was an Internet "junkie," and knew how to make me mad instantly, by not showing me a thing he knew. I would ask, and he would just shut the thing off. I never knew if he didn't want me to know, or probably just thought I couldn't learn what he already knew. And he knew a lot. Hours and hours on end he spent on the computer. I will be months, if not years, trying to figure out what he "left" on the computer, if I ever do.

Our son was perfectly content to be alone when he wanted to be. He kept many friends through the years, one special one, but when he wanted, he was alone. Being alone never bothered Todd, as he could always find something to keep himself occupied. He had all the close friends he needed and wanted Throughout the years, Kara and Jody were his constants. They fought, but they always "made up," and were friends all the way.

Todd was persistent! When he wanted something badly enough, nothing stood in his way. I don't know the arguments we had, but Todd most often persevered. He didn't want many things, but what he did, he wanted badly. Janice understood this much more than I, and more times than not, saw reasoning. Most of what Todd wanted would have only made his life better in his adult years. His music was important, his computer was important, and even the things I thought

unnecessary mostly kept him close to home and with his family. Todd didn't get a "new" car when he was 16. He got Jennifer's "hand me down" Cavalier convertible. A time or two he complained, but never pressured us to do better for him. I guess that is the reason we went out of our way to make sure he got that BMW for graduation. He had it a month or so before he graduated from High School but he understood it was his graduation gift from us. He was to pay for some of it, but never got the chance to be responsible. That may be the only really exorbitant thing Todd ever asked for. He was content with his life and enjoyed it thoroughly.

Todd was unique! A letter we have from a girl friend said she didn't care that he was different from everyone else she knew. The only people she knew like Todd were people "trying" to be like Todd. Off center is what I choose to call it. Todd fit into nobody's mold of what a typical teenager was supposed to be. We're so glad of that, now. To see Todd walk, you just knew who it was. Not a swagger, not a walk. Todd's walk! He could be picked out anywhere, in any crowd, just by watching the walk. We will certainly always remember his "gait." One of his teachers told his mother she was so glad we had that one senior picture of him dressed as he always was. She noticed that Todd had dressed his own way all those High School years, and she found it refreshing. Refreshing that he didn't care to follow "blindly" along with the "current" trends. Todd absolutely was his own person, and if you couldn't take him for what he was, he just didn't have any need of your company.

Early in his short life, Todd discovered music. Both his grandmothers played the piano, and that seemed to intrigue him. I'm not sure when we started buying him musical instruments, but it seems like we always did. Keyboards, mostly. He would go to his room and practice for hours until he could play that "one" tune he wanted to learn. No matter what it was, he wanted to learn it. "Top gun" comes to mind quickly. He learned that fast. Many times we talked about Todd taking piano lessons, but he never did. Those long, strong hands would have been perfect.

Looking at his pictures and those hands just made you know they were meant for music. Later, the music got loud. He dedicated a significant part of his short life to music. Of course, most of it I didn't understand, but his mother did. I've made the comment many times since his accident that he must have spent every extra dollar on music or computer CD's. He taught himself to play the guitar very well. He was never going to go "on tour," but it was enough for him. Many, many hours he sat in his room, playing that guitar. It was the Christmas gift he wanted most. I don't think the amp was ever loud enough for him, but he still learned to play that guitar. I'm not sure his music fit well with people other than his friends. It was still Todd's music, and if you didn't like it, don't listen. **Metallica, Metallica!** That's all we heard forever. Everything they did, he had. More than once, we drove to Lexington to get the "just released" CD by them. It took too long for it to arrive in a town like Danville, KY. Todd was 15 when he went to the NASCAR race in Bristol, TN with me. We spent the whole day Saturday that weekend looking for a **Metallica** CD. We never found it. He wanted that music so badly, but we just couldn't find it. That was one whole day we spent doing what he wanted and not what I wanted Looking for music. A weekend I'll have with me forever. Our Todd never wavered" in his love of music. If heaven needed an angel to play more music, it surely has one now!

Todd had grown to over 6 feet 3 inches tall, and was still growing. The long "skinny" muscles he always disliked were starting to thicken. He loved the idea of making me mad by not shaving for days at a time and being "scruffy." Todd was truly starting to enjoy being the young man he was becoming. In the last few months of his life, he really like to hug me when leaving for college and say, "see ya shortly!" All his life I think he looked forward to growing bigger than Dad, and he finally had I think he thought it bothered me, but it didn't. I was so proud he had grown so straight and tall. I knew what a fine man he was going to be. We will forever be disappointed and hurt that we won't be able to see the final transformation.

Todd was tender! If they could talk, the animals would be the first to tell you how much he cared. Garfield, Todd's favorite of all the cats, misses him. Todd tormented Garfield sometimes when people were around, but how many, many times he simply "loved" on that old cat, we can't guess. If cats can grieve, Gar certainly has. They were devoted to one another, and Gar misses him so much. Todd's tenderness and understanding was not limited to the animals. It showed in his loyalty to friends and people who may not have had what he did Todd never turned his back on a friend who treated him equally as well as he treated them. But if they "messed up" he never had any trouble telling them. Todd was very open with his feelings. Good or Bad!

Todd was loving! In his own way, Todd grew into such a loving "man." Man sounds funny, but he had become a young man and with each day, found a new love for his sister, parents, friends, and life. He wanted to hug and be hugged He wanted to spend his spare time with Jennifer. They fought so, but they loved so, also. The two of them always told us that they had a wonderful time together and got along so well when we weren't around. That is so obvious now.

Todd was loved! I think he never knew just how many people loved him. Not only his family, that goes without saying. I don't know anyone who met Todd that could say they didn't like him. That, of course, is a parent's perspective. But when Todd smiled, that crooked, braced-tooth smile, he couldn't be ignored The relationship Todd had with his mother was special. She knew everything about him. Sometimes it seems as if the two of them were one. They were always, always on the "same page." United against anything that wasn't "right" in their minds. If kids and parents can be, they were truly friends. What a "special" relationship.

Todd was loved! So many people, so much said, so much shown. Todd made an impression on so many people during his too-short life. Everyone that truly knew Todd, misses him.

Loving, loved, intelligent, impatient, eager, caring, thoughtful, solitary, unique, awkward, persistent, generous, tender, tenacious, affectionate. How

many more words can describe our son?! Todd left his imprint in his 18 short years. All who knew him, miss him. Most who knew him, loved him. But most of all, WE MISS HIM SO MUCH! WE LOVE YOU, TODD!!

Todd signed all his e-mail with: "Is that the moon, or the light that lights this dead-end street?" It will always be Todd's light!

Love,  
Dad, Mom and Jenn



Todd's symbols are Yin-Yang, computer, crescent moon and musical notes.

Luciana (1-20-79), the daughter of Lucia and Skip Bayne, was accidentally shot 4-30-94. The following article was written for the **Mecklenburg Neighbor** by Sue Spataro:

An angel, gently dangling from a Christmas tree branch, can have a different meaning for each of us. For Lucia Bayne, the meaning is clear.

In 1994, Bayne's 15-year-old daughter, Luciana, and a friend were playing with a loaded pistol. It accidentally fired, killing Luciana.

"It was the most devastating event of my life," Baynes says. "I was so angry at the young man who did this to my daughter. So mad at her for leaving me."

Through prayer and support from family and friends, she says, she learned to forgive. "I woke up one morning and realized that I could have this miserable existence or I could do something good for myself and others."

As part of her renewal, she opened Luciana's Angels Shop in Pineville (NC). The store is a symbol, she says, of how important it is to remember her daughter. "I can never forget her," she says. "I think of her every day. My other two children often talk about Luciana, and I encourage this. "

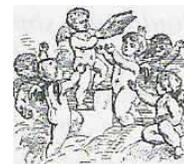
**Luciana's Angels** is not just a business; it's also a ministry, Bayne says. "I enjoy helping other people who have experienced the same loss as myself You'd be surprised at how many people come into my store and share their grief with me."

Bayne also has found another way to help people who have lost children—a support group through her church, Hickory Grove Baptist. It's called F.L.O.C. (Facing the Loss Of a Child). "We meet every second and fourth Sunday to pray and support each other," she says.

The group offers an opportunity for people to express themselves and their grief "The newcomers really need time to talk about their loss," Bayne says. "It's important just to be there for them."

She says people too often have a misconception that parents don't want to talk about a lost child. "We parents want to talk about all of our kids," she says, "Especially those taken from us too early."

"If they're not mentioned, we feel that nobody cares and they are forgotten. This is not true. The child is always with us."



Luciana's symbols are angels.

Bryan Clark (1-26-72), the son of Bill and Loretta, was killed in an automobile accident, 2-23-96. Loretta shared:

Our son was on his way by Corbin to see us and then to Cumberland College to video a basketball game for **WYMT** when he was killed. It was his first day on the job after leaving **WLEX**. He is the youngest of our five children and a joy to all of us. We are all grieving, but God has sustained us this year. He went to be with the Lord on Feb. 23, 1996, one day before his sister, Kim's birthday.

Bryan and his family were remembered at a Cumberland College basketball game, February 27.

I have a question for any of you who are CPA's or complete your own tax returns. Since chocolate is a prescription for my happiness, can I deduct it from my income tax?

