

Chapter 10 – The Golden Years

“The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power, and all that beauty, all that wealth e’er gave, Awaits alike the inevitable hour. The paths of glory lead but to the grave.” by Thomas Gray.



Lakeview Ward Bishopric 1960-64 – standing Merrill Olsen, Francis Camara and LeRoy Nelson, Clerks. Seated, Elvin Bunnell, First Counselor; Dean A. John, bishop; with Sheldon Madsen, Second counselor.

My father died January 12, 1971 without completing his story. He wrote his autobiography during March, 1958 while recovering from a broken back. In the fall of 1959, he was called to the Sharon Stake High Council, shortly thereafter as bishop of Lake View. He gave this speech at a meeting the day he was sustained:

Brothers and sisters, I’ve almost prayed in my life that this job would never come to me. I’ve never had any aspirations to be bishop. There has been speculation, a few have said to me, “Dean you’re going to be our next bishop.” I considered that fantastic and responded, “Not while I am in my right mind.” I once told President Lunceford that if he offered me \$10,00 a year and a shot gun with plenty of ammunition to shoot any man, woman, or child in the ward, I’d consider taking the job.

I might qualify that statement a bit. I might need to. I think that now I have the good will of practically everyone in the ward. I don’t know of anyone that doesn’t like me and I can say, quite honestly, that I like all of you. I think that like has transferred to the point that I can now say that I love you all. I’ve never had any trouble loving the women but when I say I love the men--as brothers, that’s going quite a ways. I say that honestly and candidly.

In 1776 Father Escalante, a Catholic priest, emerged from the mouth of Spanish Fork Canyon. He and his party came the very year that our constitution was framed. As they gazed over this valley the statement was made: “This is the most fertile and beautiful valley in all of New Spain.” Coming from Mexico, a

territory then belonged to Spain, they had traveled over much of the Southwest and were greatly impressed by this particular valley.

I've always had it in my heart and I still feel it. There is not a more beautiful, splendid, and fertile valley in all the world than there is here in Utah Valley and we live here in Lake View—right in the middle of it. My sentiments run deep as do yours. I don't believe that there is a people in this state or in the church whose roots are more firmly planted or more deeply imbedded than those of the people right here in this ward. We have the most wonderful people in the world here.

It's mainly for that reason--the faith of our fathers--that I have accepted this job. It wasn't for \$10,000 a year and it wasn't for the right to chastise anyone with a gun and shells, any person that might offend me. But because I felt that perhaps I could render some service to my Father in Heaven. I owe that to myself, and to my God and to my forefathers.

I think there have been eleven bishops now counting myself who have been called to this position: three Madsens, three Taylors, three Johnsons, one Williamson and a Brown. I have been here at the sustaining of every bishop with the exception of the first two, and I was here at the time the second bishop, my great-grandfather Johnson, was released. I am grateful to Peter Madsen, the first bishop who took him when he was a young man and provided a home for him for four or five years. He helped build Madsen Fort by Utah Lake.

I am grateful for my ancestors on my mother's side. I learned some time ago that my great-grandfather Shadrack Holdaway, was a member of the Mormon Battalion. He was at Suters Mill in California when gold was discovered. He worked panning gold during the winter and came to Salt Lake in 1847 after the Saints had arrived here. He was the first man in the church to pay his tithing to Brigham Young in gold dust. I think he paid some \$15,000 on money he eared panning gold.

I remember a story Matthew Cowley told about a devastating flood in New Zealand. In that flood 27 white men died. They had been working on the railroad when the flood came down the canyon. There were also many Maories working with that group—some were members of the church. Several white men lost their lives but not one native was lost. At the inquest one of the officials asked why it was that only white men had perished. One native boy explained it. Their camp is a short distance from where they were working, "White men run for their money," he explained, "We ran for our lives." I'm kind of in that position myself. Maybe I have, and perhaps you have, been running for money all your life. Now we have to start running for our lives.

I have a quote from the Master which I would like to follow as a theme for the next few minutes. When Christ spoke to his apostles he said: "Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you and ordained you." In that short sentence we find the one thing that sets us apart from all other Christian churches in the world. We do not choose Christ, we do not choose where we will work in the church. Christ chooses us. We are the only church in the world where the young priest officiating at the sacrament table can put his bishop, his stake president or even the president of the church under covenant to God. Think about that, it's very significant.

In one particular ward there was a bishop who was janitor in a bank. The president of the bank was his stake president. When the stake president visited that particular ward, he was under the jurisdiction of

that bishop. That's church government, that's theocracy at work and It's wonderful. I believe firmly that these men are actually called of God and are appointed to these positions.

I had quite a challenge about three months ago when I was called to the high council. I don't know of anyone that served a shorter term than I did. I was called to be bishop five days before being sustained to be a member of the high council in Stake Conference. That's working pretty fast. Once you say "yes" you're on your way.

But getting back to my theme—"Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you and ordained you," I don't know much about myself but I do know this: these two counselors here were chosen by God. I bare humble testimony to that. The first two or three days I did nothing but cry and pray. The selection of Elvin Bunnell and Sheldon Madsen did not come about by accident. There has been nothing ever come to me in all my experience than when those two names were submitted to my by Father in Heaven. I want you young boys to remember that.

The 13th Article of Faith states: "We believe that men must be called of God by prophecy and by revelation by those who are in authority to preach the gospel and administer to the ordinances thereof." It is true. It is very true. I have seen it happen in this instance and can bear witness to you.

I have accepted this call because it has come from God. To refuse it would have been to have broken faith with my forefathers. I would be breaking the covenants I have made. I couldn't do that. I just couldn't do it. What if our first bishop or our second bishop had said 'no?' They had problems. They had unique conditions that needed to be overcome. They had greater challenges than we have today. What if they had said: "No, I won't do it!"

I tell you, the spirit of this gospel, the operation of the holy ghost and the spirit of Jesus Christ has made this church what it is today. Where else in all the world would a group of people number in the thousands that settled themselves in these valleys, giving up homes, good homes to come and settle here? It was the spirit working on them that prevailed upon them to come here. They weren't satisfied. They couldn't be satisfied until they came and settled in the valleys of these mountains where they could be close to the church.

It would be breaking faith with those bishops who are sitting here now. I would be breaking faith with those who have gone before me had I refused this call. Our covenants go clear back to the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and rich blessings are ours because of those covenants.

I sat for an hour or so the other night trying to frame in verse some of the feeling of my heart. I couldn't do much with them, so I asked Diane to take what I'd written and turn it into a poem. She penned this for me:

I saw our Makers will displayed by faithful men who knelt and prayed, Then rose to build or preach or lead, or write a book or sew a seed; Those faithful men, our fathers.

I saw these men in prisons dark; tortured, beaten, torn apart, but never would their tongues reply, that God was dead, that man would die. How great the faith, our fathers.

I saw their homes and lives destroyed and then with new found faith employed, I watched them build and work and do. With friendship and unity too, What valiant men, our fathers.

And then I thought of man today, his cold unyielding selfish way. He hasn't time to do his part, Who holds the mortgage on his heart? It's not the God of his fathers.

And then a fire burned deep inside, I felt the hopelessness subside, what brilliant star has shown the way? What carries forth the church today? Tis the faith of our fathers.

May God grant that we shall never break that faith. Back to the time of Father Abraham--the covenants that you and I have upheld and agreed to — that we remain firm in the faith.

I am grateful to my family. I am grateful to my wife that I married into a family that was strong in that faith. My wife's grandfather sat, as a young boy in Ogden, on Martin Harris' knee and listened to the experience of that aged witness to the Book of Mormon. Grandpa Farley was a colonizer in Arizona and almost gave his life for the church. I am grateful to my daughters. I don't believe there is a man in the church who has spent more time working with his daughters than I have. They have been very close to me and I am grateful for them. I am grateful to this ward above all else. Because all that I have and all that I am and all that I enjoy and all the happiness that has ever come my way has been because of the church and my activity in it.

There is only one small request that I must make at this time. I know that all of you, from the smallest to the greatest, can give this to us, your bishopric - and that is your prayer for us. Just give us five seconds a day. That's all, and then as we go along, I think that five seconds will become ten seconds and it won't be long until that motivating force which causes us to pray will embellish you with a desire to serve. Just pray for us now, until other calls come along. The prayer that I close with is this: "May God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change and the courage to change the things that can be changed, that God would have us change, and the wisdom to know the difference.

I accept this call humbly and sincerely and I pledge that I shall do all I can for Lake View. With your help and the kindness and faith that you have, I think we can say with Abraham Lincoln: "Without his help we cannot succeed. With it we cannot fail!" May God bless you to this end, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Dad was an excellent bishop. He worked hard at the job and people liked him. But as he had acquired more land and with his daughter leaving home, he had less help and oft times found it hard to get through the day. While working and attending school in Washington D.C. Dad wrote this to me in 1961:

Seems good to be home at a night, seems like there is always something to do or someplace we should go nearly every night. Sunday night I was at the church house until nearly 12:00 p.m. — had a couple of meetings after sacrament meeting. Last night mother and I, Kate and Jack McKinnen, went up to the Mutual Home to a stake and ward officer mutual party. Had a hot turkey dinner; there were about 150 there and after the meal there was a short program; we had a lot of laughs and a good time.

Seems good to have mother home these days since she doesn't work at the office anymore. I hope we can arrange our financial affairs so she never needs to work again. I wish I never had so much farm work to do, I'm getting to an age where I can't get over the work I used to, then this Bishop's job takes so much time that I just can't get around to do the things that should be done when they should be. The Lord has been very good to us as a family though, we have very good health, a good home built in the best country in the world, and have some very fine neighbors, (even though they are relatives.) We have choice friends, belong to the only true church on earth, have had to work hard and been happy.

I returned from working and going to school in Washington D.D with my fiancée, Pete Belov in January of 1962. We were married on August 24, of that year. Corinne came up from Phoenix to attend our wedding. It was a lovely occasion and the last time our friends, relatives and family would be together—healthy and happy. Corinne’s tragic auto accident near Kingman, Arizona on Thanksgiving Day changed everything.

It was a very sad time for the family, but we were sustained by the faith and prayers of the community. My father talked in church on December 23, 1962. Many people had expressed concern for Corinne. They wanted to know about her recovery. So, dad thought it appropriate to say a few words about her before going on with his talk about Joseph Smith on his birthday:

Before entering upon my talk, I would like to express my thankfulness, gratitude and appreciation for my family for the many acts of kindness, lovely letters and the faith and prayers of all of you. I know that you are concerned with my daughter Corinne. I’ll explain that she is here. She is home, as near home as we can get her. I’ve had terrible conflicts in my mind and in my heart for the last four weeks. I feel much more settled now. I have peace and serenity and comfort in knowing that she is here in our midst.

After a process of twelve different doctors and four hospitals, she is now at Utah Valley Hospital where I can get to her in just a few minutes. I can call her on the phone. I am grateful for the spirit that dwells among the Latter-day Saint people. The spirit of our hospital here and our church is far different from that in other places.

She is as well as she possibly can be, I believe, under the circumstances. Her spirits are good, she loves visitors and she told me to express her thanks to all of you. She loves you; her heart is here and I am very grateful that she is part of our community once more. Christmas, this year, is much different in our home. I am more appreciative of the Gospel of Jesus Christ than I have ever been before in my life.

When my daughter cried out to me asking, “Daddy, will I ever walk again?” You’ve got to tell me!” Will I ever walk again?” I could answer her with surety and firmness being directed by the spirit of the holy ghost. “Corinne, I know you will walk again. I don’t know where, or when, but you will walk again.” That is the answer I gave her.

After two or three days of fasting and prayer, I desired further assurance that our prayers would be answered. The night before last in the middle of the night, I saw my daughter Corinne standing in the middle of a room. She looked beautiful, she didn’t wear braces or have crutches, but she was standing. I asked, “Can’t you walk Corinne?” “not yet Daddy, I can’t walk.” But that was assurance for me. Probably we have a long wait and a long time. I know not where or when, but she will walk. Jesus Christ answers that for me in the gospel that I have, and I am forever grateful to him for that.

Some years ago, at the close of World War 11, there was a very eminent sociologist from Russia that visited our country and studied our social systems, our universities and many of the different sub-social systems within our country. As he boarded a ship for his return trip to Russia, he was asked by news correspondents, “Who do you consider the great Americans?” His answer astounded them. “You have only had one great American. Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet.” He was the only man that, in your culture, has given the world ideas, which if followed, would revolutionize the human race.”

We are grateful to the Prophet Joseph Smith. Today is his birthday. The truths he established here upon the earth are revolutionary. The greatest gift you can give at Christmas is the service that you give to God and your fellowmen.

I am grateful and thankful to live in this ward and in this community and am very grateful to belong to this church. Jesus Christ is my Savior. This Christmas season has been different from anyone that I have ever known. I asked Laraine if she had the Christmas spirit this year. She said “No, not the kind we usually have, but I believe it is one that’s more real.” That describes my sentiments. I can testify along with her that me and my family have been nearer to Christ in the past four weeks than ever before in our lives. I am indeed thankful to Him for the gospel that He brought to earth.”

Laraine’s Marriage

Dad served as bishop for the next three years and we gradually adjusted to Corinne’s paralysis. She and Laraine lived with Mom and Dad. I was married to Pete and living out of state. Laraine was going to BYU. Corinne had a job in the order department of the Harold B. Lee Library there. None of us had any interest in the dairy farm, so Dad took the cows and barn to Dexter Kent who, with his family, moved into a house next to the barn. Shortly thereafter, his brother Ron returned from his mission in Scotland and came from Idaho to live with Dexter and his family while he attended BYU.



Laraine and Ron started dating, got engaged and were married in the Salt Lake Temple on April 16, 1965. Dad built a device to stabilize her and Corinne used leg braces so she could stand in the receiving line. Peter and I, came from California to participate in the festivities. Our little Brian had spent a month prior to the wedding in Provo with his grandparents and hardly knew us when we arrived. Dad enjoyed taking Brian down to the fields to trap gophers. Brian loved it and for months after he would say to me, "Remember the gophers!" Brian would wrap his little arms around my father's neck and say, "I just love you Grandpa." Being my parents first grandchild and a boy as well, made them so happy.

In early June I was just finishing up the year of teaching Social Studies at Crozier Jr. High when I received word that Mom was in the hospital for "tests." I knew something was wrong. I returned to Utah later in the month. Dad told me that Mother had been operated on for stomach cancer and the prognosis wasn't good as they couldn't remove all the cancerous tissue. Grandpa Farley had died of prostate cancer and all her life Mom worried that she too would die from the disease. Knowing she, like her dad was a worrier, dad convinced her that the operation was a success since our family was due for a miracle. We all hoped for the best but prepared for the worst.

Mom died March 12, 1966, nine months after her surgery. Once she told me that she thought she might have at least five years. She knew we really needed her! And we did. "I really miss your mother," he told me. On January 12, 1967 dad wrote, "Since losing my wife I realize that a man is less than half a man when he must continue on without his wife." At a funeral sermon he once shared Karl G. Maser's words with a grieving family: "There is a Mount Sinai for every child of God, if he knows how to climb it." This was dad's Mr. Sinai.

In January, 1967 dad had a terrible cold which clogged his sinuses. He was miserable but refusing to seek help, he decided to let nature take its course. He had terrible headaches and a few weeks later could not raise his left eyebrow. A strange numbness settled over the left side of his forehead.

The Widower

Dad began attending dances with a group of seniors call the LDS Sociables. He was an excellent dancer and enjoyed associating with them. Ladies vied for an opportunity to dance with him and brazenly cut in on one another. This gave his ego a boost. Gradually dad started dating.

Of all the ladies he dated Dad seemed most interested in Rosalee Madsen, a tall blond widow from Vineyard and Phyllis Farley, who had never been married. Rosalee was a hairdresser and had had done mother's hair on many occasions. He had known Phyllis since high school. She was mom's cousin. They had visited her in Texas when she was serving a missionary there when returning from Mexico. He got along well with both of these ladies but also dated others at the same time.

Corinne noted that he began playing the radio rather loud and was staying out late. She told me it was a bit like having a young brother who had just started dating. He would go to the BYU basketball games and then off to a dance. Dad would take one home and then be out late on another date til the wee hours of the morning. He eventually got tired of this. "Sometimes, it's a relief to be going with Phyllis," he confided to me. She's the only one who doesn't pursue me so when the other's call, I can always tell them tell them I'm seeing her. But sometimes, I think she would rather be with her girlfriend Merl than out with me.

Dad finally narrowed it down to either Phyllis or Rosalee. He liked both of them and even asked Fram which one he thought he should marry. And he wondered what mother would think about this? He worried about it that a lot and finally made it a matter of prayer. Shortly thereafter he had this dream. Mom came to him and said, "Dean, if I have to share you with someone, I'd rather it be Phyllis." With her blessing they became engaged and were married in the Salt Lake Temple on June 30, 1967.



Phyllis Eva Farley Johnson

Phyllis couldn't have been kinder to us. When she returned from her honeymoon, she brought earrings for Corinne, Laraine and I. Our mother had often brought gifts for us when returning from her trips. Phyllis cooked wonderful meals and dad was very proud of her. They enjoyed a period of happiness and started building a beautiful new home on the brow of a hill overlooking the Lake. Their pleasure with one another seemed only to be marred by Dad's annoying facial numbness.

Gradually the numbness moved down the left side of his face and the corner of his mouth began to droop. His left eye wouldn't close properly. He began visiting doctors. One told him he had Bell's Palsy, that nothing could be done and it would eventually go away. A doctor in Salt Lake told him that nerves were the problem and an operation to sever the nerves would alleviate pain. Dad had the surgery, but the intense pain persisted. "I feel like someone is pounding nails into my head," he said. At night he would walk up and down the road with Phyllis at his side to try and get relief.

He returned to the Salt Lake doctor wanting to know why he was still experiencing awful pain. "What business are you in?" the doctor asked. "I'm a dairy farmer," dad replied. "Do you ever make mistakes in farming?" he wanted to know. "Why yes," my father replied. "Well sometimes we make mistakes as well!"

In July, 1968 he could stand it no longer. He called a cousin in California and asked if she could find a doctor there that could help him. Connie did some checking and discovered that the finest diagnostic hospital in the west was at the University of Utah's Medical Center. He checked into the center the very next day. A complete medical history was taken, several tests and scans were run. Dad had a growth in his brain. He needed immediate surgery. His brothers, sister Leila, Corinne, Phyllis and I waited at the hospital for the results of the surgery.

"We found three malignant tumors," the doctor told us. "One the size of a quarter. The other two about the size of a nickel with connecting fiber. We took out as much as we dared," he explained. "How long does he have?" we asked. "A few months, a year, maybe two," he said. "It depends a great deal on him." None of us cried; we listened in shocked silence. I went back into the intensive care unit before he came out of the anesthetic. Dad looked strong and solid, even young lying there on one side. He wore a white stoking cap over the surgery, and he reminded me of a lumber jack caught in sleep. Could he really be going to die?

The doctors didn't tell Dad how bad things really were but I think he probably had guessed. Dad kept asking me what they had told us. Finally, I called the doctor and told him that he really wanted to know, and I thought he should be the one to tell him. "We can't just pull the rug out from under him," he replied. "I love truth, I love truth," kept ringing through my head. Dad had said in a talk he gave a few years ago. So I was the one who finally told him. He thanked me and said he really wanted to know.

"I've known since I was five years old that someday I would die. It's getting there that bothers me." He worried about Phyllis and Corinne. He worried about not living long enough to move into the new home that would be complete in November. Dad and Phyllis had made trips to the desert to bring back rocks for the fireplace and entry. This house represented more than just a place to live. One night he prayed asking, "how long?" The next day he had the answer and called me. The answer had come in scripture, "They shall build houses and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit. . . They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat." Isaiah 65; 21-22.

He returned from the hospital and was able to help finish the house. Dad still had headaches, but they were not as bad as before. He and Phyllis made more trips to the desert to collect rocks and drift wood for a rock garden. Phyllis drove him to Salt Lake for his cobalt treatment which made him nauseated and his hair fall out. Dad was in pain a great deal of the time but it was manageable and he kept busy. A few months later dad went back to the hospital for plastic surgery. The left side of his face had lost muscle tone and his skin sagged. He was embarrassed and developed the habit of holding his hand up to hide one side of his face. After surgery, his face swelled up for a few days but the surgery helped.

One day I called him from Skyline high School where I was teaching and asked how he was doing. "These damn pain pills do nothing for me," he complained. They were only giving him one every four or five hours. Dad had a resistance to medication and usually took four or five aspirin to knock any pain. Hospital personnel didn't understand that and ignored him when he asked for anything beyond the usual dose. I had another teacher to take my class and drove to the hospital, a few miles away and got the nurses into double the doses.

When he heard that a Temple was to be built in Provo, Dad made it a goal to live long enough to see it dedicated. He had sold the farm, but was a farmer at heart. That spring as he drove up 12th north and saw someone out plowing, "I went home and cried like a baby," he told Corinne.

One afternoon in the fall of 1969 I stopped by for a visit and we got on the subject of marijuana. Dad had read a lot and said, "I think a little marijuana tea might help with the pain. In my condition I don't think it would hurt me." I knew some swingers in those days, so it wasn't too difficult to obtain a small package of marijuana leaves. The next time I went to Provo I gave it to him. "I'll save this until I'm really depressed" he said. A year after he died, I found the marijuana in his desk drawer -- still unopened.

Dad planted a vegetable garden and some grapes along the fence. He watered and mowed the lawn himself, trimmed all the trees and clipped his bushes. The illness made him dizzy, but he kept busy and never complained. Phyllis gave him a lot of care, giving him vitamins, preparing special meals for him and driving Dad to Salt Lake for his cobalt treatments. Every time I talked with Dad, he expressed his love and appreciation for her. Corinne was always there, and we drew strength and courage from his positive attitude. Laraine visited often from Denver to lend her support.

By this time I had divorced Pete and was working as Administrative Assistant to the Registrar at Ohio State in Columbus, Ohio. On February 1969 Dad sent me a tape of his talk with this poem he had written for Uncle August's funeral - **Beatitudes for Uncle August.**

BLESSED are you who understand, my faltering steps and shaking hand.

BLESSED are you who know my ears today, must strain to catch the words you say.

BLESSED are you who seem to know, that my eyes are dim, and my wits are slow.

BLESSED are you who look away, when food is spilled on many a day.

BLESSED are you with a cherry smile, who stopped to chat with me for a while.

BLESSED are you who knew the way, to bring back those lovely yesterdays.

BLESSED are you who made it known that I was loved, and not left alone.

BLESSED are you who knew the loss, of the strength I need to bare the cross.

BLESSED are you who eased the days, on my journey home in so many ways.

Dad died on January 12, 1970, almost a year after speaking at Uncle August's funeral. His story and memories of his faith and courage have sustained and strengthen me throughout my life.

Corinne Johnson Young

Corinne concludes Dad's story with Chapter 11 – A talk on disabilities given at Stake Youth Conference.



Photo of Corinne and Everett from KSL-TV's Broadcast - "Women of Faith." Their three children -- David, Nicole Conley and Michael with Everett and my husband, Thomas A. Stokoe.