TO OUR GRANDDAUGHTER DONNA KAY COLEMAN

BY

Martha Chitwood

Today you are twenty-one years old, Donna Kay so let us do a little "remembering."

On 22 March 1960 you came to live with us. Your daddy, Nan, and Nannie all went up to the Crawford County Hospital with your mother on March the 21st. Your mother didn't much want to go to the hospital and Nan said to her, "You are expecting a baby" and your mother said, "Yes," and Nan said "You had better go to the hospital then" so she was ready to go We stayed around the Hospital all night, and the next morning your Nan took off for a day's work. Your Daddy and I stayed at the Hospital all day but we did not see you till about 4 O'clock March 22, 1960. When Nan came by the hospital from work, you were there. Donna, it was surely a long day, your Daddy was walking on air, and they all told me that I didn't know what I was doing. We were so glad that you had come to live with us and your mother looked liked she needed a good long nap.

Donna, we loved you so much, you were our first grandchild and a first granddaughter. You were so sweet. I had in my mind all the time that you would be a little boy and as it happened you were a precious little Granddaughter. I thought to myself, a little girl to sew and make pretty clothes for. So I guess you can say I have done a few garments for you. I stayed a few days with your mother when they brought you home from the hospital. I did so enjoy helping out with you and you grew sweeter each day. But, Donna, you did do some crying like all babies do, but you were so sweet we even loved you when you cried.

Well, I came home and left you for your mother to take care of, even though, it hurt me to leave, but I would go to see you every day and one evening I went and your mother had you lying on a pallet, they were eating supper so I played with you and you know what! You rolled over and that was great, you kept on growing and the next thing you sat alone then you went to crawling and the first thing we knew you were walking. Then it was time for your first Christmas and to get the best view of this is to get out the pictures of your first Christmas. Your grandparents were there to help you celebrate and have been there for all your Christmases.

But here I am getting ahead of myself, I want to bring in that had my dear daddy been living he would have thought you were the most precious thing in the world for you would have been his first great grandchild and you would have been a special great-granddaughter to him. Now. my dear mother was proud of you too but she just didn't have that way of showing her love as Daddy did. You had two great-grandmothers at this time.

And while we are on this let me say when your mother was small the old piano was brought from my home to my house for your mother to learn how to play the piano, so the piano got over to your house. But before you started to school you were taking piano lessons. Nannie was so proud of you playing the piano. In a few years you were playing the piano at the Church and your feet didn't even touch the floor.

Just a little more on this subject, you did so well on the piano, your daddy and mother began to talk about getting you a new piano, but to part with the old one was not easy, for "Big Dad" had given it to your mother, and I told them, if my Daddy were living, he would say, "Get that great-granddaughter of mine a new piano." I am so proud that you can play the piano and I'm asking you to never stop and keep in practice. So many things have happened in these twenty-one years. When your home was being built your family lived with us in 1962 then you moved where you live now. One day I was cleaning leaves from the yard and would put them in the wheel barrow and then put you on top of the leaves for a ride and the first thing I knew you were covered up with ticks. Your mother and I brought you in the house and laid you on the cabinet and went to getting ticks off of you; didn't take time to kill them, just turned on the fire and burned them up. That was the last time you took a ride on top of the leaves.

Your mother and daddy left you with us to go Christmas shopping and you cried and sobbed, your heart was broken, you even sobbed after you went to sleep. When you were just a baby and your daddy was mowing the lawn and your mother had you outside and the mower hit a bone and it flew and hit you, scared your mother so bad which could have been a serious accident.

Paul Wayne came to live with you in 1963, May 27th, so you had a brother, you were so proud of him that you let him do you just about anyway that he wanted too.

Your Nan and I have been on some happy trips with you all to Florida and Texas and on the one to Florida you were in the back seat with Nan and me and were about half asleep and you kicked Nan and he has always said you broke one of his ribs.

You and Paul were staying with us when your parents went to Mayo Clinic, you got so sick but we made it through and both of you were so glad when your parents came back home.

Then the day arrived when you would graduate from High School—your happy time in the. school band, I was so glad that you were an honor student. Then your first job and going to West Ark College. There are so many things that I have omitted but in it all you are still our precious granddaughter.

And now you tell us that 13 June 1981 you will be married to Todd Small. May your lover and you find happiness together forever. This will be another page in your lives

For now: May God's and blessings

Be richly bestowed

On you as you happily

Travel life's road

May all your Birthdays

Be milestones of cheer

And each step of your way

May you know that God is near.

Loving you forever

Nan and Nannie

P.S. Donna, I want to add a little more to your twenty-first birthday letter. It is not so easy to look back that many years and think of everything you want to say, not me anyway.

I want to tell you that when you were born you did have some more grandparents, in fact four grandparents. There was my mother, Nan, Mother, and Papa and Mama Coleman but as of today all but my mother are gone.

I believe that I am right on this that there is a picture of you and Nan's mother in my bedroom on the bed with Great-Grandmother Chitwood. Your Aunt Lois had given you a real pretty outfit for Christmas and you were all dressed up it in. There are some other pictures but I believe that they are in a group. Look the pictures up sometime, you were so pretty. Nan's Mother was staying with us at the time. You also had a great-great-great Aunt Trudy: Gertrude Vinsant.

And another thing, Donna, when you had your tonsils removed was a bad time. Then a few years later you had appendicitis and had to have an operation. I never had to go through that with your mother or your Uncle John Paul. I thought all of it was bad. The day you took, your mother called me to come over there and, when the pain would hit, you would look at me and say, "I'm hurting again, Nannie." So off to the hospital you had to go and by that night you were operated on. Thought it would surely throw your daddy when he got him the word that you were on your way to the hospital. But he did real well. You were hard on your mother, you wanted her all the time. You didn't want me to relieve her at all. But anyway we made it.

Still love you our Granddaughter

Nan and Nannie

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