



TRIBUTE IN HONOR OF THE REV. DR. JOHN GREELY CORRY, ESQ.

(Worship Service Speaker)

Reflections by youngest sister, Janol Corry Whitfield

It is an honor to have a tribute in honor of my constant childhood companion, playmate, lifelong idol, role model, friend and brother, the Rev. Dr. John Greely Corry, Esq. included in the 100th Reunion Souvenir Journal.

John and I are the youngest of ten children born to the Rev. Clarence Clinton Corry and Mrs. Leila Borders Corry. We grew up in rural Cleveland County, NC. Our six surviving siblings were Thomas (T.C.), Roger, Clayward, Ellease, Albertine, and Symantha.

From the time I can remember, John and I constantly enjoyed many happy days and hours together riding horses, climbing trees, pitching horseshoes, playing ball with makeshift balls and bats, swinging on tire swings, picking berries, wading in the creek, and doing farm chores. Each hour spent together was enjoyed and cherished, including learning to tie square knots and communicating in sign language as John prepared to become the first African American Eagle Scout in Cleveland County under the mastership of Mr. J.D. Kibler.

As very young children, we enjoyed the annual reunions at Cousins Mason and China Roberts' home near Shelby, NC. We not only enjoyed the delicious food served outdoors and playing with young cousins, we were also inspired, encouraged, and motivated by messages by the Rev. John Wesley Roberts, the Rev. Dwight Costner, and Uncle William (Bill) Borders. We remember vividly their emphasis on becoming educated, self-sufficient, independent, law-abiding and contributing citizens of our county, state, and nation.

Living in rural Cleveland County, the only two-room, two-teacher school was too far away for John to walk until the family moved closer when he was seven years old. He entered Borders School, named in honor of our forefather, Eli Borders Roberts, son of Martha Roberts Howell and father of Mason Borders Roberts.

Although John and I had been taught at home how to read, write, count, spell, and communicate well verbally by our mother, he was restless, inattentive, and frequently cried in Miss Blanche Arnold's combination primer, first, second and third grade class. After a few days, John told Miss Arnold he missed his younger sister, Janol, who remained at home - thought to be too young to enter school. The following day and the remainder of the year, Janol accompanied John to school, walking in the side ditch as John walked along the edge of the dirt road. The only concern Miss Arnold had for John the remainder of the year was on which grade level to teach him. At the end of the year, she promoted him to third grade, having completed with outstanding performance and achievement, primer, first, and second grades in just four months.

This was only the beginning of John's numerous accomplishments, including Bachelor of Arts, Master of Divinity, Doctor of Divinity, and Doctor of Jurisprudence degrees. He has experienced many challenges and firsts during his academic and professional life, but perhaps none as difficult as attending school in Miss Arnold's class prior to younger sister Janol's enrollment and sitting beside him.

Our parents lived to see John preach his initial sermon at the age of twenty at Washington Baptist Church, Waco, NC, under the pastorate of the Rev. P.B. Barnette. The Rev. Clarence Corry (father) shared the pulpit and participated in the service. In attendance were John's mother, siblings, primer/first grade classmate, Carrie Peeler, sister-in-law and high school teacher, Annie Corry, Miss Arnold, and younger sister, Janol.

Reflecting back over the years, I realize that God must have chosen John at an early age to serve Him in the ministry. As young children, we often played church. We sang hymns, John read the Bible, prayed, and preached.

My husband, Fred, and I are grateful John accepted the call as we were honored for him to officiate for his first marriage ceremony during our wedding in Washington Baptist Church, Waco, NC, Sunday, June 5, 1955. Nearly forty-five years later, October 9, 1999, he assisted our pastor, Dr. Howard A. Chubbs, during the wedding of our younger son, Charles, at Providence Baptist Church, Greensboro, NC.

Although over fifty years have passed, it seems like yesterday I heard John preach his first sermon and sing his first hymn, "I Have Decided To Follow Jesus... No Turning Back!" There is no turning back for the Rev. Dr. John Greely Corry, Esq. He presently serves as pastor of Braden Memorial United Methodist Church, Nashville, TN.