

## **Journey Back From My Stroke**

I was born Oct. 2, 1942 in Roswell, New Mexico. The first thing I remember is the crash in Roswell. They said it was a UFO. I heard my dad and uncle talking about it and they said it was probably one of those planes that they were testing at White Sands. As a boy growing up I was more interested in football and baseball and never thought about the UFO any more. My Dad, Dorman, and Mom, Ruby, were Christian folks. I was brought up as a Baptist. I had one brother, A.D., he was 16 years older than me. Just about the time I was walking, he went to college. We moved away from Roswell to several Texas towns and ended up in Waco, Texas. I went to Connally High School and played all sports. My coach finally got to be Superintendent. My coach is deceased now. A boy that I went to school with, Don, is Superintendent now. I ran around with his older brother Ronnie, who is deceased now. I went to school to talk to Don about our reunion. He said that coach said out of his years of coaching I was the best one who played for him. He said that I put my heart into the game and was an animal out there. I guess I was taught by my cousin, George Groseclose. He was a professional wrestler. He went by the name of "Gorgeous George." He would try all new holds on me when he was in town. I remember one time he put me to sleep and when I woke up I could hear my mother yelling at him. George taught me to be a fighter. Five colleges talked to me about playing football them. Pittsburgh talked about playing baseball for them. George tried to get me to go with him and become a wrestler. I talked to my dad about it and I decided to go to Baylor. The Baylor coach talked to me about playing football. If I made the team he would give me a scholarship. Looking back, I should have took them up offer to play baseball. I got a job during the summertime and bought me a car. Dad was in and out of the hospitals and I could not quit my job. I went Baylor two years and went to business school one year at night. At that time, I met the love of my life, Wanda. She was blonde and good looking, I thought she was a model, later she became a model. I had a time getting her to look at me. I finally got a date with her and we out dancing. We starting seeing each other all the time. Wanda and I went out to the lake and watch moonlight come up. I had all kinds of cookies, chips and candy. We were listening to the radio and every once and while, I stole a kiss. Wanda's Dad would come home at 11:00 P.M. and she had better be there. We heard the 11:00 news, we put the petal to the metal. They were building a new dam to the lake and it was raining. I ran off the road on a curve on the grass and I couldn't get back on the road. I then tried to hit some trees but they threw us into the lake. We were sitting there with the water coming in the floorboards and we got out the car , made it to the road. Two gravel trucks stopped and they got chains and got us out. I finally got the car started and we went to Wanda's house. On the way we decided to get married. All of the lights were out and I raised the window and snuck Wanda into the house. We told her Mom, Irene, the next day and she said she would break the news to Wanda's Dad. They approved and we got married. Raymond, that's Wanda's Dad, I didn't really know him but we became friends. Wanda had three brothers, Odell, he was the oldest, Jim, and then Bill, he was the youngest. A.D., my brother, became a Baptist Minister and he married Wanda and I. I went to work as a cost accountant at Cameron Mills, a local sawmill. Billy Joe Shaver was working at

Cameron Mills building doors. He got his hand caught in a saw and lost three fingers. I had known Billy Joe when he was going with Brenda, a friend of mine. I think he married her three times. He had Brenda's Dad's horse trailer at my house and Billy Joe was wanting to sell it to me. He wanted \$300.00 for the trailer and I told him I would buy it. At 6:00 A.M. Friday a truck drove up to my house and hauled that trailer off. Billy Joe came over said I didn't know if you would have the money or not. I decided to let him have it, he had the money so I took it. I didn't need the trailer anyway, we had horses and a trailer. He went to Nashville and become Honky Tonk Hero. I do see him every now and then. I worked there about two years and the walls closed in on me. I had to get of that building. My boss offered a raise but I explained to him I just wasn't happy. I went to work for Sherwin Williams paint company. I worked here in Waco for a year and they sent me to San Antonito. I stayed there for two years and they sent me to Lubbock. I stayed there one and half years but my Dad wasn't doing any good, so I wanted to back to Waco to spend what time he had left. Sherwin Williams moved me back to Waco. My Dad died about six months later. The next job I had was a paint contractor. It has been 41 years and I am still a going. Some good and some bad. Wanda quit work and had a precious girl. We named her Kimberly Ann. Wanda and I build a house in Hewitt, Texas. We had horses and when Kim was two, I bought her a Shetland pony. His name was ,Shorty and she become to love that horse. We would be riding and Kim would fall a sleep and fall off of Shorty. He wouldn't move till she got up. We met Jerry and Patsy and daughter Lisa. They had horses and we started to run around with them. When Kim started to school, she started to Midway. One time I was going to town and saw a school bus that turned over, it was Kim's bus. A girl, who was older, let Kim have her seat and those who were standing all went to the hospital. Luckily there were no serious injuries. I stopped and ran to the bus. Kim and Wanda called me. Kim got out of the bus through the window. She forgot her lunch and crawled back through the window to get her lunch. She went to Midway until she finished the third grade. We sold our house at Hewitt and bought a house and 70 acres in Crawford. We got more and more horses. Kim started to Crawford. We all showed horses at Central Texas Horse Association and Wanda and I got three more people and formed the Heart of Texas Quarter Horse Association. It became a success as we had two shows a year, one at Heart Of Texas Fair and another in January between Ft. Worth and San Antonio at the Fair. Wanda and Kim started to show, Wanda was best showing a western pleasure horse. Kim showed in Halter, western pleasure, English pleasure, barrels, pole bending, reining. Kim was high point in her age group in Trinity Horse Show Assoc., Longhorn Assoc., and Heart of Texas Assoc. I was showing in western pleasure and roping. I was riding 2 year horse and he got spooked and ended up on the ground on my head. I went to the hospital. The doctors found a broke disc in my neck and I had have a fusion. That knocked out riding horses for a few months. Kim was into baseball and basketball and then the boys came along and she lost interest in the horses. We were tired of keeping the 70 acres, fixing fence, working on the barn, we decided to sell. After two back operation, the doctor told me if I had one more I might be in a wheel chair. Wanda was worked down. We put up for sale and the first couple that looked at it bought it. We had to find a house and we bought one and remodeled it. I put a swimming pool and a game room and we moved in. Kim's house was a meeting place because they could swim, drink Dr Pepper, and eat.

every two weeks. They stayed in Port Lavaca a little over a year and then they moved back to Waco. I started to build a house and I wanted Nicole first birthday party to be there. I had been working with Chuck and he was best house builder in town so I did get him to build my house. His wife's name was Susan and we became good friends with them. Chuck and I hunted and fish together. I started to get serious about fishing. My Dad love to fish and he sometimes would take me with him. Roy owned Bass World and that is where I bought all my tackle. Roy asked me if I wanted to buy in with him so I did. All of sudden I was pardoners on tackle store and I had five boats. I had a boat for any thing you wanted to fish for. I start to Striper guide on Lake Whitney and had a boat to go offshore. Wanda and I sure like to go fishing in the gulf. It wasn't no telling what we would catch. My neighbor Johnny and Karen would go to the coast with us. Karen would to the beach with their boys, Russell and Dustin. Johnny would go fishing with us. Johnny started stripper fishing and he become a guide. It was in March and he had guide trip the next day at Lake Whitney. He asked me where I would fish. It was on a Sunday and the temperature was in the 50's and the water 48% Johnny and I were on the lake at 8:00. We were at the north end the lake about noon and decided to eat. We were the only boat in site and we were eating a sandwich and we saw a boat coming right at us. Johnny said if they didn't turn they was going to hit us. I said we were the only boat in site and he was going close to us and throw water on us. He was getting close and Johnny was looking at boat with his binocular and he could not see anybody. He started to honk the horn and I stood up and started to wave. They kept coming and we decided to jump right before they his boat. They hit his right in center and went over boat. The motor ran across the seat and he knocked the center console off the boat. I landed about 50 or 60 yards from the boat and Johnny landed about 25 or 30 yards from the boat. We had on coveralls and boots with no life jackets on. Johnny got to the boat and I was swimming and got tired and was trying to float, I sank down about 10 or 12 feet and I looked up and I told myself I was going to drown. I got myself to the top of water and started swimming. I finally got to the boat and Johnny had his hand trying to reach me. He pulled me up into the boat. He said he was going jump in to water if I had any more trouble. I don't know why those guys didn't try to help us. They pulled us in and they didn't offer a coat or anything. Johnny got a new boat and fishing tackle and I got the scare of my life. I was doing work for Mitchell, I painted his houses. He had a boat here and in Florida. I would see him on the lake and we started going to the lake together. Mary was his wife and they liked to party. Mitchell asked us to go to the Bahamas and we went. He had taken to 54feet Hatras to Marsh Harbor Bahamas. We flew in to Marsh Harbor and they had to check our passport. We went to the grocery store and to buy beer, beer, beer and liquor and a few groceries. Mitchell had talked to friends of his and would meet us down at harbor. Him and wife and two boys and their friend. Two boys and their friend were college students and they all had jobs in a seafood restaurants. We all went out fishing the next day and we caught a lot fish. When got in we cleaned the fish and the boys cooked them. We had everybody on harbor easting fish and drinking beer. They all looked for us to come in and what we going feed that night. It was lobster season and we eat lobster and fish every night. We went diving every day. If we couldn't catch those fish, we speared them. After we was seven days in Marsh Harbor we went West End Bahamas. We were there three day and fished. We went to Fort Lauderdale and put the boat in a slip and

Wanda and I was coming over Lake Waco and ask her if she wanted buy a boat and she said yes. We picked out a boat and it was 18ft. fish and ski. We had boat full every time we went to the lake. Kim was point guard in basketball. We were at a tournament and she slapped the ball away from the girl who had the ball, then she dove at the ball and Kim and the girl on the other team hit heads. The girl from the other team was knocked out. When she looked over at her team members on the bench they were all laughing. Kim started to laugh and the ref called a technical on her. I stood up and started to voice my opinion and they escorted me out of the gym. That taught me a lesson. Kim went on to be head cheerleader and then Princess. She was an A student all the way. Wanda, Kim and I met some wonderful people at Crawford. We run around with L.J. and Betty. We fished and deer hunting with them and went to all the games. Our next door neighbor was Ron and Del. The way I met Ron is he would leave shoes he worked in the garden and my dog would go over and bring one to my house. Ron and Del became as good of friends as you would ever have. I got Ron on the lease that me and L.J. had. Ron and Del would take boat and Wanda and I would take our to lake every evening and going fishing. We would travel with Ron and Del, we were with them all the time. Ron told me that he had a sore on his hip and he was going to doctor in the morning. It was cancer and he was eat up with it. He got worse and they put him on morphine. He asked me if I would shoot him and said no because I would have to shoot myself. I was in the room with him when he died. I never did over it and I don't guess I ever will.

Del moved to South Padre because the had a son and daughter that lives there. We go see her from time to time. Now back to Kim. Kim was a very good looking girl, everybody thought she should be a movie star and I did to. All the boys started hanging around. Wanda would set them straight and they all were a little bit afraid of me. In 1984 the Olympic games came to Los Angeles and Wanda's brother Bill and I went to games. We stayed with Randy, Wanda uncle. Not many people get to go but if you ever have chance to go. We got to go the boxing, track and field, swimming, basketball. When the U.S.A. comes everybody start U.S.A- U.S.A. That was one of the highlights in my life. Another one when I got to go down the field with Dallas Cowboys home games and give them oxygen when they needed it. That was when Tom was there the last few years and I knew all the players. On the field seeing them get mad and get hurt and the sound when they hit. There is nothing like be on the sidelines. Kim graduated from Crawford High School and she thought she wanted to go to Texas State. So I bought her a new Camero She was going with Todd who was attending there. Wanda and I took her there and signed her up for school. On the way back, she started crying, and she thought we were trying to get rid of her. Do you know how hard it is to let your only child go away from you. Kim decided to stay in Waco and enrolled at M.C.C. She finally decided to by a hair stylist. Todd hung around. I tried to run him off but he just kept showing up. One night I was in the bedroom watching football, Todd came in and he said he wanted to talk to me. He asked if he could marry my sweet little girl. I wasn't ready to let go. I told him she was spoiled, she got everything she wanted. Wanda took Kim to the finest stores to buy her clothes. They ended up getting married anyway and had one hell of a wedding. Wanda's uncle, Randy, married them. After four years, they first girl, Nicole. Nicole was blonde and she looked like Kim. Todd took job in Port Lavaca and we helped them move there. That is first Wanda and I had ever been away from them. We would go there or they would come here

stayed a two days and went back to Waco. Wanda and I didn't the next year because we had of work and could not get away. Roy and I had a chance to sell Bass World and we decided to we could get the right price for it. The store was gone and Roy went to work selling boats and I started to fish more. As time went on I knew something wasn't right with me. I would be walking and I would lose my balance and fall down. At times I would be walking and I can not see and would stop or if somebody was with me, I would asked to seat down. I should went to doctor but I didn't. I was a macho man and we thank we will get over it. You know how you feel and don't put it off if need to a doctor. In 1996, Mitchell asked Wanda and I to go to the Bahamas and we decided to go to. We got to Waco Airport and there was a mix up on our tickets. We took a latter fly to Dallas and we had to wait to go Miami. When we got to Miami, the plane to Marsh Harbor Bahamas was on the other end the airport so we hurried to get there. Mitchell and I had to go back and get our luggage that is when I started feeling something was wrong. My feet felt heavy and I was out of breath but I couldn't stop because I would miss the plane. I got on the plane and I was out breath and sweating and my head felt different. Wanda what was wrong and I said that I was tired. I didn't think we would ever land. I feeling bad but we had to go a line for them to check our papers and they don't get any hurry. I didn't need to run and my luggage in Miami, because it wasn't on plane, it got there three days latter. We had go buy some clothes until our luggage got there. The night before we were going to leave Marsh Harbor we went out and eat and had few drinks maybe I had to many. I fell out of my chair, maybe it was the drinks or it could have been warning. We slept to next day. We were going to leave the next day to go to another port. By the time got up, all the bait fish was gone. Mitchell and I had walk about a mile to get some bait. When we were coming back, I had set down three times and I told Mitchell to go on to the boat with the bait, I guess I had a hang over. I did not know what was wrong with me but something was. When I got to boat, we got ever thing ready then were on the way. I just set on the back the boat and the wind. Then we stopped about 10 miles out and started fishing. I didn't fish because I was still feeling bad. After a while we decided to move on. We had gone about 30 miles out and Mitchell said the boat had barnacle on the bottoms. I asked him if he had some brushers and said he did. We stopped and we got in water and went under the boat and started to clean. We would come and get some air and go back under and clean. Mitchell got in the boat and I stayed in water and cleaned some more. I don't know if holding my breath and coming to top of the water breathing had something to do with it or it was time. I managed to get to the swim platform and told Wanda to help get into the boat and she did. I told Mitchell get to the hospital something was bad wrong. That boat had a bridge you drove it from the top and Mitchell said you come up here and let the wind blow in your face. Wanda helped me get up there and I set down. I was setting there and then I passed out. Wanda, at a latter date, told me when we got to Marsh Harbor they had a time getting me down the ladder. They didn't a hospital they had a clinic and that doctor said I was going to die. The doctor called Freeport and they couldn't get anybody to come and get me because it was a holiday. He called Fort Lauderdale and they flew over got me. It was 13 ½ hours after I had my stroke before I got to the hospital. I woke up three days after I was in intensive care. The nurse told me I had a stroke and my wife was in the waiting room but she said the doctor is going see you and then your wife can come in. I tried to say okay but then I realize I couldn't talk. Then the

doctor came in and asked to raised my arms and could only raise my left arm. He asked to raised my legs and I could only raise left leg. Then I went back to sleep and the first I remember seeing Wanda is when they moved to a room. I so sorry for Wanda, she had on bathing suit with sandals and a hospital blanket. She didn't have time to get her clothes or makeup. I think she had a comb in her purse. Wanda told that Kim was coming and Kim got there the next day. Wanda and Kim walked down about a mile to a store and got Wanda some clothes. I was in a room with two beds and they let Wanda and Kim stay in my room. I knew they wanted to be close to me because they thought I was going die. The doctor come in to see me and he told I died twice and he brought me back to life. I just looked at him and I thought to myself God wasn't ready for me. The preacher came and said blessing over me and with my left hand I pointed up to heaven. The next day Wanda and Kim went down to eat and when they got back to my room the nurses was taking out of my room and Wanda asked where they was taking me. They said we taking to have a pacemaker put in and Wanda said why didn't somebody tell me. The nurses said I thought the doctor had told you. I stayed in there five weeks and I had good days and bad ones. I thank them for what they for did Wanda and Kim. When I was in intensive care the nurses brought Wanda warm blankets because she had on a bathing suit. I thank them for saving my life. They have so many wonderful doctors and nurses. I wanted to go home and I didn't know if I was going to make or not but I wanting be home if I didn't. The last week I was there, any time any one would come in I would look to Wanda or Kim and point my finger to Waco. The come in and said I think you are ready to fly home. They took me in ambulance to the airport and he put me on the plane. On the way home, the guy setting across from me was reading a book. He read the front and back page and he would tear it out and throw it on the floor. I watch him do that and then I touch Wanda and nodded my head and she said I don't know. I just wanted someone to see that because I didn't know if I was seeing things. When I got Dallas Fort Worth Airport, Wanda took me off the plane in wheel chair and Billy, Todd and Chuck were there and they put in suburban and lay me down and took me to Waco Hospital. I stay about a week there and they some more tests of me. The doctor called Wanda outside of room and told her that I would never walk again. The doctor let me go home the next day. When we got home Wanda had a few friends waiting at the house for me. They came to outside to meet me. Wanda pushed in wheel chair into the garage and I stopped her because that is where I had all of my fishing poles and baits . I had 123 rods and reels. I fixed reels and I had some to fix and I just look at them and tears came to my eyes. Wanda wheeled me into our bedroom and put me to bed. I was tired and went to sleep. The next day Wanda fixed me my meals. She asked what I wanted and I couldn't tell because I could talk. I would cry a lot and feel sorry for myself. She have to bath, shave, comb my hair and anything else. Wanda would put movies on for me. I bet you I watched every western that was made. I would lay there and tried to talk. My mind was good and I knew what I wanted to say but I couldn't get it out. That would make so mad and tears would come to my eyes. After about the fourth day, Wanda come in to check of me. I told the best I could that I wanted to die. I did not want her to go thru what she was doing. She started crying and said I want you to live for me and Kim and Todd and Nicole and Danielle and she went out of the room. Well I said to myself if are going to live you are going walk and talk. So my left was good and I pushed myself to edge of the bed. I put my right leg off the bed

and I tried to put my leg off the bed and I fell. Wanda came running into the bedroom and I shook my head at her and tried to pull myself on the bed and I couldn't. She help me get the bed and understood that I wanted to live. I had to go to the doctor two or three times a week. So when the doctor thought I was strong enough he started me in physical and speech therapy.