

## Ann Ralston Chrisman



Ann Ralston Chrisman was born Annie Lizzie Haynes in Triune, Tennessee in 1921. She attended College Grove School. She worked hard on the family farm along side her three brothers: Jody, Frank, and Jack, and her sister, Mary Alice (Lamb). In 1942, she married Charles Ralston, the youngest son of Mr. Jim Dub and Mrs. Carrie Ralston. Soon after the marriage Charles left to serve in World War II for five years while Ann worked in a sewing factory and waited for his return. She also worked at McClellan's Department Store and rode an urban bus to Nashville from Franklin.

In 1948, the couple built their home in Eagleville from salvaged lumber from the Camp Stewart Army Base. The new subdivision was called "New Town" on Old Highway 41A, where Ms. Ann still lives today. They raised four children: Faye, Charles, Nancy and Rachel. Ms. Ann is my mother, and I am proud to celebrate her as a good citizen and an "Everyday Angel". To my mother, neighbors were just an extension of family. In the old fashion sense, she was just about the best neighbor a person could have.

Ms. Ann was well known as an excellent seamstress and a good cook. These talents were shared with every neighbor, friend, or relative we ever had. One of her best friends when I was young was Mrs. Rachel Floyd, wife of Ted Floyd. Mrs. Floyd was a teacher at Eagleville. She died while still a young woman, and I will never forget the compassion my mother felt for her as a friend, and the sympathy she expressed through her actions and words. Over the years, "Mama" must have baked hundreds of cakes or casseroles and made hundreds of dresses and costumes for people in

the Eagleville community. She also extended her generosity to our classmates and friends. Our house was always open and always full. I remember my brother bringing his friends home for the weekend so often that my mom had to say "Boys, you are eating me out of house and home. You'll have to stop coming every weekend." Well, the next weekend the same boys came again, but this time they brought their own groceries.



Mama always made sure we were at Eagleville Methodist Church on Sunday, and we attended every Vacation Bible School in town during the summer. She began working at Eagleville School in 1959 as a cook. She didn't drive, so she rode the bus to school with us in the morning. Mr. Jordon Redmon was our neighbor and our bus driver. We never got by with anything at school. She was a lot harder on us than any teacher. Her work ethic was unquestionable. A favorite expression was, "If it is worth doing, it is worth doing right." She served Eagleville School for 30 years, and retired in 1989. Bless her heart, I sent my daughter to live with "Mama" during her first year at MTSU. Just as I had anticipated, my mother never let her miss a class. My daughter laughs when she tells how grandma would wake her and have her on campus hours before class began.

Through the years, she managed to continue to be a caretaker for many in their time of sickness. In Mama's retirement she was still a very vital and energetic person. She received a plaque for her service to the College Grove Senior Citizens program. It always seemed that "Mama" never met a stranger, or was never at a loss for words.

Our Dad died in 1979, but Mama handled every situation with strength. She became a grandmother six times and enjoyed that role very much. She has passed her strength to her children and grandchildren as we have struggled to create our own lives (our brother in Murfreesboro and the girls in Chattanooga).

## Citizen

In 1995 she became reacquainted with a childhood sweetheart, Dave Chrisman, which she had not been in touch with for 56 years. They married in 1996 and unfortunately, 6 months later she suffered a stroke, which for the first time in her life, required her to slow-down. She still smiles with her eyes whenever she encounters an old friend, and we still see some of that friskiness in her personality that makes her unique.

There is a best selling book currently being read by many. It is The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren. The first words of the book profess, "It is not about you!" I think "Ms. Ann", my "Mama", has lived her life with that simple wisdom and that will be her legacy because she has always served others in the simple ways of an "Everyday Angel".