

## Remembering

### The Stories of our Lives

*G.A Blackburn*

There are certain warnings we experience in our lives that can have profound impacts on us. If you have participated in any active way in this past century “ERROR “File not found... flashing on your computer screen sends a shock wave through you. OMG, where are my emails? What happened to all my files? Where are all my pictures? Anyone who has been the victim of a theft can remember the terrible feeling of the experience when you realize that you have been “violated”! Some precious treasure that has been part of your life is gone. It’s not where it is supposed to be, it’s missing.... where did it go? Who took it? Why? Sometimes you get lucky and you remember where you left those keys, the car or your phone. Old age can be very annoying. There are also those more serious losses of possessions, personal treasures, people and qualities of life. The majority of people do not choose to be homeless, contract cancer, lose a loved one or give away their memories.

One of our most precious gifts as humans, beside our capacity for love, is our “Memory”. Anyone who has seen the effects of dementia or Alzheimer’s share the pain of the horror imagining the impact of having all your memories taken away.

It is an all too common threat to the senior communities. We treasure our memories; they are a comfort to us in our twilight years. Remembering those from our past is an important part of our story and a tribute to those we recall.

When I began working in engineering in the late ‘60’s I remember a wonderful engineer named Roger Otis, Roger was a huge man towering over 6’2” and a very skilled materials engineer. He was a mentor and my first experience with the concept of retirement. Until meeting Roger retirement was something all the “old timers” talked about on coffee break. As a young engineer I didn’t give it a second thought. When he announced his plans for retirement he became the champion overnight for this select group of “Old Timers”. He made it and now he was cashing in for his rewards. Doing what he wanted to do, when he wanted to. He had all the accolades, that ‘a boys and the big retirement party. Even us young

folks participated, “Free cake”. Roger left. A new face took over his desk and the program went on. Three years later, there was a buzz around the office, “Did you hear about Roger?” Roger was found dead sitting in his boat fishing on the lake. It wasn’t as much a shock to the other “Old Timers” as it was to me and the younger engineers. How could this be? It wasn’t fair, “Is that all there is? is that what we have to look forward to? Roger’s story ended...or did it? That was over seven decades ago and I have just shared it with you. Roger Otis welcome back.

We are all souls living a life we can’t explain and may not understand but are the original authors of our stories. Those stories are a living part of our Universe. They may be accessed from the records we keep and the memories we share but they will always be there somewhere. Let’s treasure these memories as many ways as we can. Gather the records, write them down, tell them over and over again to who will ever listen. Most importantly listen when they are told, share them and pass them on to the future. We create the past and the future every day, but we live in the now. Tell your story save the past. A lost memory is such a terrible thing to waste.