

Every day Thanksgiving for Melissa

Thanksgiving is every day at the home of Allen and Brenda Hastings where they count their blessings for all their children and especially their miracle child.

Melissa Hastings, 12 on Tuesday, is a normal, typical teenager who loves her family, the fifth grade at East School, her teacher Marie Beasley and adores her "second mother" African American Doris Mintz Degbeth.

The story of the friendship between Melissa and her nurse is unique. There is a love story the family like to share.

Mrs. Degbeth was on the respiratory staff of Kings Mountain Hospital when the six pound baby weighed in with a birth defect that required hospitalization for nearly three years. Born without a roof in her mouth, she required surgery after surgery.

"Every time I became scared when the baby was sick I beeped Doris and she came running and has helped look after Melissa ever since," said Mrs. Hastings, who is also the mother of Jeff, 18, Jason, 15, and Katie Hastings, 6.

"I made many house calls

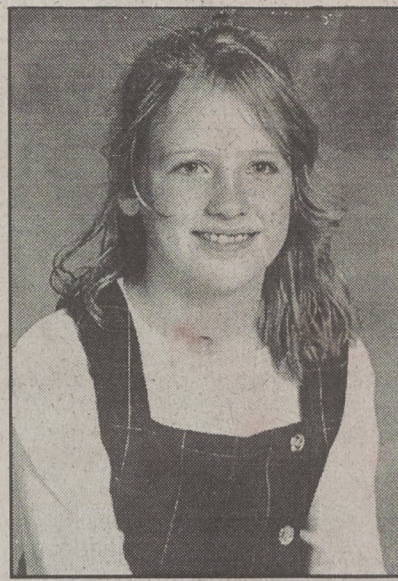
during the early years of that child's life," said Doris.

Now Melissa doesn't use a beeper but the telephone to call her longtime friend now and they enjoy looking at pictures, playing on the computer and shopping for school clothes.

Melissa is the granddaughter of Margaret Patterson of Kings Mountain and Martha Hastings of Forest City.

Sunday the family will celebrate her birthday with a party at home.

Doris will cut the birthday cake.



MELISSA HASTINGS

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Essie Carroll celebrates 89th birthday

Her large Kings Mountain family consider Essie Carroll, 89, a Thanksgiving blessing all year round.

Thursday the Carrolls gathered at a bountiful Thanksgiving table at the home of Jo and Evans Carroll on Katherine Street and counted their blessings.

Mrs. Carroll, born November 28, 1907, was celebrating her birthday and there was plenty of food and plenty of hugs all around from the 45 people who attended, including her four children and their families.

"Some members of our family were working but by the end of the day they will be here to celebrate with Granny," said Jo Carroll, who along with her

husband hosts the holiday birthday party every year.

Family has always been her life and greatest joy, according to Granny Carroll whose spryness and good humor belie her age.

"I am blessed with good health and just recently renewed my driver's license for five more years," says Mrs. Carroll, who pedals Avon and Stanley Products all over town and is active in East Side Baptist Church and Senior Citizens groups at the Depot Center. She admits that she is usually the life of any party.

Her family cites her independent spirit for her longevity, saying that Granny's middle name should be "go."

"Granny is at Hardee's or McDonald's most every morning with seniors her age and if we don't find her there she is visiting someone at the nursing home or hospital or taking a group of her friends out for breakfast or lunch," says daughter Ethel Mauney.

She is the widow of F. O. "Doc" Carroll. Her sons are James, Evans and Gene Carroll, all of Kings Mountain.

"I'm just glad to be alive and blessed with so much love from family and friends," said Mrs. Carroll.

She's planning on celebrating her 100th birthday and driving herself to the party.



ESSIE CARROLL

Stroupe takes Lander baseball coaching job

Brevard College head baseball coach Rusty Stroupe announced today that he will be leaving the Brevard College program to head up the baseball squad at Lander University in Greenwood, SC. Stroupe will make the jump from Brevard College's NJCAA (National Junior College Athletic Association) ranks to head up Lander University's first four-year baseball program in the NCAA Division II Peach Belt Conference.

Stroupe is the grandson of

the late Dorothy Hart Houston and the step-grandson of former Kings Mountain Commissioner Humes Houston.

"Brevard College has provided me with one of the greatest opportunities in my life," said Stroupe. "It is with mixed emotions that I accept the head baseball coaching position at Lander University. The Brevard College experience is one that will have a lasting impact on my life; the administration has been tremendously supportive

of me personally and concerned with the welfare of the baseball program. I will greatly miss the people of Brevard including my faculty colleagues, staff workers, fellow coaches and members of the community who have provided so much support to my family and my baseball teams. My hope is that in some small way I have been able to return the favor to the Brevard community for all of the warmth I have felt over the past five years."

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