



Sew

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She also owned and operated a garment specialty shop on King Street making bridal and bridesmaids dresses. Her first design from her home was her daughter's wedding dress.

Dora's husband, the late Harold Bridges, died 40 years ago and Dora started sewing to raise her family of two boys and a girl. Her youngest child was nine when Mr. Bridges died and Dora put her talent at the sewing machine to work. "I had made the children's clothes and done some sewing at home," said Dora adding

"After the children were grown I just kept on working and met so many nice people and was able to expand my workplace." Five years ago when she learned about an opening for a part time job in the gift shop at the senior center she jumped at the chance to show off the handwork of seniors. She also has displayed a few of her own handmade items.

Dora Ross Bridges, daughter of the late George and Ada Ross, was born in Belmont and raised on a farm in a family of seven girls and three boys. As a young girl she learned how to use a sewing machine from her mother, also a talented seamstress. She double dated with friends in Gastonia and met her husband, who was originally from Shelby. The Ross family has lived in Kings Mountain 50 years on Wells Street.

Pattern making is simple for Mrs. Bridges. She uses a grader and specifications, of course, sizing the product - a dress neck, shoulder, arm holes etc.

The family includes three children: Charles (Butch) Bridges and wife, Yvonne, David Bridges and wife, Joann and Beverly Small, all of Kings Mountain; six grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

Bridges is active in Shelby Missionary Methodist Church. Family and church are priorities.

"I have been really blessed," said the friendly Kings Mountain homemaker who enjoys greeting members and newcomers to the Senior Center Gift Shop. Whether they're shopping for Christmas, birthday, get well, baby shower gifts, earrings, cards and purses, she invites them to browse and enjoy pleasant surroundings. Bridges is eager to share gift ideas for men, women and children of all ages and she knows the history of each piece.

The filial duty of John Wilson, Jr.

Four Square Gospel Church founder tends family plot

By THOMAS LARK

BELMONT—It's a grave responsibility.

Quite literally. It's the filial duty of John Wilson, Jr. of Fort Myers, Fla. Several times a year, the native Belmonter returns to his hometown to tend the graves of his parents, Rev. John Terrell Wilson, Sr. and Virginia Jones Wilson.

Along with other members of the Wilson family, they're buried in the historic Greenwood Cemetery, adjacent the First Presbyterian Church of Belmont.

"I owed it to my daddy," said Wilson, 58, wiping a tear from his eye, "and to my grandmother."

Removing a pressure-washing device from the bed of his well-maintained pickup truck Saturday afternoon, he noted that the day would have been his father's 82nd birthday. As he gently cleaned the late pastor's tombstone, Wilson told the story of his family.

Like so many of the South's mill villagers, Lawrence and Fannie Wilson came down from the mountains to work in the cotton mills more than 100 years ago. The future pastor grew up in Belmont's Eagle Mill Village (now gone).

Like most men of his generation, Rev. Wilson served in World War II. He was a veteran of the United States Navy.

After being ordained in the Foursquare Gospel Church, Wilson would take his family from town to town and church to church.

He served many flocks, including those at the Foursquare Gospel

Church of Kings Mountain, which he himself built about 45 years ago; at the First Foursquare Gospel Church of East Gastonia; at Second Foursquare Gospel in Concord; and at Foursquare Gospel churches in Raeford and Smyrna, Ga.

"Dad went all over the world," his son said, recalling evangelistic crusades as far away as Alaska and even England, as well as radio and television preaching engagements.

But despite all this traveling, the pastor never forgot his roots.

"You could take Daddy out of Belmont," said his son, "but you couldn't take Belmont out of Daddy."

Refusing to take a salary from his churches, Rev. Wilson instead went to work as a trucker and in the cotton mills of the Southern towns in which the family dwelt.

John Wilson, Jr. recalled life as a small child in Belmont.

"We bought all of our groceries at the old Stowe Mercantile," he said. "I like to go back to those times. Money was always tight, back then. We were the poorest of the poor."

He remembered a time at the old mercantile when he randomly stole a piece of bubblegum. His grandmother was with him, and she forcibly returned the lad to the store, making him give back the gum.

Then Grandma Fannie tanned his fanny.

"And I thank God for it!" said Wilson, smiling but still grateful for such firm correction.

On another occasion, Rev. Wilson caught his son smoking a cigarette.

"When he was done with me, I was smoking alright!" Wilson recalled with a laugh. "Daddy raised all of us right."

And those kids raised up right were seven in number: besides John Wilson, Jr. and wife Jean, residents of Fort Myers for 11 years now, there are sis-

ters Sherry Wilson of Gardner, Lynn Crawley of Gastonia and Kim Emory and Chris Deese, both of Rocky Mount; and brother Mark Wilson of Marietta, Ga. Younger brother Kent Wilson died in 2005.

Several times a year, John Wilson returns here to see sister Lynn, his aunt, Rachel Faircloth of Cherryville and other local kinfolk. He'll always pay a visit to Greenwood and pay his respects to his parents and other family members now at rest in the cemetery's well cared-for grounds.

"I made a promise to maintain this part of the cemetery from here on out," he said.

Need the gravestones of your loved ones cleaned? Wilson said he would use his pressure-washer for a small fee or even for free.

Why? Because of the duty of remembering the dead—an important Christian tenet instilled in Wilson by his father.

"Dad wasn't perfect," he observed. "He had his faults. But he was a man of God. No doubt about that."

To learn more, John Wilson said he encourages folks with kin buried in Greenwood to call him at 239-948-2615.



Photograph by Thomas Lark
Wilson gets to work with his pressure-washing device.

Who's To Blame For Those Pesky Gray Hairs?

(SPM Wire) Can you blame a lifetime of annoying jobs, unruly kids and family emergencies for your silver-streaked head of hair?

It turns out that those ever-multiplying graying hairs that tend to crop up with age really are signs of stress, reveals new research recently

published in the science and medical journal, "Cell."

However, the stress in question is stress on cells in your body, not necessarily the family and work stress over your lifetime.

According to researchers at Tokyo Medical and Dental Univer-

sity, "the DNA in [our body's] cells is under constant attack" from such damaging agents as chemicals, ultraviolet light and ionizing radiation.

"It is estimated that a single cell in mammals can encounter approximately 100,000 DNA damaging

events per day," said Emi Nishimura, who led the new research.

It turns out that stress does damage to the DNA in stem cells that are responsible for the coloring in our hair, among other things.

According to the researchers, the

new findings about gray hair may lead to advances in understanding other symptoms of aging. They support the "stem cell aging hypothesis," which proposes that DNA damage to long-lived stem cells can be a major cause for the symptoms that come with age.

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