

How I wish my dad had written such a book for me—full of stories from a previous generation, stories of family and place, childhood adventures, teen-age jobs and school, military service, church life, and earning a living! The details vary widely from today, but the values endure—love, duty, family, vocation, faith, hard work, sacrifice, fulfillment. I know and love Harold Brown as his pastor. You will find his story full of insights for living, circumstances that might overwhelm today, but forged character that beckons to modern readers. Along the way, you will smile, chuckle, and even laugh out loud at his stories. In the end, you will be glad you read his book and may even consider writing such a story for your children. I now plan to do so for mine!

—The Rev. Dr. James R. Fuller,  
Senior Pastor, Calder Baptist Church, Beaumont, Texas

In *My Son: To Whom it May Concern*, Harold Brown provides a view of life as seen by an octogenarian looking in the rear-view mirror. It's a clear view, and compelling too, because an "ordinary" life well-lived resonates with other lives, probably even your own. Brown's son, Paul, isn't your child, but he may remind you of children you know. Brown's marriage to his remarkable wife, Winnie, isn't your marriage, but you'll relate to the life they lived together, accompanied by their family, friends and church. *My Son* is a Texas story of life and family and faith in the latter half of the 20th century. It'll take you back.

— Marv Knox, Editor, Baptist Standard

# My Son

*To Whom It May Concern*

by  
H. HAROLD BROWN

© 2018

Published in the United States by Nurturing Faith Inc., Macon GA,

[www.nurturingfaith.net](http://www.nurturingfaith.net).

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available.

ISBN 978-1-63528-041-8

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America.

Cover photo by Smileus.

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. [www.zondervan.com](http://www.zondervan.com) The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

Dedicated to Winnie, to my mother, and to my son, Paul,  
whose companionships and love have blessed my life beyond the fondest  
dreams and expectations I could ever have imagined.



My son then

The intervening years!



My son now

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Author .....	ix	15. Seeking a Fortune in Scrap Iron .....	30
Preface .....	xi	16. Beginning a Faith Journey .....	32
Prologue .....	xiii	17. The Goose Hunting Lease.....	34
1. Our Meeting and Marriage.....	3	18. Baby It's Cold Outside.....	35
2. Snow Time in Malakoff .....	4	19. The Journey to Senior Buyer..	37
3. The Ice Box .....	6	Money Trees*.....	40
4. Gin Tank Baptizing .....	8	20. The Senior Trip.....	41
5. Introducing Daddy.....	9	21. The Wrong Runway.....	42
6. A New Culture and Race .....	11	22. The Three 'Amigos' .....	44
7. Hazards of Tree Climbing.....	14	23. Leaves, Leaves.....	47
8. Easter in Beeville .....	15	24. Steak House Sign.....	48
9. Joining the Air Force .....	17	25. The Centennial.....	49
What's in a Name*.....	19	26. Grandmamma's Week.....	50
10. My Best Story.....	20	27. My Earliest Memory.....	54
11. The Gulf Market.....	22	28. The Rose Parade .....	55
12. The Mail.....	25	29. It Was George.....	57
13. A Baboon in East Texas.....	27	The Fourth Branch of Government* .....	60
14. Ministry at Sabine Oaks .....	29		

30. The Fire Phone .....	61	46. Another of My Stories .....	89
31. The Horse Ride .....	62	47. The Halloween Carnival .....	91
32. Back to College.....	63	48. Churches .....	92
33. Maggie and Me.....	65	49. Christmas Time .....	97
Johnson, George W.; WHEN YOU AND I WERE YOUNG, MAGGIE; America Sings; Robbins Music Compa- ny, 799 Seventh Street, New York, N.Y.; Copyright 1935		A Cause to Fear* .....	99
34. The Hero .....	67	50. Adventures with Jim .....	100
35. My Second Best Story.....	68	51. Hitching a Ride with Don...	102
36. Brother-in-law Duncan.....	69	52. Daddy's Demise.....	104
37. Hitch-hiking to Paris .....	70	53. A Floundering Trip.....	106
38. Thoughts on Love.....	72	54. Mrs. Blackwell.....	108
39. Smokey Airplane .....	73	55. Apples.....	110
The Songs of a Nation* .....	76	56. Rubber Guns .....	112
40. Ollie and Golf .....	77	57. Pop's Barbeque.....	113
41. Pop and the Fresno .....	78	58. The 3rd Grade .....	115
42. The Mexican Mission.....	79	59. Being Political.....	116
43. Grocery Store Changes .....	81	"Slow Horses"* .....	119
44. A Little Lung Problem.....	83	60. The Ladies .....	120
45. High School Football.....	86	Post Script.....	128

\*Columns written for publication in the home town newspaper, MALAKOFF NEWS, in 1960s.

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

H. Harold Brown grew up in Malakoff, Texas where the Baptist Church and school system provided a basis for his life. He graduated from high school in 1946, and was among the first students of Henderson County Junior College (Trinity Valley Community College). In 1948 he began a four year service with the U. S Air Force.

In 1952 Brown began a five year's tenure of Variety Store management. Marriage to Winnie Harris came in 1957. Shortly, he returned to an educational pursuit resulting in graduation in 1960 from the University of Corpus Christi (Texas A & M at Corpus Christi) with degree in Business Administration, minor in Religious Education.

1960 also saw the beginning of employment with Jefferson Chemical Co. (Texaco Chemical Co.), where Brown was employed for 28 years. The first 20 years with company lead to the position of Traffic Supervisor. The last eight years were spent as Senior Buyer for Texaco Chemical Co., Port Neches plant.

1961 found Brown beginning to use his Religious Education training at Southside, First Baptist Port Neches, Woodcrest in Port Arthur and eventually in 1993 to Calder; all Baptist congregations.

Other ministry services include: Shepard's Inn (a facility for visitors to area prisoners) and Triangle Aids Network (which primarily transported patients to Galveston and Houston for treatment). Calder church activities included Area hurricane repair, Mission trips, and Habitat for Humanity building.

Along the way he managed to work in 22 years on the Planning and Zoning Board for the City of Port Neches.

There is a tapestry of Americana in his life that, although not the same, is woven into the lives of all the parents, grand-parents or great grand-parents for the last 85 or more years.

# PREFACE

I have written at various times over my years, but not published for remuneration. Recently, I read *Gilead*, a fictional autobiography of John Ames written by Marilynne Robinson. I began to think I might write about some of my own life experiences. I have named the writings *My Son: To Whom It May Concern*, and I suppose this to be a short résumé of my life, but much more it is the Americana of some 80 years in which I have lived.

I am 87 years of age, and the writings span time from the 1930s to the present. Those who have read my writings tell me I write somewhat like I verbalize the stories.

I have also included some of my stories and a few reprints from a newspaper column I had during the 1960s. They were carried only by my hometown newspaper, *The Malakoff News*.

What you will read are my life experiences, recalled from an old memory with the proviso that for some there is no one left to verify or contradict, except where I have noted otherwise.

H. Harold Brown



# PROLOGUE

## A Trend of Circumstance

When one pauses to reflect upon the many experiences of life, the unanswerable questions of “who, why, what, and how did all these contribute to my life?” inevitably enter one’s mind.

“Fate,” some would say. All of this was simply the destiny appointed to one’s life. Such belief has long standing in the idea that the gods and goddesses determine the birth, life, and death of man. Seems to me that this relegates man to nothing.

“The self-made man,” others might add. A person who has been especially successful in life will be pointed out and even held up as a role model. Most of the time this leaves out others’ contributions. You surely could not apply this to me.

“God ordained it,” some no doubt will say. There is no question that God, over time, has chosen certain individuals to perform life tasks of a godly nature and understanding. All our lives cannot be attributable to this, lest we be robots. And surely God did not create us to be robots.

Somewhere along the way, I have gravitated toward an understanding that most, if not all, of life is governed by the “trend of circumstances.” The young child willingly jumps into the arms of the father, knowing that up until now this person has provided safety. Is it any wonder that as time goes by, the child continues to seek counsel from this “safe one”? As the “safe one” is augmented by teachers, friends, and acquaintances, we find ourselves surrounded by many “safe ones,” and we are able to distinguish the “unsafe ones.”

As a child learns to ride a tricycle, he or she experiments with speed and guidance, which is then groomed into confidence and knowledge that leads to the bicycle, the car, and for some a jet plane.

Circumstances consist of opportunity and recognition. Two persons may have the same opportunity in life. One will recognize and judge yes or no; the second may not ever see it as opportunity because the trends of his or her life have not afforded the knowledge to act in that circumstance. Trend of

circumstance is like a never-ending, unnumbered series of doors. Life experiences up to any particular point, generally, will govern one's recognition of the circumstances (doors) as well as determine whether or not one enters a given door.

Trend of circumstance for me has a great deal to do with faith in God. Has one's acceptance of God as the "safe one" been sufficient to walk through some doors? At other doors, has past experience and knowledge been great enough to say no, close the door, and move on?

The trend of circumstance must also include hope. By this understanding the circumstances of life and challenges of faith must always be viewed in light of hope. By action or inaction hope extends beyond a particular circumstance. In the biblical rendition of "faith, hope, and love," an older translation uses the term *charity* in place of love. One of the meanings of charity is "the disposition to think favorably on others." Since the trend of circumstance not only relies on the remembrance of life experiences past, but also recognizes the life experience of now, we may say it also presupposes the life experience to come. These always concern others.

And so it is with a trend of circumstance—and hopefully the application of faith, hope, and charity—that I will bring to mind some small remembrances of circumstance. Some will no doubt be trivial in nature; others, perhaps, are of more importance. But all will lend contributions to the personal experiences that have become my trend of circumstance.

Join me!

H. Harold Brown