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A Visit With Grandfather

Published in *Meadowcrest News and Views*, November 2004

At age 94, Grandfather had just moved to Ocala, Florida the year before, a short distance away from my home. He was tall for a man born at the beginning of the 20th Century, and although he slumped slightly with age his vigor showed as I started out with him for his brisk daily walk in the cool morning air. Neighbors passed by in cars, and Grandfather waved to each one.

I had several role models as I grew up. Perhaps chief among them was Grandfather. Born in Scotland, he became a Rhodes scholar and a Professor of Medicine. He was a consummate researcher, exploring the mysteries of blood composition, and he wrote many medical journal articles and a book. His passion, especially later in life, was the collection of sea shells. He amassed a personal collection of over 30,000 shells from all over the world which was carefully stored, categorized, and indexed.

I was feeling a bit down that day, and I decided to share with Grandfather the source of my concerns. I told him "I've come to believe I may have chosen the wrong profession. As an attorney I try hard to serve my clients well. But perhaps I should have followed into your footsteps to become a doctor. Grandfather, what I do seems to pale in significance to what a family doctor does, not to mention your accomplishments as a university professor and researcher."

Grandfather continued his brisk walk, and I found myself striving to keep up at times. He replied, "It's not what you do in life as your chosen profession, or occupation, that matters. It's whether you impact other lives in a positive way. Whether you are a doctor, lawyer, policeman, trash collector, schoolteacher, or sales clerk, does not matter." I thought for a moment, but was perplexed by what he had said. Grandfather proceeded on with his advice. "Take one of my neighbors, the single mother of two children, who works as a cashier during the day and cares for her children. At work she smiles at those who go through her register and greets them warmly. When she is with her children she shows them patience, love, and

understanding. She instructs and guides her children to become good people and good citizens. These are very important matters, and no doubt this woman is having a profound impact upon her children's lives. She also positively impacts the lives of others. Each Sunday she volunteers to help with the service at her church, and she also helps out with a Girl Scout troop. She participates in the PTA at her children's school. She is leading her life in such a way as to make a positive impact on the lives of others."

Grandfather paused in his lesson, but his pace actually quickened. He seem invigorated by the opportunity to share his advice with me as he continued. "Everyone has the opportunity to contribute in his or her own way. The most important thing for you to determine is how you, personally, will impact the lives of others, and what can you do to increase the magnitude of that impact."

Grandfather passed away during the summer of the following year. But his words of wisdom continue with me, and have brought to me a renewed sense of purpose and enjoyment in life. I realize now that each of us, whatever our chosen occupation and whatever our situation in life, has the opportunity, each day, to significantly enhance the enjoyment of life for those around us in some way.

At the Joseph Financial Group, we encourage you to get involved and help out others. We encourage Citrus County residents to visit the Nature Coast Volunteer Center (527-5430) for information on volunteer opportunities. Or find a way to support your favorite charitable organization and others around you, through volunteering, financial contributions, or simply lending a helping hand and a caring spirit.

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