

THEY DON'T MAKE FRIENDS LIKE THEY USED TO

Jim McCrocklin was the second person I met in Wimberley when I moved here in 1983. For an unknown reason we hit it off. I didn't know who he was, what he had done, just a deep abiding respect developed. Before I bought the Wimberley View in 1987, I asked Jim's advice. When my father died in 1988, I turned to him for the fatherly counsel I had lost. He was always there for me. When I started the Century-News in Dripping Springs, he again shared his wisdom. Financial questions were fodder for his mind. Always listening, always two or three steps ahead of me. I could just call and he would say, "Come on down." Upon arrival, he would ask, "Do we need to go in the back?" Never was there something else more important than the problem to be discussed. One thing you could always count on was walking away with a decision that you knew was correct when you left. He was always willing to give a humble helping hand.

Once when we were discussing politics, he share some details of his life in Washington, D.C. He invited me to his home to further inspect some memorabilia. Several boxes and several hours later, Jim and I had meticulously gone through notes and papers of his past when he worked for his life-long friend L.B.J. When I asked about one item, he replied it's nothing, look at it if you want." It was an ornate Christmas card with a return address which only said, "The White House", no city state or zip required. I slowly opened it and underneath the mechanically written signature was a handwritten message, "we'll be at the ranch all of Christmas week, don't call, just come, we would like to see you," with an additional "L" underneath. Another item was a picture of L.B.J.'s inauguration in 1965, which showed a crew-cut dark haired Jim and Mrs. McCrocklin seated immediately next to President and Mrs. Johnson in the inaugural parade reviewing box. Had I asked he would have probably said that was nothing also.

I had the privilege of seeing him go to bat for Wimberley when the Senior Citizens were trying to buy the Thrift Store building from FDIC in the late 1980's. He was directly responsible for the acquisition of land the Visitor's Center is located on in 1991. He personally guaranteed the note for the Winters-Wimberley-Keith house that was purchased and paid in full earlier this month. As someone said to me today when we were reminiscing "A great Oak has fallen in the woods."

Jim McCrocklin not only taught us how to live, but how to die. Throughout his battle with kidney disease and dialysis, he continued to be an example and set a standard few will achieve.

He rubbed elbows both the most influential and most common everyday people on earth. Anyone who had the privilege to have known him will miss him. I know he will leave a void that will be impossible to fill for many others as well as myself. They just don't make friends like they used to.