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## FORWARD

Where do I begin??

I was born October 12, 1949 at 1153 Balkin Street, Houston, Texas in Harris County- phone # Olive 44134. Of my parents Walter Doyle Shultz, and Geraldine (Jeri) Reeder Shultz, born 1930 and died right before Christmas 1985. She was 56 and way too young to die. My mom's dad was Virgle Reeder, who died about 1981, and her mother died when my mom was 11 years old. Her step mom (Hattie Reeder) raised her. Her brothers were Herbert, Pete and Otis, her sisters were, Navolene & Ruby. My dad was born Feb. 15 1924 and died April 2010. His dad was Cary D. Shultz (1874-1958). My dad's mom Margaret died in 1952. He was 1 of 12 children (6 girls & 6 boys). C.D. Shultz fought in the Spanish-American war, and His Dad (my great grandfather) fought in the Civil War. My Dad's brothers were George, Bill, Cary Jr., John, & Robert, his sisters were May, Kate Lillian, Sara, Becky, and Betty.

Heinrich Christoff Schultz born in Germany in 1680, died 1734, begat; Johan Valentin Schultz

born in Cosby Tn. 1715-1787 begat; Johan Martin Schultz, begat; George Shultz, born 1798, wife Mary begat; Martin V. Shultz, born 1822 begat; Carey D. Shultz, born 1874-1858 & wife Margaret Smeltzer. He had a wife before Margaret, Begat; Walter Doyle Shultz, Feb. 15 1924-April 2010, and wife (my Mom) Geraldine (Jeri) begat;

Ross Wayne Shultz Oct. 12 1949- ,wife Nancy Sue begat; Andrea Leigh, Susan Lee, and Matthew Wayne.

On my Mothers' side Martin Reeder, Born July 1855 and great grandma Vine, from Pickett Co. begat; Grandpa Virgle Reeder, born 1899,from Pickett Co and his wife, my grandma Elizia; Begat Geraldine (Jeri) Reeder, my Mom. Born June 12<sup>th</sup> 1929, in Pickett Co..

My brothers; Doyle, Scott, and Todd, and my sister Karen

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## 1. IN THE BEGINNING.....

I guess I'll start my story in 1950. The country was getting ravaged by the Polio epidemic, and it had everybody scared to death. At 18 months old I was struck with a bout of polio. Now, when I say a bout, I don't mean a mild case like some of the kids who just ended up a little sick and in a wheelchair; I caught a full blown, knockin' on deaths door, plan the funeral, *real* bad case. After a long stay in the hospital, (seems in my memory that I was there for about 17 years give or take, but then again I was only 18 months old so don't hold me to that), the prognosis was *not* good. In fact, that no-nonsense, black and white, book-smart doctor told my mom, "Not only will he not ever walk; he will not even be able to wiggle his toes." He tried his very hardest to convince her to just give up.

Did I mention I was living in an iron lung at this time? An iron lung is a contraption about the size of a giant Zeplin and resembles a monster, but was more like a rounded jail cell and definitely not the place this two year old wanted to be. But, since I couldn't breathe on my own, unfortunately it was a necessity. Along with all the spinal taps, shots and

that iron lung, it sure wasn't much of a life for a little kid.

My Mom wouldn't listen to those doctors or anyone for that matter when it came to trying to get her to give up on me, no not one bit. She knew from deep inside herself, in that place where moms just know, that I would walk again and more, that I would be ok. Mom was the only one though that believed that, my Dad, had been convinced by those same experts and he tried and tried, even enlisting several other doctors' help, to convince her to come out of "denial".

You see, he'd heard the stories and listened to the doctors and he was convinced the best thing to do was for everyone to just make up their mind that I was going to die, or at least be an invalid for the rest of my life and just move on. But not my mom, she wasn't buying that thinking; she wouldn't give up, despite the doctors, the other experts and even my dad.

Well, after several months I begin to wiggle my toes and fingers. My mom, my constant companion and advocate was the only one who saw this 'miracle' as a sign of hope. The doctor's kept saying "that's all he'll ever do, don't get your hopes up because that's all he will ever do." The doctors kept trying to treat my Mom as if she were still in denial. They tried saying that's probably all he'll ever do.

Mom and Dad came very close to a divorce over this, but she held her ground, they did not divorce and I kept improving until I finally was able to come home from the hospital. The truth is..... well..... God had a whole different plan.

After being delivered from polio, I had to learn to walk all over again, which isn't a huge big deal I guess since I had only started walking the first time a few months before getting sick anyway. The worst part was after I was 'better'.

Now, I know that sounds strange but, the parents of the kids on our block wouldn't let their children play with me; they thought I was dirty or contaminated, or worse. I guess it's no different than now when people get sick with a contagious disease but to a small child it sure was a scary and lonely experience. I guess, well... I know, it was scary for them too, but I sure didn't get that at the time. People back then didn't understand polio. I guess most still don't.

## A. SKIPPY

But....I had this mutt of a dog named Skippy and he played with me.

He didn't care one bit that I had polio. That dog of mine, by the way, was HUGE. Skippy was so big that he was only a little bit shorter than me, and I think around, oh.... 200 pounds and a vicious guard dog. But, that scraggly, long haired, ferocious giant was my friend (my only friend for a while). I guess I should probably admit that Skippy only weighed fifteen pounds and was scared of just about everything but me. But to little kid, he sure was big and brave.

Well anyway, we had this gigantic, vast fenced-in back yard with a swing set, and a sand box where me and Skippy the giant mutt dog played together almost every day. That backyard was like the Tundra, or maybe the Great Plains (in reality it was a 40'x50' backyard), but for me, it was my domain. I couldn't even begin to tell you all the adventures we had, trekking across that enormous yard, scaling mountains, fighting Indians, shooting bad guys, saving the world, and discovering new lands like Lewis and Clark.

That was us, Ross and Skippy, we were a team, we were partners, and more important we were best friends.

After a couple of years of just me and Skippy playing alone in the Tundra things finally started getting' better and I got to start playing with the

kids in the neighborhood (at least the ones who could brave the distance and elements just to get into my backyard). And, I had trained Skippy to be just slightly less dangerous, I guess all those adventures had taken their toll on that poor ole' dog.

A bunch of us kids started a club called THE BROKEN ARROW; of course we let Skippy join too.

We sure was young at age 6.

## B. MORE NEEDLES

There are a lot of things over the next couple of years that stick out. Like for instance the time several years later that I was riding in my Dads 1950 Plymouth.

That day, don't remember the weather but I do remember that he suddenly slammed on the brakes. I don't recall what happened, maybe a dog ran out in the road, maybe another car slammed on their breaks, and maybe, just maybe he simply wasn't paying attention. But anyway, when he slammed on those brakes I went flying across the back seat like a carnival acrobat that had been shot out of a canon. You see, I was standing in the back seat, we didn't have no seatbelt, and wouldn't have wore 'em anyway.

Well, I flew so hard that I went over the front seat and hit my head on the dash board. I don't remember a whole lot of details but that there was a lot of blood, and me getting 7 stitches right on my forehead.

Now that was not a pleasant experience. After all them years of doctors and that iron lung and stuff, my idea of doctors was just the guys in the white jackets that poked stuff in ya with giant swords they like to call needles, and squirt stuff in ya that they promise will make it hurt less, (never will understand how the stuff that is supposed to numb ya hurts worse than that cut did).

*You know I remember a lot about my early years, but, I don't remember being born. But I do remember the first time I had to have my diaper changed, and my first tooth.*

I honestly can still see my first day of school way back in kindergarten. I remember I got mad, really mad, not just a little upset, but I'm talking temper-tantrum, can't believe my momma didn't whoop my behind for acting like a fool, mad. And all because I couldn't take my lunch to school like my big brother, Doyle did. I guess, it was because I only got to go for a half day. But I sure did wanna take me a packed lunch.

Man, I still hate that.

### C. THE FLOOD

A few years later it had been raining for a couple of days, raining might not be the best description of it, it poured buckets, night and day like maybe we should be buildin' n Ark kinda rain. The kinda rain like only Texas can have, I guess cause there is nowhere for it to go, but it just kept coming, and I was at school.

They wouldn't let us go home from school cause the streets were flooded real bad, it was over the tops of the cars already. And nobody thought that rain would carry on that way, but they were wrong.

Was I ever scared! The thought of staying away from my Mom, my security blanket, my constant-for another night- I started to panic. Everything started closing in on me, and my mind starting racing like a kid caught stealing candy from the penny candy store around the corner. I mean with all the memories I still had from having polio and all those nights I spent in at the hospital when Mom had to go home and take care of her family (my Dad & Dolye). I did not, I mean I REALLY DID NOT want to stay another night, away from her. I COULDN'T do it. To heck with my dad and brother, I wanted her with me.

So while the other kids thought about the fun they'd have being stuck at that school and they started getting all rowdy and stuff, well..... I waited. And waited, and waited. Waited with my nose

pressed against the glass in my class room, anxious, scared, nervous, and panicking I watched. I don't know, maybe in hopes the rain would quit, so I could make my dash down those four city blocks to where I belonged. I thought for a minute that I could make a raft like Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer, or swim like I was being chased by an alligator. Maybe the teacher wouldn't notice that I snuck out and I'd be home before anybody realized I was even gone. That's it, I could make it, I 'm sure of it.

'Bout the time I had made up my mind that I was gonna make a run for it I heard the most amazing sound and for a minute I thought I was seein' a mirage. My eyes must be playing tricks on me cause there came my Dad, The Hero, (a super hero without the cape-but he didn't need one that day). He came right up the middle of the street in his boat, motor running and everything. I told ya it was raining hard!

My dad pulled that boat right up to the front of the school house and picked Doyle and me up, that outboard motor running wide open he took towards home. We rode right up the middle of the street, and we weren't even stopping at the red lights. What a relief. I was home, safe, soaking wet and still with all my insecurities in tack, but we were home. Safe and settled in, I was where I belonged.

Don't remember if I ever told my dad he was my hero, or if even my mom ever understood how bad I NEEDED to be home, but I sure was glad to be there.

By the way, I went to Hartsfield Elementary school, you know, even back then we had to have a driver's license, issued by the city of Houston, to ride our bikes. Boy, that's a lot to put on a little kid. Guess they thought there was enough maniacs on the road already.

We lived in a neighborhood that was made up almost entirely of young families; seems like everybody had children around my age. When I was 8 there was a girl who lived next door, and she was pretty, I mean real purty, this girl could make you fall off yer roller skates, or break your neck twisting around to get another look pretty. I'm talking can't concentrate on my chores but I didn't care pretty. She was the first person, really the first girl outside our family that I ever kissed. You know, I can't really swear I kissed her, but thinking back I sure did want to, maybe I had imagined it so many times that it just felt real, but I think I did.

Eight years old is kinda young, but she sure was pretty and maybe it's just fun believing that's the way it happened.

You know, living in a sub-division during the 50's, in Houston wasn't a bad place at all to be. We had a lot of fun. We'd go snake hunting, 'cause back then Houston wasn't so grown up with building and strip malls and such. There were plenty of places we could walk to, we'd turn over rocks and old logs and catch all kinds of snakes. Boy did they come in all different colors. We didn't know what brand they were, but heck, we were only 8 years

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