



**Tribute to
THOMAS G.
BROWN**

1942 - 2013

*By "Auntie" Cinita (Davis) Brown,
daughter of Coma Davis and sister to Tom's mother, Minnie*

*Photos & Layout by Kenneth Brown,
son of Kiree (Hartley) & Orville "Jake" Brown*

Thomas Gerald Brown, the youngest of six children born to John Lihu Brown and Minnie Ellen Davis Brown made his arrival with the March winds of 1942. At the time of his arrival, his two older sisters, Julia Mae and Zola Faye were in their early teens. Some of their first thoughts about their baby brother could have been, “Can you believe that one little boy baby can create so much extra washing?” Remember, the washing was still being done on a washboard in a tub of water heated on the wood cook stove or perhaps outside in iron kettle over a fire.



Zola Brown with her brothers, Tom and Jim

Bob, the twelve year old brother, probably thought, “Well, now I’ll have two little brothers that will want to go with me every time I leave the house. I won’t even be able to hunt rabbits by myself. I thought Jim was enough for me to have to put up with.”

And Joann, the little sister, could have thought, “Oh good, a real live doll for me to play with—but this boy doll sure has a head full of hair and it all sticks straight up.”

We can only imagine the thinking that went on in the Brown home at the time of Tom’s arrival, but we can be certain of a few facts. Tom Brown undoubtedly learned to work at a very early age and developed life long work ethics. We can be positive about this because his father, John Brown, was a hard-working man and he taught and expected all of his children to work.

With confidence, we can say that Tom Brown and his siblings always had good food to eat, clean clothes to wear, and a mother with a loving and forgiving heart and a listening ear. We know this to be a fact because Minnie Davis Brown was his mom. She truly was the embodiment of an ideal mother and homemaker. She could take what seemed like a very few simple ingredients and turn out a bountiful meal—food enough

to feed her family and any of the multitude of Brown or Davis relatives or even a stranger who happened by at mealtime.

Minnie had experience at caring for children before her children were born. Her own mother died when she was fourteen years old and she, as an older sister, helped care for her younger siblings. Life was not easy for Minnie so she learned many necessary work endeavors as well as coping skills that served her well throughout her lifetime.

Tom was born at Whitescreek southeast of Ava but spent a lot of his early years at “Sand Ridge,” the name given to the farm south of Ava where John “Root” and Rebecca Herndon Davis, had lived and where “Root” had planted the big orchard. They were the grandparents of Tom’s mother, Minnie Davis.



Jim & Tom Brown

Coma & May (Stockwell) Davis Family
(Photo taken not long before May's death on May 6, 1922)



Back: Coma, May, Thelma, Raymond, Minnie (Tom's mother)
Front: Cleo, Geneva, Marion and Russell

Photo from Glen Dale Hartley -- Family of Isaac S. & Margaret (Manning) Brown -- circa 1920

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Seated (L-R): Isaac S. & Margaret (Manning) Brown holding the twins (maybe Veda left and Naida right);
Standing (L-R): Abraham Manning (Margaret's father, Louis (standing between his parents);
Velma, Lula, & Everett (at end); Seated in car (L-R): John and Clarence

After the deaths of John & Rebecca, Coma Davis and his seven children, including Minnie, Tom's mother, lived on this place. Minnie and John moved to this farm about 1940 when Grandpa Coma Davis left it to operate the little Hest Store on Mo. Highway 5.

A mile or so from the Hest Store was the Spring Creek Store, owned and operated by Isaac Brown, Tom's paternal grandfather. Isaac and Margaret Manning Brown's home was near this store. This was where they reared their family of nine children, including their oldest son, John, Tom's father.

Tom grew up among these grandparents, the many Davis and Brown aunts and uncles, and the dozens and dozens of cousins. Perhaps this influenced his becoming such a family oriented man. Tom Brown truly loved and appreciated his family and friends.

Tom's parents had two small children when the Great Depression began. Three more were born as it lingered through the 1930s. The 1940s along with America's being in World War II brought new problems, new work possibilities. In 1943, John and Minnie decided to go to Washington and seek work there. As previously stated, both John and Minnie were hard, conscientious workers and had taught their children to work. In Washington, all of the family members worked—worked and saved every possible dollar. The family's plan was to save enough money to buy a farm in Douglas County. Before Tom started school, this goal had been accomplished. John, Minnie, and the four younger children, Bob, Joann, Jim, and Tom came home to their beloved Ozarks. John and Minnie bought their farm west of Ava in the Goodhope Community. John bought a herd of cows, built a grade-A dairy barn, and the work of running a farm—truly a family farm—was begun.

Tom attended school at Goodhope where his favorite subjects were recess and baseball. He never saw himself as the class clown, but I am sure his teachers did. Where Tom was found, there would be laughter, a practical joke, and a good time. Tom worked with his family on the farm especially at milking the cows. He experienced the normal events common to boys growing up in the Ozarks—learning to swim in Beaver, fishing and hunting, smoking with Brother Jim and Cousin Clifford Lansdown (and getting caught by Mama Minnie and Aunt Geneva), learning to drive and getting his first car, and reluctantly going to Church at Goodhope with his parents.

In 1961, a young lady in the Goodhope community caught and held Tom's eye and his attention.



Her name was Sandra Sue Lethco. Tom talked to his mother about her, about the possibility of marrying her. Minnie's response was, "Son, I don't know about that. Sue is so skinny and frail. I'm afraid she'd be so sickly and you'd have to carry her on a pillow for all of her life." Well, Tom married "little" Sue on March 25, 1961. Minnie and Sue became real soul mates and she later said, "Well, Sue is the healthiest person in our family." Sue and Minnie joined forces in prayers that



**Sue & Tom Brown with their children
Dianne and Rodney**

they could see Tom turn his life around. God heard and answered these prayers.

Tom and Sue lived around Ava for most all of their married life. Tom farmed and drove a truck. In 1975, they bought their place on O highway and this has been their home since then. Tom often remarked that he had lived there so long that all of the bill collectors knew where to find him. Tom left this home and moved to Heaven on April 5, 2013.

After Tom's conversion, he worked as hard for the Lord as he had for Satan during the years before his salvation experience. Tom said that he could never forget, never escape, the prayers his mother had prayed for him.

Tom had a talent for music and for writing. I believe those who knew him would say this was truly a God-given gift. He used this gift for writing gospel songs. He did not claim to have written the songs, instead he would say, "God gave me another song. Would you like to hear it?" His guitar was always nearby, and if you were fortunate, he would play and sing it for you.



Tom and Sue traveled all over the area singing and playing at churches, rest homes, and at various events. Tom always let his listeners know that he was singing for God's glory. Some of the words Tom wrote—from the songs that God gave him—express his thoughts and let us remember the "Real Tom Brown." Think of him and as you read the words of his songs:

INSURANCE PLAN

*Well, I'll tell you a story
About an insurance plan
It's not taking your money
But putting your life in God's hand.*

*Well, the premiums are cheap
Now that's what they say
All you have to do
Is fall on your knees and pray.*

*The policy has no fine print
You have to read
Just the Holy Bible
Is all you'll ever need.
Read it and use it daily
And you will understand
That you're just a part of God's
Insurance Plan.*

*It's not a banker's life
But it's better anyway
It has a grace period
That's not just thirty days.*

*It's for the rest of your life
Or as long as you can stand
And a promise of a home
Up in glory land
It's got triple indemnity
It's not too bad
I guarantee
You'll have three times as much as you ever
had.*

*It's a lot better insurance than a no fault insurance plan.
It offers you a chance to shake Jesus' hand.*

REPEAT CHOURS:

*Read it and use it daily
And you will understand
That you're just a part of God's Insurance Plan.*

I'M ON MY WAY TO HEAVEN BUT I'M ONLY HALFWAY HOME

*I've traveled a long way down life's road,
And there's been times I've carried a mighty
heavy load.*

*But then I met the Master
The best friend I've ever known
Now I'm on my way to Heaven
But, I'm only halfway home.*

*I must cross the Jordan River
I have to fight the raging tide
If I want to be with Jesus
Who's waiting on the other side.
I need him now, more now than I have ever
known
For I'm on my way to Heaven but I'm only
halfway home.*

*I must fight the good fight and I must finish
the course
But to find the strength I need for that
I must go straight to the source
Welcome faithful servant, won't you come on in
When I hear those words at last
I'll know I'm home again.*

KING, MASTER, SAVIOR AND FRIEND

*King, Master, Savior and Friend
Alpha, Omega, the Beginning and End
Love that's made perfect
Mercy without end
King, Master, Savior and Friend.*

*Lord, keep me humble, Lord, keep me weak
Teach me to listen, till I know how to speak
Lord, please remind me lest I ever forget
Just where you brought me from
And I'm not home yet.*

*Lord, give me strength to climb another hill
Lord, give me courage to always do your will
Lord, please remind me of the price to set me free
Your precious blood on Calvary.*

Tom and Sue's CD titled "A Good Time To Call" contains these songs and others that he wrote. This CD



will be always be treasured by his family and friends. On this CD and a second CD titled "Half Way Home," Tom and Sue were part of a group once called "Spoken For" and then "Faith Full." Other members were Cindy Winslow, Susan Sinclair and Mary Baumgartner.

Tom sent a CD to Bob Husky's sister, Suzette Husky, and she wrote a poem and sent it to Tom with her thank you letter. She ended her poem to Tom with these words:

***Yes, there's a spot in God's choir
Somewhere up in the blue
Where Jesus and His Angels have
A spot reserved for you!
They're all awaiting there for you
And the music you can bring
God has a wonderful new song
That he wants you to sing.***

Tom has joined God's choir. I feel sure his message to us would be, "Let not your heart be troubled...I'm waiting for you."

In addition to his wife, Sue, Tom is survived by his three children, Terry and Melissa Cornelius, Rodney and Lisa Brown, and Dianne Brown; four grandchildren, Savannah Cornelius, Delmar and Dennis Oliver, and Kayli Brown; one brother Jim Brown and two sisters Zola Lutz and Joann Silvey.