

## chapter 7.3

### GARY DEAN HARTLEY

Eldon & Verda's third-born (b. 1962)

*Written by Gary Hartley*

**M**y name is Gary Dean Hartley, the youngest of three sons born to Eldon Leon Hartley and Verda Florence (Burleson) Hartley. I was born on February 6, 1961 in Wichita KS and was raised there. I attended school in Haysville KS and graduated from Campus High School in 1979. Presently I reside in Wichita with my wife, Jennifer. I have two daughters, two stepsons, and four grandchildren.

#### **Childhood Memories of the Family**

My Grandma Hartley lived in Ava, MO, which was a 6-7 hour drive from our home in Wichita. In spite of the distance, we still managed to make the trip 3 or 4 times a year. I remember how long and boring the ride seemed at times, especially since I had no little brother or sister to argue and fight with along the way. No matter what time of the day or night we would arrive, Grandma Hartley was waiting up for us. She was a very loving and caring person and seemed to be liked by everyone who knew her. I will always be reminded of the flower beds which surrounded Grandma's house. Her flowers attracted dozens of hummingbirds, and I was determined to catch one and bring it back to Wichita for my friends to see. I would spend countless hours chasing hummingbirds around her house.

When I finally gave up, Grandma would always let out a laugh and ask me how many I had caught that day. My response was always the same. She must have felt sorry for me, because she would pull out her coin purse and count out enough change for me to go down the street for an ice cream cone.

Needless to say, my friends never saw one of Grandma's hummingbirds. During many of our trips to Ava my father would take us to Grandma's old farm. I always enjoyed my father's stories about growing up during the depression and how hard it was to make ends meet. Aunt Kiree, who was my father's oldest sister lived just a few blocks from Grandma. Aunt Kiree was a very gentle and kind person and I always looked forward to her picnic lunches alongside the creek just outside of Ava. To this day I don't believe I have had a tuna sandwich that would top Aunt



Kiree's.

My father and mother were very family oriented and gatherings with aunts, uncles, and cousins were common. Uncle William (Lawrence) was my father's older brother and he lived on a farm with his wife, Aunt Mina and their children. I looked forward to the visits to their house and always managed to find some mischief to get into with my cousins (Richard, Barbara, and Steve).

There was never a dull moment. Uncle Lawrence was quite the prankster and pinned me with the nickname "Dino", which stuck with me for years. My mother and Aunt Mina were very close and provided each other with much support and encouragement during rough times. I can remember my mother referring to Aunt Mina as her sister on a number of occasions.

We were also close to my father's younger sister, Aunt Dochia (Levon) and her family. My Aunt Levon was always a very positive and fun person to be around and I still look forward to our visits. Her children, Sue and Joe, were always a big part of our life, and we shared many a family dinner together. Sue and Joe were close in age to my older brothers and I enjoyed listening to their stories about growing up. Sue, her husband Larry Masters, and their children Larry Jr., Terry, and Tameria (Tammy) lived near us in Wichita. Larry Jr, Terry, Tammy and I were close in age and had a lot of great times riding motorcycles or playing ball together. My mother considered Sue the daughter she never had, and they talked nearly every day. I know it was very comforting to my mother in her later years to have someone like Sue to confide in.

The family bonds and memories I have from my childhood are special to me, and I feel they are a big part of who I am today. Times were not always easy, but we all managed to make the best of them.

### After High School

My parents always encouraged us to participate in sports, so athletics were a big part of my life as a child.. After graduation, a friend introduced me to technical rock and ice climbing, which became a passion for me. When work and school permitted I was off to Colorado to pursue my new interest.. I will never forget my mother's reaction when she finally found out what I was really doing on these trips.

After a few years of the climb-

### Gary's Life in a Nutshell

- Born 1961 in Wichita KS
- Grew up in Wichita KS.
- Graduated Campus High 1970
- BS in Geology from Wichita State in 1988.
- MS in Technical Education from Pittsburg State in 1992
- Married in 1985
- Children:
  - Elisia
  - Danielle
- Married Jennifer Biel in 2007
- Lives in Wichita KS

Below, ca 1970—Gary Hartley (center) with his mother, Verda (Burleson) Hartley and his brother, Jerry Hartley.





Gary and his wife, Jennifer



ing lifestyle, I felt it was time to get serious about my education, so I enrolled at Wichita State University as a full time student and a short time later was employed by United Parcel Service. After completing my sophomore year at WSU, I received an academic scholarship and was able to graduate with a B.S. in Geology in 1988.

After graduation I accepted a position with a Safety and Environmental company and was employed with them for 22 years. After a short break from college, I decided to return to school and received my Master's Degree Technical Education from Pittsburg State University in 1992.

While a student at WSU, I met and married Melonda Roberson, and we were blessed with two wonderful daughters, Elisia and Danielle. We built a home just outside of Rosehill KS, and the girls attended Rosehill and Derby schools until their graduation.

In 1995 I received a promotion from my employer which required me to relocate to Oklahoma City. At first I felt good about the move, but I soon became homesick and found myself traveling back to Wichita nearly every weekend. When my father passed away in 2000, I became even more anxious to return to Wichita. In 2001, I was offered another position within the company, which was my ticket home. I eagerly accepted the promotion and have lived in Wichita ever since.

In 2006, I was blessed with the love of my life, Jennifer (Biel) Hartley. We were married in September of 2007, and in 2011, we moved into my childhood home. Jennifer has been active in Special Olympics as a coach for nearly 20 years and is employed as a health care professional. My family now includes two stepsons, Levi and Joshua Foust, and two additional grandchildren Dakota and Nova. .

### Our Children/Grandchildren

**Elisia (Hartley) Wilson**—The oldest of our children was born on June 14, 1982, in Wichita, KS. Elisia attended Rosehill KS schools and excelled in both soccer and track. After her sophomore year of high

At left, July 30, 2008—at the funeral luncheon for Gary's mother, Verda (Burlison) Hartley. (L-R), Gary and Jennifer behind with Gary's daughters, Danielle, and Elisia in front.

school, Elisia transferred to Derby KS High School to play on the varsity soccer team. Upon graduation from Derby in 2000, Elisia received an athletic (soccer) scholarship to Cloud County KS Community College.

Elisia lives with her husband Caleb Wilson in Virginia Beach, VA. Caleb is a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy, and Elisia is a health care professional and photographer. Elisia is still involved in soccer, both as a player and coach.

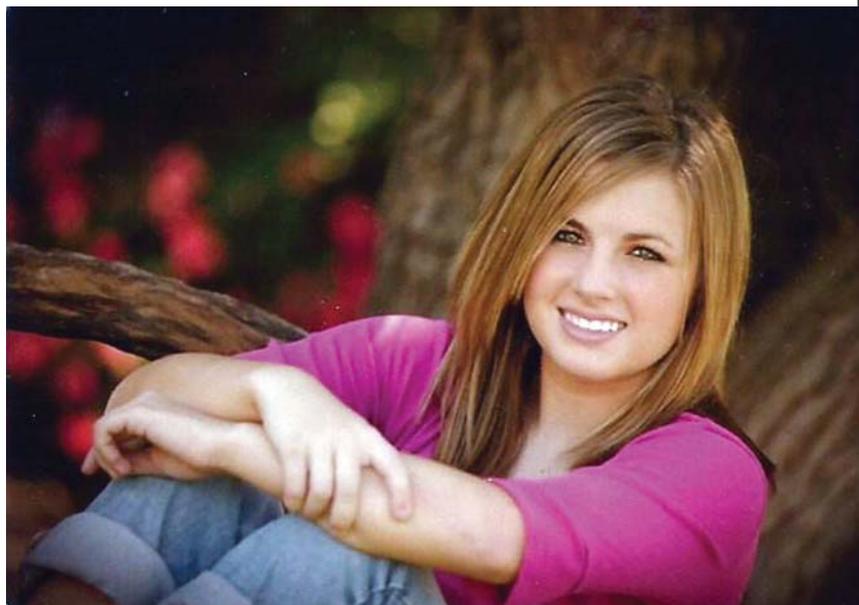
On January 25th 2002 Elisia blessed us with our first granddaughter, Taylor Faeon Wilson and our first grandson Landon on April 14th 2006--both of whom are active in sports and music.

**Danielle Hartley**—My youngest daughter was born on August 24th 1988, in Wichita, KS. Danielle attended Rosehill KS schools where she played soccer and volleyball. After graduating from Rosehill High School in 2006, she attended University of Kansas on an academic scholarship and graduated from KU with a Bachelors degree in Accounting in 2011.

Danielle currently lives in Boston, MA where she works for a Marketing firm. She is attending school for her Master's degree and studying for the CPA exam. While working in Boston, Danielle met her fiancé, Nick Moise, and they have set their wedding date for October 2015.



Above, Gary's daughter, Elisia (Hartley) Wilson and her children—Landon (in front) and Taylor.



At left, Gary's daughter, Danielle Hartley

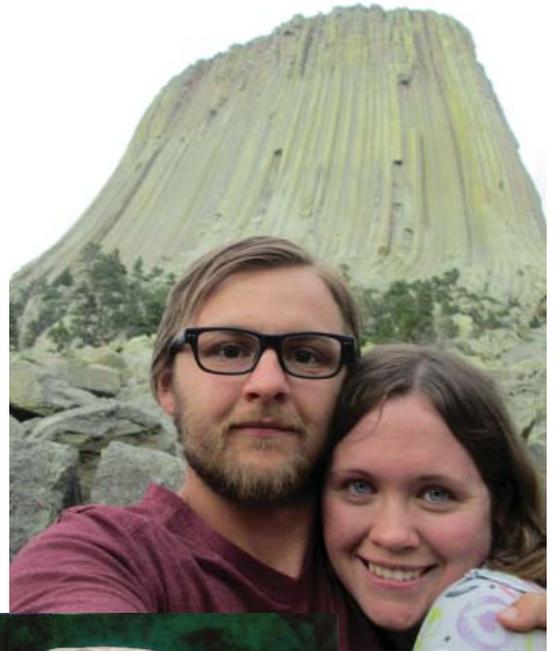


Above, Levi Foust (on right) with friend, Alexis & Ilea.

### Jennifer's Children / Gary's Step-Children

**Levi Foust**—Levi is Jennifer's oldest son and was born on June 26th 1989, in Wichita, KS. He is currently employed by Bombardier Learjet as an A&P Mechanic.

**Joshua Foust**—Josh is the youngest of Jennifer's sons and was born on August 2nd 1990 in Wichita, KS. Josh is married to Samantha (Reynolds) Foust and they have two children--a son, Dakota Dean born Jan. 10th 2012, and a daughter, Nova Ann, born April 23rd 2013. Josh and his father operate a lawn and tree service just outside of Wichita.



At right, Joshua & Samantha Foust



Above, Dakota Foust



At right, Nova Foust

At right, Gary Hartley's Children. L-R: Elissa & Caleb Wilson, Danielle Hartley, Levi Foust, and Joshua Foust. The relationship of the Hartleys to the ape in the right background is debatable.



At left, 1992—Eldon & Verda (Burleson) Hartley at their 50th Wedding Anniversary

At right, Oct. 2014—Gary Hartley (on left), David Gardenhire (son of Evelyn Brown Elliott), and Kenneth Brown. At Gary's home in south Wichita

