

Plain Brown Rapper

Special Edition Honoring our Sister Vivian Grace Brown Beardslee

June, 2001

*Do not stand at my grave and weep;
I am not there, I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow;
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain;
I am the gentle autumn's rain.
When you awaken in the morning hush,
I am the swift uplifting rush
of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft star that shines at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry.
I am not there I did not die.*

Vivian Beardslee



Vivian Grace Beardslee

August 20, 1913 – May 29, 2001

She lived her life in the Grace of God

It rained that night. It rained on May 29th as Nancy was calling to give us the sad tidings of Vivian's passing. One of those wonderful ground soaking rains Vivian always prayed for when her beloved Texas became dry and parched. There was thunder and lightning with the rain, it was as though God was showering us with his tears for he knows how much we will miss her and as she entered into Heaven, there was thunderous applause from the angels greeting her and they put on a fireworks display so she could see her way. Somewhere up in heaven she is busy doing her many chores. There won't be a garden tractor for her to run or a chain saw to trim those pesky branches from the pecan trees but there will be many babies for her to fold into her arms and love. As Dick says, "Jesus probably has her playing the piano." She will be very content with her rocker and little charges at her feet.



The Memorial Service at the St Paul's Cumberland Presbyterian Church

Our sister, Vivian was born on what is now Warren AFB, then known as Fort D. A. Russell. Dad, Tandy Parks Brown, was a Sergeant in the 4th Field Artillery and mother, Grace Cleo Parker Brown was a homemaker. They lived in a tiny three room house which is still on the base and is now guest housing for visiting Officers.

Even as a tiny child, Vivian had an infectious laugh and mother often told of how she would climb up on someone's lap and say, "lets laugh" and sure enough, everyone laughed. Her laugh and smile are well known to all of us and there isn't any who can say she didn't affect our lives. She was our surrogate mother, big sister and just plain friend.

Her children remember her as a stern disciplinarian with unconditional love. She guided them through all their trials and tribulations with the best of care. Her grandchildren remember a grandmother who loved them deeply and gave them lots of advise and guidance. They are sad she is gone, but grateful for the pleasure they have from knowing her.

For several years, Vivian cared for her husband, Frank as he suffered the ravages of his Alzheimer's Disease and I'm sure none of us will ever know what a toll the burden took. During this time, she never complained or asked for help and remained cheerful and positive.

There are not enough wonderful and loving things you can say about Vivian. Things we could probably never say of anyone else because once the mold was made, it was broken and she remains a one of a kind human being. As you read the memories shared by family members, you will understand a woman who helped mother, cared for us as little children and carried her concern on into our adult lives. She always considered herself our guardian and we accepted all of her love.

Please remember her in her good times, remember her love and wonderful sense of humor and know she is right up there on God's right hand, giving out her motherly advise.

Many family members asked to have their memories presented here.

Charles remembers a time when he returned from the Marines and spent a summer with Vivian and Frank on the Farm down at Buckeye, Colorado. Charles remembers a hard working Vivian who made do with very little and still kept her wonderful smile and positive outlook. He remembers going with Frank to get slabs from the sawmill on Laramie Peak. He said on the trip back as they passed through Wheatland, Frank always stopped for a malt at the Wheatland Drugstore. Good times!

Dick remembers her as a great lady with so much faith. I hope the rest of us can learn from her example. Her love and care for Frank was extraordinary.

Nancy writes: "How do I express my feelings about Vivian? She was always a strong shoulder to cry on and always listened to me without being judgmental. A special presence in time of need.

Because I was only 5 years old when she and Frank were married, my memories at home are sketchy, but one summer during my teen years, I spent the summer with them in Lansing, Michigan. Vivian had surgery and Mom thought my presence in the household would help give her a break. What a wonderful experience it was!! We talked and became really good friends. She played her "honky tonk" piano and I really hated to come home.

Also a special memory for Bob and I was when our honeymoon was ending, we had spent all our money on the car and were in need of food and gas. We drove to the farm at Buckeye (out of Wellington, Colorado) and were treated to a real home cooked farm meal and tank of gas and lots of love. Needless to say, she was special to both of us.

A little trivia, on our wedding day, I tripped getting out of the car and tore my new nylons. Vivian to the rescue, we hurried into the church and she gave me her hosiery and then she proceeded to the wedding with bare legs.

We were fortunate to be able to see Vivian this past winter and we said what was in our hearts at that time. May God bless her and we all know she is with Frank and the family looking down on us."

Orpha sent along, "Vivian had a special way of warming our hearts. She always communicated in an upbeat way that left us knowing how much she cared and loved us. Her concern and interest in Leonard's health meant a lot to him. Vivian's advice to me on how to cope with death was a great help to me and has been shared with many of my friends. She said, 'I should think of the loss as a book that you open and close. The opening and closing of the book goes on and on but you are alive and must go on.' She was a wonderful sister-in-law who left me with many beautiful memories."

Mike wrote, "There are so many memories, it is hard to decide which to include. Vivian was always a second Mother to me and visits to her were always relished, especially when I was young. My first trip was to Lansing, Michigan, when I was about 5 years old. What a treat! All that way on the train, meeting my "OLD" nephews and niece, and seeing a place with trees everywhere. I remember Vivian encouraging Bob to take me to school for "show and tell" (this little guy is my uncle!!!). Later, when they were living on the farm in Colorado, the trips were even more fun and frequent. My fondest memories (and sometimes most painful memories when I tried to keep up with Bob and Bill - ant bites, wounds from riding a wagon down the sugar beet dump, being shoved under the covers after a bean dinner, etc.) were on the farm.

The memories that best tell what a truly good person Vivian was, however, came later. After Mom and Dad died, she was worried about me being an orphan and asked me to move to Austin so she and Frank could take care of me. The fact that I was 20 years old, in the Marines and soon to be married were never considered - she was just worried about her baby brother.

Nanette remembers when she was having trouble teaching Amy how to do things - Amy is left handed and Nanette is right handed. Vivian, being a southpaw, told her to show Amy how to do things by facing her.

In 1967, the University of Wyoming was invited to play in the Sugar Bowl on New Years Day, 1968. Nanette, the kids and I flew to Austin so she and Frank could baby-sit while we went to the game. She couldn't get us out the door fast enough, and made it plain there was no need for us to rush our return. She took Katy, who was just a few months old, and turned Bill and Amy over to Frank - there was no need for Nanette or me to be there. This was the trip where Amy, just learning to talk, came up with Uncle "Fink" and Bill asked Frank if he would be his Grandpa because Bill didn't have one.

Finally, both Nanette and I remember the afternoon we spent with her in Austin two years ago. Little did we know she would soon be going to the nursing home and never returning to her own house to live. She was so alert and happy and reveled in telling us stories about her early years, especially during the time she was dating Frank. I recounted these stories in an earlier "Rapper" and they are all well worth re-reading.

Vivian will be sorely missed by all of my family. She was very special to all of us."

Leah writes: "I was 6 or 7 years old when one of the funniest memories of Vivian happened. Everybody in the neighborhood knew better than to cross the Brown's but there was one boy – known as the 'Eastside Bully' named Wyman Graber. He was always causing trouble. One day as we were all playing in the park, which we Brown's thought we owned, this bully started teasing the younger kids so Vivian and Anna decided to straighten him out. They chased him home where he ran into his house, Anna ran in right behind him straight through his house where Vivian waited outside with a big stick and started beating him up. His mother called the police on the Brown girls but the police just laughed about the whole incident. Needless to say, we were never bothered by him again!!!

I'm sure I could fill a book of things I remember about Vivian as I was the 7th of the 17 children mother and dad brought into this world.

We all looked up to Vivian as a role model. She was a great sister to all of us."

Dolfe remembers Vivian's visit while Bob was stationed in Washington, D.C. She was only going to stay 3 days and be off because that was the amount of time she spent with other members of the family. Three days became 7 then 10 then two weeks. She made me promise I would never tell because she didn't want to hurt anyone else by staying longer at our house than she had with everyone else. It was so funny because visiting Washington is not just coming to see us, it is a visit to one of the most beautiful Capitals in the world and there was so much to see and do.

She loved Arlington Cemetery and always called us on July 4th to ask if we were watching the National Symphony on the steps of the Capital building. She loved the Kennedy Center where we saw the Premier of the "Vox Humana" played by the National Symphony and the performance of "Zorba The Greek" starring Anthony Quinn (which she thought was much too risqué). When night came and the bugler played "Taps" she tapped on our door to ask what it was. After that, she stayed awake each night until "Taps" was played and then she went to sleep. We ate at the Fish Market where a "Ragtime" piano player entertained us for most of an evening and traveled to the Gettysburg Battlefield and Lancaster, Pennsylvania where the Amish live. A bit of a skeptic, she thought perhaps they might have hidden plumbing and buried the cable so it would look like they didn't have any indoor plumbing or electricity. She couldn't imagine anyone living that way on purpose, guess she had to and didn't appreciate it at all. There were so many things she loved, the monuments at night, the Marine Corp Retreat at the Iwo Jima Memorial, the personal tour of the Organization of America States Headquarters Building arranged for us by Ambassador McGee. The OAS tour was delayed a day because the U.S. invaded Grenada and the entire delegation had arrived in all their big black limos. Even watching those activities was a treat. I could go on and on about a lady who loved to see and do but I'm sure you get the idea. She returned the following year so we could take her up to New England to see the fall colors. We stayed at the Groton Naval Station one night and in order to have her with us, we told them she was my mother. She said that was OK just for that night, but not say it again. We had a great laugh. The trip was a lot of fun and to this day I will always remember a Vivian who came to see what the capital was all about and left her loving imprint in our lives.

Pat writes: "We have had the blessings of knowing a grand lady in our sister Vivian. As the oldest of so many, she has had quite a story to tell and each of us is a part or chapter of this tale. I can claim Chapter 15 in her volume of siblings. I am sorry I was not closer in age to her because there is a lot of her history I know nothing about. My recollections of earlier years are vague, even when she and Frank came to stay before moving to Colorado. Even when they lived on the farm I don't have a lot of memories of Vivian except she was a lot like Mother, stern, organized and a task master. We didn't cross her but we also could cuddle and love her. She had an infectious laugh and a smile which lit up her face. For my senior trip in high school I spent a couple of weeks in Austin with her family. I got to know her a little better then. As the years went by she came to visit occasionally and she always seemed the same. She never aged. My most pride in having her around was her telling how she and mother would nurse either Bobby or myself when we were infants, depending on which one was available and which of us was hungry. I was fortunate enough to see her in January of this year. She was in the nursing home and other than her physical condition, she looked as young as I wanted her to look and we shared a few stories about my growing up. I will always love her and miss her and think of her as my 'other mother.'" ---

"Pattilu" (her name for me)



IN THE GOOD NEWS DEPARTMENT, MORE CONGRATULATIONS!!!!!!

Charles' Granddaughter **Tarah Margaret Norris** is graduating from the Port Jervis High School on June 22nd. Tarah graduates with a 3.7 GPA and will attend State University New York (SUNY) New Paltz, New York in August. She has been selected to play for the Women's Basketball Team for New Paltz, which she is extremely excited about and looking forward to participating in. Tarah received the Rotary Student Athlete Award for basketball, Sussex Bank Athlete of the Month Award and certificates of recognition and participation in Varsity Cheerleading and Varsity Basketball. (Her Mom, **Cindy Brown**, says she has been cheerleading since she was 6.)

Ryan Alexander Norris will be graduating from the USN Gunners Mate Tech School in Great Lakes, Illinois on June 20th. After a leave of 16 days at home, he will then be transferred to Norfolk, Virginia to attend a special tech school for 4 months..... then it's off to Hawaii for an assignment at Pearl Harbor Naval Station!!! Well, my guess is Cindy will be making some trips to Hawaii during his three year stay there.

Some additional information regarding **June's** grandson, **Gabe Smith**. His graduation from Bakersfield High School was on June 7th. He will be attending school at the University of California at Santa Barbara with two California grants and an endowment. Good job Gabe!

Our own Grandson, **Devon VanAlyne** will be graduating from the Navy's Nuclear Power School on June 27, and hasn't received his next assignment at this writing. He will enjoy a leave here in Cheyenne with us and in Gardnerville, Nevada with his parents, **Roger and Susan**.

And, if I may brag just a little, our Grandson, **David Nash, Barbara and Walt's** son, is currently on the Dean's List at Creighton University where he is in his third year of Pharmacy School. **David** and his wife, **Kimberly** are expecting our great grandbaby in October. Next year at this time, we can announce there is a "Doctor" in the house!

Leah and Willis's great granddaughter, **Ashley Monroe (Ricky Jean's daughter – Jeanne's granddaughter)** graduated from Estes Park High School and is planning on attending Tulsa University in Oklahoma in the fall. Congratulations!!!!!!

Their great grandson, **Michael White** graduated from East High School and plans on attending Laramie County Community College. He has been working throughout the school year at the law firm of Hirst and Applegate and will work with the City of Cheyenne over the summer months.. **Michael** is **Chana's** son.

Bob and Carolyn Beardslee's son in law, **Bruce Blazine** has been awarded the "SNOOPY" Award presented by the Space Flight Awareness division of NASA. This award is especially coveted because it is an award presented to only one percent of the space program workforce and given by the Astronauts to someone they feel has accomplished "OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE CONTRIBUTING TO FLIGHT SAFETY OR MISSION SUCCESS." The award is a sterling silver Snoopy lapel pin which was flown on a Space Shuttle Mission plus a certificate and commendation letter signed by the presenting astronaut. The family sends **Bruce** congratulations and I'm sure we aren't nearly as happy as those astronauts who put their safety in this young man's hands. **Bruce** is married to **Kristi Beardslee**.

In an earlier issue, **Pat** told us her Grandson, **Austin** was participating in the Wyoming Two Ball Championship. **Austin** and his partner, **Emmett** placed Second in the Regionals. **Austin** has had a busy year with all the work involved in earning the President's Student Service Award (75 hours of community service) and placing 4th in the Wyoming State Math Olympiad. National standings not in yet. His class just finished the "Wall of Tolerance" at their School. The dedication was held last week. The "Wall" is visible from I-25 and is truly a work of art. Congratulations for all your hard work!

GOOD JOB AND KEEP US INFORMED