

In remembrance of

**DR. FORREST C. "PHOG"
ALLEN
AND
HIS WIFE BESS**

39 pages in length

By his loving nephew

MILTON FORREST HUGHES

Age 87

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Memories of Phog and Bess Allen

My name is Milton Forrest Hughes. At age 87, I am the last living nephew of Dr. Forrest C. "Phog" Allen, connected by way of Bess, his wife. Bess (Milton) Allen and my mother, Ethel (Milton) Hughes, were sisters, and I received my middle name of Forrest as his namesake. Since I am now so old, but still mostly unimpaired in mind, I think I'd do well to write down my memories of my Uncle Forrest and Aunt Bess and their family of six children before my reflections are lost and gone.

Since Bess and Forrest both grew up in the same community, of Jackson County, Missouri, and since I was reared there also, I'll begin with some anecdotes about Bess. My mother told me many stories about her from their childhood years before Bess and Forrest began their romance in Independence High School well before they fell in love and married, and before she became his teammate in creating his amazing career and providing for his lifelong happiness.

To have known Bess Allen exclusively as an adult lady in Lawrence, her socially polished friends must have seen her only as a model mother of Phog's children, a community leader in church and civic organizations, and as a hostess of the highest standards of taste and charm. These friends would hardly have guessed that she was born to hard-toiling farm parents and reared in a log cabin. Her father, my grandfather Frank Milton, had barely three years of schooling. Emerging from devastation in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, he had come out to Missouri after the Civil War almost penniless—he actually had 11 cents—and at age fourteen, had worked near Lexington as a hired hand. There he saved his scant wages, married, and started a family of three children, Jim, Bess, and Grace. Somehow the Miltons continued earning and saving enough funds to make a down payment on a 100 acre tract of pastureland six miles southeast of Independence. It had a good cold water spring and a log cabin large enough to be called a house built right after the Civil War. The house showed its age, but had a walk in space at ground level for milking and sheltering cows and storing their feed. Two stories above housed the five-person family. From this home Bessie Evalina Milton, a bare-footed child, helped with all the chores required to transform this crude property into a productive dairy farm. To develop their tract and purchase more

acreage, parents and children had to work from dawn to dark constructing a much better home and farm buildings, breeding livestock, expanding their holdings, and sharing labors, joys, sorrows, and practical jokes with their widely dispersed neighbors from miles around.

Bess at age six began attending the Crackerneck School. It stood about two miles southeast of the log cabin house in which the Miltons lived before 1905. Each morning with her lunch in a little satchel, she walked along the dirt roads sometimes choked with dust, sometimes mired with muddy ruts full of water or ice. At school amidst a gathering of pupils ranging in ages from six through fourteen, she sat with fewer than twenty other children on plain wooden benches, learning all the well-drilled basics that Professor Boone could teach. He was a descendant of Daniel Boone, and he was a stern schoolmaster who dominated the boys with his dark frown, and if necessary, his vigorous cane. When Professor Boone pulled the last clang of the school bell each morning, they knew he meant business, and no monkey business.

He gave girls the roles of little school teachers by assigning them to pass their knowledge along to younger pupils. In the single room with all eight grades, sometimes embodied by only a pupil or two in each grade, they all often studied their various lessons aloud at the same time, but Professor Boone could move among them listening and correcting. Their "deportment" was almost faultless under Boone's vigilant eyes. Pupils of all levels, of course, could overhear the work of the classes above and below them. In that way they managed to anticipate the next lesson ahead and brush up the most recent lesson behind.

On a nail Boone's cane hung conspicuously, but he seldom had to use it. Everybody remembered vividly that it was in his reach. When he did apply it, boys seemed not to harbor resentment. Life in the country was hard. They knew the wages of sin, the frequent sufferings of death among their families and neighbors, and the miserable consequences of neglecting crops and livestock. Getting caned was something they could easily believe that they deserved and could soon forgive as punishment delivered for their own good.

All the pupils, parents, and community members used the title of "professor" to distinguish teacher William Boone in order to inculcate respect. Also, of course, those farmers knew nothing of college and university titles. Boone

probably had little more than a grade school education himself, but he had an iron grip on penmanship, phonetic spelling, arithmetic, the art of reading aloud with expression, and a few other subjects. He drove his curriculum home allowing no inattention or back sliding.

At recess the children could visit the outhouse and swing on the wild grapevines attached to the ancient trees that stood bordering the playground and overhanging the creek. The bigger boys played catch, cleaned boots, cut kindling, or sawed wood for the heat stove. Girls like Bess drew water for the drinking pail with its dipper, or played jacks, cut paper dolls, jumped rope, or janitored the schoolroom.

Another feature of Bess's elementary education was her taking part in the "entertainments" which Professor Boone scheduled at intervals. When there was no conflict with spring planting or harvest time, he often held evening programs in which all the school families could perform. Besides watching and hearing the children display their attainments, everybody even the toddlers and adults were welcome to "get up before the public" and make speeches. Some joined in primitive debates like "Which is better a horse or a cow?" Granddad Milton said his comical piece "My Sunday Britches," in which his pants blew off the clothes line during a storm. Too often Old Man Herman took the floor and ranted in favor of Socialism. Family quartets sang hymns. The school kids and even their preschool siblings got their moments of glory. Bess's little sister, Ethel at age four, was placed on Professor Boone's table and allowed to say her first memorized speech, with the all important gestures: "These are little hands I'm holding out to you, but someday when I'm older many useful things they'll do." The most elderly folk could tell tales of the Civil War, Battle of the Little Blue, and the first and second Battles of Independence. They could recall the Bushwackers led by William Quantrill and Bloody Bill Anderson, the Missouri train robbers, the Younger Brothers, the James boys, and the Dalton gang. The horses of these outlaws had left countless hoof prints all along the Crackerneck Road.

These school events combined the primitive talent show, the history lesson, and the PTA meeting. Out in the backwoods of our county, around 1900, "entertainments" like these represented "culture", and gave the farmers and their wives something to think about and marvel at during their brutal daily toil. They

provided a big part of the social interaction and “refinement” available. They allowed Professor Boone to work in a few words with individual parents about their children’s industriousness or lack thereof. He could also call attention to the school’s needs for better lighting or better contributions to the woodpile.

These country folk did not expect detailed reporting of their children’s grades, with percentages and the results of complicated exams. If at the end of each school year the children met Professor Boone’s demands, they “passed”.

In 1902, when Bess completed the eighth grade, she “passed” out of the realm of Professor Boone, prepared to ascend to high school. By this time, she was one of the few girls who could ride a horse side-saddle at full gallop, completely free of fear. The Lord had given her two additional healthy siblings and taken away three deceased ones. They died victims of diphtheria and other cuts by the Grim Reaper.

The Milton place had expanded beyond the original 100-acre dairy farm to add a tract of crop land and hay fields, a parcel of rich bottom land for corn, a big woods with a winding creek and a pleasant swimming hole. A vaulted stone tunnel allowed the dairy cattle to pass under the extremely muddy 39th Street and graze in the woods. There was a big pond stocked with fish. The old log cabin would remain standing for another forty years, but the family was now starting work on a “modern” spacious farmhouse with porches. They had just built a huge red barn, a milk house for sixteen cows, a hen house, other outbuildings, and a stone garage with a heat stove, ready for a future 1903 Buick.

Bess’s father employed about a half dozen hired hands and labored alongside them in every part of his holdings. He also used his horses and mules to excavate basements for new homes. Earth-moving was accomplished by hooking his team to a “slip,” a heavy steel box with an open front and a cutting blade able to peel up and remove about 900 pounds of dirt, trip itself over to discharge its load. A man doing this excavating had to wade and climb through the spill, holding the reins, and commanding the draft animals. It was man-killing work, but in addition, Bess’s father also graded the right-of-way for the Lee’s Summit Road which was routed out from Independence along the frontage of his farm and on to the town of Lee’s Summit twelve miles farther south.

Back in 1900 from the Montgomery Ward catalog, Bess’s father had bought

a black buggy for his wife and girls. The boys preferred riding horseback. Bess's mother used the buggy every so often to carry her butter and eggs to Independence and barter them for certain grocery staples which could not be produced at home. During the five week days, this buggy was available for Bess to drive to town for high school. She could study and write her homework as she traveled because her horse was so used to the route. There she left the buggy and Old Coaly at the livery stable where Forrest and his five brothers often played a crude mixture of soccer and basketball in the courtyard.

In earlier years on the Sabbaths Bess's mother had faithfully taken her girls to the Methodist Church South for Sunday School with Ethel riding on Bess's lap. I'm not sure how the girls were conveyed to Sunday School before the buggy was purchased, but I know that Bess attended that Sunday School even as a child because that's where she first met a little boy named Forrest Allen. Much later, when she reached fourteen and Forrest reappeared as a brawny, good-looking lad of sixteen, their acquaintance suddenly had become different, very different. When she joined the Freshman Class, Forrest was a junior. Now she was ready for a phase of school life far more interesting than the one at Crackerneck.

From here on the story of Bess Milton entwines itself completely with the story of Forrest Allen. He was a town boy in Independence. His family consisted entirely of sons, named Homer, Elmer, Harry, Forrest, Hubert, and Richard. Their father, William Allen, at 26 years of age had taken as his bride the girl named Mary Elexene Perry, age thirteen. He had somehow "inspired" her to produce Forest and his three older brothers by the time she was ^{barely} 22, and Hubert and Richard very soon after. At 802 N. Union Street in Independence, their father, William Allen, seems to have reared all these boys in very modest circumstances. He sold produce to grocery stores, including the one owned by Joe Brady on the square. This is the store where Bess's mother came, in her buggy, to barter for groceries with her eggs and butter. Probably the Miltons bought little of William Allen's produce because they raised plenty of truck garden on their own. William Allen seems to have had little influence on the boys' upbringing. They remembered him mainly for his scorn of their athletic pursuits, saying that playing games would never get them anywhere or earn them a living. He was well known for only one contribution—keeping the boys shod. He got the nickname, "Shoes" because of the many pairs

he bought and brought home for his six young athletes.

The six Allen brothers became a close knit, rough and ready group able to form a team in themselves for football or any other sport in season. In their backyard not a blade of grass could grow beneath the jumping, kicking, and pivoting feet of these avid players. Forrest's older brother Harry, nicknamed "Pete", spent whole days throwing a ball at a knothole in the barn door in order to perfect his marksmanship. All the boys honed their skills in different ways, but until Forrest reached his teens, brother Pete was his idol and Pete became a basketball star at KU and a coach at Warrensburg before Forrest followed and even surpassed him.

Forrest and his brothers all attended the Ott grade school, seven blocks away to the east of their home. On the school grounds and throughout their roaming territory, their reputation was often of doubtful respectability, but mostly because they were so boisterous and hyperactive. I never heard that as group, they did very much that offended other people except to make a lot of noise.

At school they dominated the athletic and the social activities. They were not considered bullies. Their rivals simply backed away because the Allens exerted themselves like a coordinated force of nature, seldom to be reckoned with.

Forrest himself was a popular, sixteen year old junior, when Bess at age fourteen first made his acquaintance. She was attracted at once, but she could not immediately see the flaws in his character. When he was two years younger, Forrest had been caught up in an unusually stormy adolescence. When the tide of testosterone began pouring through his system, it had the effect of a witches' brew. He began testing the perfection of his body against every bad habit available, to see how much pain he could stand and how much poison he could absorb. In prizefighting, he fought bare-knuckle bouts, paying the price by losing four of his teeth. He acquired liquors and drank heavily and in one brawl in a pool room, he got clubbed on the head, emerging with a near concussion and a lasting scar on his forehead. He smoked like a bonfire. His pugnacity flared up to full force whenever he felt insulted or saw any of his brothers being cheated or abused. He was probably ready to break the hearts of girls at the time when Bess Milton appeared at high school.

At age fourteen, Bess was very susceptible to him, but as she discovered his faults, he could tell that his effect was not positive. Her standards had been formed

by an autocratic father, a devoutly Christian mother, and an intolerant schoolmaster. Forrest Allen realized at once that he wanted this girl, but that his behavior which harmed her would also disqualify him with Bess. He soon resolved to clean up his act. By age seventeen, he said his reformation was complete and that health and fitness had become his top priorities. As he improved himself, Bess was drawn to him more strongly and he to her. She became his only girl for the rest of both their lives.

Out at the Milton farm, on evenings and weekends, Bess's father began to notice that a "neckid fella" was forming the habit of running along the road to Lee's Summit and in returning always stopped by the Milton's' back porch for a big drink of water. This was Forrest Allen, running his daily distance of thirty-six miles round trip. He was the first jogger ever seen to wear shorts and an athletic shirt instead of the overalls, long sleeves and sweat stained straw hat of a farmer.

Also, Forrest began to appear even more frequently in his conventional clothes, obviously starting his courtship of Bess. He became a regular personality at the farm, promptly learning to pitch hay and do any job at hand. He helped saw wood, load cattle for transport to market, performing light chores like milking, and doing heavy duties like butchering hogs in the fall and plowing snow with a mule team in winter. Although he had been brought up in town he liked country life and its workload, and he caught on to every job immediately. It became evident that life in town had not given him enough outlets for his energy. Out on the farm, where the need for manpower knew no end, the gift of energy like his won a hearty welcome. All the Miltons liked him. He was thoughtful toward Bess, observant of every farm need and quick to take it on.

Especially in summertime numerous cousins and neighbors of Bess gathered in the front yard at Sunnyside, as the Milton farm was named. They romped and played games and cranked like mad at the ice cream freezer. One Sunday a cousin, Lee Hodgins, took far more of the ice cream than his rightful share. Bess's father heard the outcry. He came and told Lee he was barred from having any more ice cream that day. As evening came on Bess's father departed for some project in the barn. An impromptu game began—"Slipping Up on the Ice Cream Freezer". It involved cross-body blocks, flying tackles, and lots of whooping and howling. Forrest Allen was popularly acclaimed the most valiant defender of the freezer. I'd

be willing to bet that the ice cream princess gave her hero an extra dollop. One rather prudish cousin, visiting from Virginia, carried home his report that all the Miltons at Sunnyside had gone loco.

Loco or not, they always set a bountiful table for family, hired men, cousins, neighbors, and for a prized visitor such as Forrest Allen became. Sunnyside Farm spent very little money because it produced a great variety of things to eat and to sell: truck garden vegetables, pickles, eggs, milk, butter, and cheese. The orchard and berry patch yielded fruit for home canning, and the bee hives gave honey and wax for making candles and sealing quart jars. Each summer the biggest fish were seined from the pond and the yearly hatch of squabs gathered from the pigeon nests in the barn rafters. The farm provided such poultry as chickens, turkeys, and geese. The geese had down plucked each year to stuff pillows and feather beds. Home grown pork and beef filled the smoke house. Cows and horses produced calves and colts. The cropland yielded hay, corn, roasting ears, oats, and other grains even including sorgho to make sorghum molasses. The woods produced winter stove fuel and construction lumber, and even building-stone from the small rock quarry in one hillside. With a well and cistern, the Miltons knew nothing of water bills. Cash income was used only for buying a few extras beyond those obtained by barter such as fence wire, coal oil, salt, medicine, and lye for making soap. It was used also for the family giving weekly donations at church. Whenever Bess's father could afford more land he took it on using all his savings for the biggest down payment possible and paying interest on the remainder. He toiled till his hands and entire body grew distorted, until his wife Lizzie was worn out and broken in health. Outside of high school hours, Bess and Forrest gave their utmost in all this work. Forrest thrived on it. It was all new to him. He had a mind which responded well when learning things fresh and unfamiliar.

For Forrest, high school should have ended in 1904, but since Bess was younger she came out of school two years later in 1906. I can find no evidence that he was ever formally graduated at this time, probably because he was working as a laborer in a railroad-building crew in Texas, also in 1904. His mother passed away at age 40, and this shock must have matured him and convinced him of the need for personal income and self-sufficiency. His love of athletics underscored the need for physical fitness, and his love for Bess taught him responsibility. Apparently high

school studies must have dropped by the wayside. He was later to pursue a four-year college course at KU, and here also there is no record of his winning a degree. His only formal certification came from completing a full program of four years at the Kansas City School of Osteopathy.

To both Bess and Forrest, the years immediately ahead must have threatened them with bad chronology. When I considered the contrasting pressures they faced in the years 1904-1905, I see at first glance a love affair almost as star-crossed as that of Juliet and Romeo. In some way, this year might appear to be the most crucial one in their lives. Since Bess faced a set of choices somewhat simpler than those of Forrest, I'll begin by discussing hers.

In the spring of 1904, Bess needed two more years to complete her secondary education. Her beloved schoolmate, it seems, had missed earning his diploma. He needed to maintain a paying job, or figure a way to start college without the normal credentials and build up his qualifications for employment of some better kind. What would become of his passion for athletics? Bess herself knew she was destined to go to college at the Normal School in Warrensburg, Missouri. Boys and girls from Independence heard of almost no other college to consider. The in-state tuition was affordable and the curriculum extremely practical. The major program was teacher training. Librarianship, home economics, office work, and nursing made up other good offerings. Bess would be the first of the Miltons to venture into such semi-professional fields of study, yet her family had confidence in her power to succeed.

At this point, my narrative about Bess Milton in 1904 may seem incoherent as I bring up some background details about the American Civil War of 1861-5, just 39 years in the past. Let me explain. In the blood of all the Miltons flowed the pulse of Confederate sympathies. Bess had been born in Wellington, Missouri, near Lexington, and the riverfront strip called "Little Dixie". Her father, Frank Milton, as a five year old boy had seen his home and farm buildings all burned down by General Philip Sheridan's Union Army as it carried out punitive expeditions in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. That had been a hotbed of rebel spirits which the Northern high command considered deserving of punishment like the region from Atlanta to the sea where General Sherman had wreaked similar destruction. Up in Virginia, Sheridan had turned thousands of people including the

Miltons into displaced persons and refugees. Bess's mother Lizzie came from the same valley. Although the Miltons were cool toward politics, Bess's father had to be a Democrat in order to qualify for his road building contracts in Jackson County. When their mother, Lizzie, took Bess and Ethel in the buggy for religious observances, their destination was the Methodist Church South, not the Methodist Church North about two blocks away. The Methodists had split over the slavery issue into two factions in 1845 and they did not reunify until 1939. I never heard that Bess espoused any political views but such was the air she breathed on the Missouri side of the state line.

This atmosphere was the same one that surrounded Forrest. His maternal grandfather Perry had marched with General Sterling Price, the commander of the rebel army in south Missouri. Back East, Forrest's paternal grandfather Allen had fought under General Robert E. Lee. As I have said concerning Bess, so too with Forrest: they had never shown historical biases, but both had grown up in Jackson County where such biases almost universally prevailed in some minor way. Bess and Forrest seemed immune to home-grown opinions, but even if they had adopted those opinions there would have been no conflict between them. They would have felt no mental disturbance to their resultant relationship-up to 1904.

The climate on the Missouri-Confederate-Democrat side of the state line and the climate on the Kansas-Union-Republican side brought on a change anyone could feel as he crossed over. Suddenly, Forrest resolved to cross. He enrolled to begin a four year degree in Lawrence. Bess was planning soon to go east to Warrensburg, while he was going west. She worried whether he would encounter hostility in that different country, and she worried whether their ties could stretch a hundred miles and continue to hold. What would change in his personality between ages 19 and 23? Would he become a stranger from a strange land?

Except for the fact that his brother "Pete" had attended KU for two years, and played varsity basketball there, the question remained as to why Forrest should make the same choice. What could have made him turn and go? To find an answer we must pick apart a tangle of events involving the Allen Brothers, the World's Fair of 1904, the contact with James Naismith, and Forrest's actions with the Kansas City Athletic Club.

For years the Allen brothers had practiced till their shoes wore to shreds, on

their yard, on 802 Union Street, at the Ott School playground and in the barn of the livery stable where Bess parked her buggy. Realizing the need for a full-scale basketball court with a marked floor and two opposite goals the brothers decided to join the YMCA, later the Modern Woodmen of America, and still later, the Kansas City Athletic Club. They soon became aware that KU athletic scouts were evaluating them as promising players. The Allens, particularly Forrest, rather quickly came into contact with Dr. James Naismith, the legendary coach from KU who exerted such authority in the formulation of basketball rules. He closely observed Forrest's basketball skills, but if he offered an athletic scholarship to KU, Forrest would have flatly refused it, saying he thought it contemptible to take money for going to any specific college. Although he could not have foreseen his future destiny, he was just months away from gathering a personal windfall to pay his own way to KU with solid cash.

Looking eastward past Warrensburg and all the way across Missouri to St. Louis, the extremely garish World's Fair of 1904 was dominating national news. Besides featuring all the technology of current progress, it encompassed the Olympic Games and highlighted a basketball tourney, which would culminate in the world's championship. Apparently it did not involve any teams from foreign countries since basketball had so recently originated in the United States and had not yet spread in any significant degree to other nations.

At the World's Fair, even girl's basketball had a place in the schedule. That world's championship was won by the team from the Indian School for Girls in Fort Shaw, Montana. The male title fell to the Buffalo Germans, a Deutch-speaking team from Buffalo, New York. I wish I knew what emboldened the Allen Brothers to challenge the Buffalo Germans. Still, for no logical reason I can discover, Forrest began, in the first months of 1905, to do the unthinkable. He taunted the Germans to come to Kansas City and defend their title. Still only a nineteen year-old, he persuaded backers to rent the huge convention hall at 13th and Central for this purpose. It could seat five thousand spectators. Forrest even managed to get the investors to sign a legal contract entitling them to half the profits and guaranteeing the other half to himself personally. They scheduled a three game series in which the winner of two out of three would be the champions.

The Buffalo Germans won the first game. But the next one fell to the Allen

Brothers of Independence who used five Allens on the floor and one on the bench as a substitute. Forrest managed the team, played center, and tossed all the free throws. It was a day in basketball when all the penalty shots for a given team were performed by one single player, and after every goal there had to be a center jump. As both center and free thrower, Forrest played a crucial part. Of the six brothers, Forrest was the tallest by barely an inch and his height was 5'11".

The first two games had roused strong complaints from both teams over the officiating. In the third and final game, Dr. James Naismith, the founder and lawgiver of the sport, served as referee. No one questioned his decisions, and the Allen brothers won that deciding game by a score of 45-14. Forrest played those three games with both elbows recently broken. Now, however, the proceeds from his tournament gave him the first big brimming jackpot of his life. With it he could join Dr. Naismith and pay his tuition and other expenses at KU.

In 1905, this victory rocked the United States and reverberated across two oceans stimulating enthusiasm for basketball in faraway places. It represented the "Last Hurrah" for the Allen Brothers. They all needed to become self supporting to marry and establish families of their own. To me the awesome thing about this championship was that the Allens had not come up through all the usual rounds of elimination, gathering all star status in their geographic regions, their states, and even their big municipalities. The six of them all came from just one house.

Phog was now ready to begin his first year as a student at KU, at the same time serving as a basketball coach at Baker University in Baldwin, Kansas. This was the year when he acquired the nickname "Phog". In umpiring baseball games, he called the balls and strikes and the safes and outs with such a resounding voice that spectators nicknamed him "Foghorn" and soon merely "Phog". An unknown sports reporter facetiously spelled it as "Phog," and that stuck. His family, the Allens and the Miltons, did not use this name for many years. It wasn't that they disapproved of it. To them it simply sounded unnatural and cartoonish. In writing letters to my mother, Aunt Bess never referred to him by any other name than Forrest. Even though the name and the reputation of Phog Allen were so widely known to the public, the word "Phog" did not become a household term in our families until almost 1950. Only then did I notice that Aunt Bess and his children were beginning to call him "Phog" or "Phoggy".

In 1906, he continued as a student, played baseball and basketball at KU and coached basketball at Baker. 1907, still a full time student, he continued playing baseball and basketball at KU and coaching basketball at Baker. In 1908, he stopped playing baseball at KU but coached basketball there, and also at Baker, and at the Haskell Indian Institute. Also in 1908, Bess ended her formal education at Warrensburg. Besides achieving excellence as a student, she had gained one year of firsthand teaching experience. She was 20 to his 22. They knew they had met adult standards and earned the right to claim each other. That summer, at Sunnyside Farm, the lawn filled with chairs seating the Allen and Milton kinfolks, Bess and Forrest finally got together with a minister on the front steps to exchange vows and rings. Then to skip away as newlyweds.

Apparently, even in his nuptial happiness, with a baby named Mary arriving in 1909, Phog realized that he could not keep on coaching at three schools and carrying his new responsibilities, with only the income of what was basically a teacher's pay scale. He needed a real profession. He enrolled for a four year course at the Kansas City School of Osteopathy. This program would occupy him from 1909-12.

According to the U.S. census of 1910, he and Bess and their infant daughter Mary were maintaining a place at 121 E. Alton in Independence. Along with the delight of parenthood, that had brought them new complications and expenses. Considering limitations of pregnancy and motherhood Bess could not have helped support them and Forrest must have had no time for a moonlight job with his time fully occupied with commuting into the city and in pursuing his challenging studies, lectures, library work, and hands-on practice with patients. The new parents could only have met these costs by using the savings which Bess had earned as a teacher and Phog had earned as a coach. In 1911, more than halfway through osteopathy, they welcomed their second baby, Forrest Jr. Phog finished his program and won title of "Doctor of Osteopathy" in 1912. This was the year when his father, William Allen, ended an eight-year period as widower and married a second wife named Maryjohn.

In the summer of 1912, he accepted work in coaching football and basketball at Warrensburg, probably hoping to establish an osteopathic practice on the side. Here at CMSC Bess had readymade friends. Forrest's teams began

winning excellent victories in both sports. In 1914, the stork brought them a third baby, Milton, nicknamed Mitt, and in 1916, a baby girl named Jane. As World War I broke out in 1917, Forrest had too many dependents to be subject to the draft. He enlisted in the Army, and served briefly at the rank of captain. Very likely he led some physical fitness programs in Warrensburg. Local country boys were rejected with many disorders such as flat feet, rickets, lung disease, and bad teeth, but Uncle Sam was interested in their rehabilitation.

All the six Allens—Phog, Bess, Mary, Forrest Jr., Mitt, and Jane managed to thrive through the war years and the Great Influenza epidemic of 1918—19. In that latter year, 1919, a new baby boy Robert or “Bob” joined the family. The Allens needed a bigger house, a bigger salary, and a bigger college in which to expand Phog’s coaching career. At KU Dr. Naismith had been watching his growing success and noticing that he was blessed with an amazing power to treat athletic injuries and minimize the time lost by his star players due to sprains and dislocations. In the autumn of 1919, Dr. Naismith made an irresistible offer which brought the Allens to Lawrence, Kansas. There in 1921, their last baby, Eleanor, arrived balancing out the family with three healthy girls and three healthy boys.

In that same year, Bess’s beloved mother, Lizzie Milton, departed her toilsome life at Sunnyside Farm. Then on January 21, 1922, the Allens of Lawrence opened their fine new home to Ethel Milton and Maurice Hughes for their marriage ceremony. These were my parents to be.

In the summer of 1925 came the greatest disaster of the Allens’ family history. Phog and Bess had loaded up their car with all six children and had taken a trip, I believe their first real vacation. While they were away and out of touch, the Kaw River, which passes just north of Lawrence, staged a devastating flood. It engulfed the town’s water treatment plant and contaminated it with sewage. The Allens returned from their travels and reached their home without hearing this piece of dire news. Little Forrest as he was called was the first one to exit the car and bolt into the house for a big thirsty drink. Before the neighbors could come out and tell the Allens of the need to boil any water from municipal supply lines, Phog and Bess entered their home too late. In a few days their first born son had contracted typhoid fever. He suffered a quick decline and within a few days he was dead. He had reached only age 14. His parents seemed struck by a lightning bolt.

They would have descended into the dark domain and sacrificed themselves most gladly to bring him back. My mother said there were several years of anguish for the seven Allens who survived. They were just recovering from their profoundest grief by 1927, when my brother, Bob Hughes was born back in Missouri. I was born 21 months later at the very end of 1928.

Until now my knowledge of the Allens has been based on a great deal of family lore which I learned by word of mouth. I have injected few dates and details from research. But now that I have begun breathing a breath of life and observing the world around me I can fill the rest of this chronicle with my own direct memories. Give me about five years to reach kindergarten age and begin telling my stories of Phog and his family as I directly touched, saw, and spoke with them. Meanwhile, Phog's father became a widower for the second time, losing Maryjohn in the year 1929, after seven years of this second marriage. He was destined to live until 1937 and then buried in an unmarked grave at Woodlawn Cemetery in Independence, resting between his two wives, Mary E. on one side, and Mary J. on the other.

Even though I grew up on Blue Ridge Boulevard between Kansas City and Independence over on the Missouri side, my parents exchanged visits with the Allens at least several times a year, when we Hugheses either traveled to Lawrence or we embraced them at weddings, funerals, and family reunions on the Missouri side. The Allens usually brought several of their neatly groomed children along. They all still grieved from their loss of "Little Forrest", who had been the living image of his dad.

In 1934, when I was about five years old, my memory began to capture some impressions of our family trips to Lawrence. As we drove westward through Potawatomi my folks explained the frontier times, the meaning of "Kansas Territory", and the names of some of the tribes settled near the border. I knew that my famous Uncle Forrest had coached teams at the Haskell Indian Institute in Lawrence and he that had been very fond of those hard working young athletes.

When we came to a stop at our destination on Louisiana Avenue, I saw my first street paved with red brick and the Allens' grand cube shaped corner house of gray stucco. At the front door we fell into the open arms of Uncle Phog, Aunt Bess, five of their six children and three young grandchildren of my age and a little

younger. These grandchildren were the kiddies of the Allen's oldest daughter, Mary, who was now about twenty-five and married to a man named Pete Hamilton. The other Allen children, omitting the cherished "Little Forrest", were Mitt about twenty, Jane about eighteen, Bob about fifteen, and Eleanor about twelve. I was naturally attracted to the three little Hamiltons, named Lee, Joan, and Libby.

Lee took me exploring outdoors around the small lawn to the alley which split the block of homes on a line parallel to Louisiana Avenue. I saw the back of the grand house with a high wall enclosing its flower garden, the fastidiously neat family garage, and a big iron plate like a manhole cover at the edge of the alley pavement. Even small boys can step hard enough on a treadle to make this plate tip open and raise the Allens' trash can upward about a foot for convenient emptying. To me, that was like magic.

We then entered the gate to the walled garden, a beautiful secluded place with rock-built terraced beds of blossoms of several colors and growing at several levels. Most impressive of all was the flowing water fountain with a sculptured image of a lion which spouted water into a splash basin. About two feet east of the fountain lay a flat rock. When we lifted it up, we could see into a cavity about sixteen inches deep where a pipe and valve supplied the water. By turning this valve merely off and back on we could change the flow making the lion growl only a trickle or roar a torrent.

We reentered the house through the back door and inspected Aunt Bess' large modern kitchen. It had enough countertops and workspaces for the preparation of large scale luncheons, and parties which I later learned that Aunt Bess served with the aid of a part time maid and caterer. We next found our way into an elegant study or drawing room where I noticed especially a beautiful walnut teacart with walnut wheels cut with polished spokes. Lee and I would have loved to go crashing around on this fancy cart, but he warned me that the very idea was most strongly prohibited for little boys. To me, the other center of interest in this room was a prismatic glass window in the west wall overlooking the garden. On later visits I especially liked slipping into this room when the sun was declining over the garden wall outside and making this unique window send its rainbow colors migrating across the carpet, the tea cart, the ornate furniture and the bookcases to end high on the interior walls. There they faded and darkened out at

sunset.

Lee and I then ventured onward into the northeast corner of the house where we found a large uncarpeted room, flooded with natural light. Its floor was either terrazzo or beautifully patterned flat tile, kept rather bare for dribbling and shooting miniature basketballs at a little hoop mounted above a certain doorway. I now recognize that this fine home must have had ten or twelve foot ceilings, to allow for this high hoop and long shots. The Allen's youngest daughter Eleanor, about age twelve, often swished through this court attempting tricky shots and bouncing a red rubber ball. She wore a cute little yellow sun dress to match her hair.

I thought all three of the Allen girls, Eleanor, Jane, and Mary were truly beautiful. Eleanor was a lanky blond sixth grader, a bit disdainful of us kindergarten boys who tried to catch a glimpse of her panties as she twirled past us. Jane, at eighteen was a strikingly lovely brunette worthy of a magazine cover. She was destined a few years later to be chosen as a beauty queen at KU. The oldest daughter, Mary (Allen) Hamilton at age twenty-four, was the mother of Phog's only grandchildren to date, my buddy Lee and his sisters Joan and Libby. Their mom, Mary was the most petite of the three Allen daughters. She had a personality so warm and loving that she could have melted dry ice. In fact, as a teenager she was a girl of the kind who would give her parents sleepless hours and make them keep their fingers crossed for her from the time she went dating till she came home late at night. When she met Pete Hamilton, a handsome ruddy faced suitor, her lot was quickly decided. He traveled as a whiskey salesman for a large distillery in Kentucky and his florid face showed an intimate familiarity with his product. He married and endowed her with motherhood well before age twenty, so that Mary was the only one of Phog's children to miss out on a college education at KU. She spent much time at Lawrence, divorced Pete Hamilton after several years and lived apart from him, but then remarried and stuck with him for life.

In my earliest distinct remembrance of Phog, when I was four or five, he was about forty, at a time in his career when he was as busy, successful, famous, and beloved as any man could hope to be. I was not able to imagine that he had forty-one more years ahead for still greater glorification. He was never too busy to play

and talk with little boys, especially at the table. He preached somewhat playfully that we should not bolt down our food without chewing each bite a hundred times for the sake of full digestion, big muscles, and keen attention to the talk of the grownups. He often tossed us a marvelous polysyllabic vocabulary word or two, usually related to bodily strength and speed. He praised any skill he saw in us for self expression and word power.

Back at my home in Missouri, about six years later, Forrest and Bess came visiting one day to bring my brother and me a large, impressive gift which they must have needed to convey in a pickup truck. It was a heavy, free-standing basketball goal at the top of an iron pipe. This pipe was set in the hub of a flat circular base as big as the wheel of a farm wagon. Uncle Forrest called it a Goal-Hi. He and a few of his friends at a manufacturing plant had decided to produce and promote these unusual structures to start a new form of basketball on a circular court with concentric markings and entirely new rules for play. He acknowledged that Goal-Hi might catch on at outdoor playgrounds but would be a hard sell in schools unless futuristic architecture might someday come to feature round gymnasiums and bleachers. Not likely. I believe Phog's venture into this implausible pipe dream of Goal-Hi stemmed from his strong advocacy of the idea that long shots should aim cleanly for the hoop without dependence on a backboard. He thought practice with Goal-Hi should sharpen this spectacular skill. It could reduce the high rate of fouls and injuries in the forecourt under the basket when layup shots predominate and flying knees and elbows break noses and tangle legs producing dislocations and sprains. Hence, the Goal-Hi stalk was topped with only a standard sized hoop supported on a skeleton basket with cupped ribs and three gaps to allow a basketball to exit. Each gap had a clanger which rang out to verify the goal as the ball emerged. There was no net. With this structure in our side yard my brother and I made use of the Goal-Hi for a year or two, but then lost interest. Mother and Dad notified the Allens and they came and took it away to lend elsewhere. If the few Goal-Hi structures were not melted for scrap during World War II there might be several still stored in a garage out in the Western states to commemorate Phog's fantasy.

Forrest Jr. would have been a wonderful athlete, the Allens believed, if death had not claimed him in 1925. The two surviving sons Mitt and Bob both played basketball on the KU varsity, although the five years difference in their ages did not

allow them to play on the same teams at the same time. Mitt stood about five foot ten and had a somewhat stockier physique than Bob, but Mitt proved highly coachable and showed strong endurance. Bob stood about an inch taller. He had a longer reach and a longer stride. He trained himself to be a long shot expert.

During my years at home as a teenager in Missouri, I was told of a serious head injury to Bob Allen, Phog's youngest son, during a basketball game in some out of state gymnasium whose walls stood much too close to the side lines. He was playing as a member of the KU varsity squad. According to Aunt Bess he was knocked out of bounds and split his head "wide open". He suffered a bad concussion but the split must have affected only his scalp, not his actual brain case. Very soon he returned to play.

I myself saw only one live KU basketball game in Lawrence at the Hoch Auditorium in 1939 or '40. Bob Allen was playing. KU faced tough opponents, especially skillful in guarding. The game was hard fought, the teams almost equally matched. The battle seemed fated to end with KU one point behind. All evening they knocked down passes and shots. In the last half minute, all the players crammed themselves into the front court, under the KU basket struggling almost on their hands and knees for ball control and the chance for a shot. I did not even notice when my cousin Bob slipped out of the melee and retreated to one remote corner of the court as far away as possible. In the final ten seconds, from among all the massed bodies and flailing elbows, somebody threw the basketball entirely away! It hurdled across a long stretch of empty floor toward the distant right-hand corner, as far as possible from KU's goal. There stood a receiver, Bob Allen, who had absented himself like a phantom out of the scramble. He neatly caught the pass and prepared to shoot. The nine other players could only gape. As the clock ticked away, he launched his long shot, a two-handed pusher from the top of his chest with a fine right hand following through. The ball arced high toward the ceiling lights over the court's entire length and dropped without a touch of backboard or rim straight toward the hoop. Swish! Buzzer! BEDLAM!!! The KU fans nearly lifted that auditorium off its foundation, as Bob Allen dashed for the showers.

Phog was often quoted as saying that victories were not his primary aim. That's hard to believe, since his record of winnings brought him renowned and a fine salary plus other rewards. At KU, both the students and the faculty viewed him

as king of the campus. But he always said that what he lived for was brilliant athleticism, perfect marksmanship, and the universal delight everyone felt when a beautiful strategy emerged from nowhere, and became a sporting miracle that blew men's minds.

He achieved and kept cordial relationships with most of the college coaches in America. Many of them had once been his triumphant players. They all said that in his arsenal of coaching weapons, along with his prescient array of ball-playing ideas, they would never forget his keen-edged pep talks, always able to revive energy and self confidence like sharpened swords.

Coaching his team was the joy of Phog's life, but the work load he carried was not simple. Phog had become so widely known and so admired that he had developed several sidelines. He responded to numerous invitations as an after dinner speaker at civic clubs such as the Rotary and the Kiwanis. Every week he drove to several towns, like Beatrice, Nebraska, within range of Lawrence, entertained his audiences and brought home valuable honorariums for his family budget. With the editorial aid of his faithful wife Bess he wrote books and articles on athletics and health. He gave osteopathic treatments to injured people, ranging from little children to old folks who came beseeching help from his strong, kindly hands. For at least twenty-five years, he taught a weekly Sunday School class at the Methodist Church. He gave his five surviving children all the time and encouragement they needed, plus always the example of unfailing manhood. In addition, he confronted a big in-basket of requests for recommendations from students, parents, and private employers concerning summer jobs, promotions, post graduate education, and similar advantages for youngsters who had made previous contacts with him in his wide-reaching career.

One day in 1941 Phog telephoned my parents to introduce the idea of sending my brother and me to the Culver Summer Schools on Lake Maxinkuckee, Indiana. This was a junior part of the Culver Military Academy. With World War II looming in the near future, he said he thought some military schooling would help us gain leadership and make us eligible for officer training instead of just becoming cannon fodder. He had admission and scholarship blanks ready to forward to us and he believed we could win stipends that would make the experiences affordable. Phog had already sent his youngest son, Bob, to this program and was

now endorsing his grandson, Leander Hamilton, for the Culver training.

You probably remember that Lee Hamilton was of the same age as my brother and me. My brother, whose name was also Bob, joined Lee in entering the Culver Cavalry division. They became members of the Black Horse Troop and received training in jumping, rough riding, parading on horseback, and handling the lance, the main weapon of the horse cavalry in former days.

One summer after my brother Bob started to Culver, I followed but made my choice for the Naval School. Lake Maxinkuckee, which lapped the Academy shores, stretched away for six square miles of sparkling water. I learned to skipper sailboats, to row in the shell crew, and to scramble aloft into the rigging of Culver's three-masted square rigger. We midshipmen learned many techniques fascinating to me as an inlander from Missouri. We tied all the knots, learned to take soundings, to use various anchors, to master the rules of right-a-way and collision avoidance, and to calculate even dead reckoning and do celestial navigation. I came to love being on the water thanks to my dear Uncle Forrest. He made it possible for me to enjoy it forever after, both in actuality and through the reading of literature of the sea.

The Culver experience was the first of my two personal gifts from Phog. For me, Culver took on extra value in 1966, in the midst of my teaching career, when I moved with my family to reside at the Academy and teach German and Russian languages as a member of the brilliant faculty of the CMA winter school. My children received full tuition scholarships and we all enjoyed the best twelve years of our lives.

Back in 1944, while I was a midshipman, my brother, Bob Hughes, over in the Cavalry Camp, found himself falling into bad company. There were two or three rotten troopers obsessed with complaint, especially about the dining hall food, which did not meet their "high" standards. They introduced Bob into smoking cigars, nipping on a booze bottle, and breaking the regulations in other ways. They composed a letter to the dining hall manager, castigating his menus and issuing him a ridiculous threat of death. The letter proved to be in Bob's handwriting. The group was soon caught and exposed. Several plotters "got the shoe" and my brother got "busted" in rank and made into a pariah among his fellow first classmen. I darkly suspected that he would have gotten kicked out but was barely

saved because of Culver's honor of Phog Allen who had recommended Bob. Phog did not actually intervene. Bob went home and our mother passed along the bad tidings to her sister Bess. Phog learned of the scandal and wrote Bob the following letter which I copy below.

Trooper Robert Hughes,
Black Horse Troop,
Culver Military Academy,
Culver, Indiana.

Dear Bobby:

Your mother called Aunt Bess last evening and was quite concerned regarding some of the boyish pranks that you have indulged in. When these things are called to the attention of an older man he can always recall how many mistakes this older man made in childhood.

The educator says that we have our childhood to grow and to develop. And this is very true. Every fellow makes mistakes and has a right to make mistakes, but to make the same mistake many times is not a mark of intelligence. The intelligent man will learn by previous mistakes and will not repeat these mistakes. That is true in basketball, isn't it, Bob? We call them fouls and the other side has the free throw from the free throw line. And if we foul an opponent while he is shooting two free throws are given.

Fifty-two per cent of all the games won in basketball in America are won on account of free throws. In baseball we call them errors, and in football we call them penalties. The reason that we have athletics in high school and college is to teach education through play. There are rules of the game that you must play by and the referee calls the fouls or violations. If a fellow makes many errors in baseball his side loses.

So we look at this game of life the same way. The Master Planner of men put certain obstacles in our way that cause fear, concern, joy, exhilaration of spirit which we call morale, dejection which we call blues and so forth, inhibitions which are contributed to certain privileges that may not be had by people at different times. Belonging to certain groups or gangs is the right of the fellow belonging. Other fellows would like to be in this gang but they are not asked. And the fellow on the outside wonders why he isn't asked by that group. They just don't want him, that is all, because he doesn't have anything to contribute, so the gang thinks.

Always it has been this way through the world, Bob. Wherever we have men gathered together we have some men who want to lead. We have others who are content to follow. Then we have others who despise order and fellowship, and they are the fellows who are bent on destroying the better associations of men. We call these fellows anarchists.

And then there are fellows who lack courage, who whisper evil things about men. They whisper things that are not true and they know it, but they do it because they are jealous, and they are jealous of something the other fellow has. Or, they have self-pity in their make-up. They want somebody to feel sorry for them. They want to feel that they have been abused and when a law is administered that interferes with their so-called freedom they rebel against it.

You will remember in the early days of our country when our pioneer forefathers settled in New England, John Smith said "Those who do not work shall not eat." He meant that everybody had to struggle for a constructive purpose and those idlers or fellows who did not care to make progress could not loaf around an active group.

That is exactly what you have got at Culver, Bob. You have got some boys who care, others who want to feel that the whole world is designed to be of service to those people who do not want to work, do not want to conform but are thinking only of themselves as being the ones who should be fed, sheltered and pampered.

Do you know the life history of old Colonel Culver? He was a very poor boy. He worked very hard and met many discouragements. But, Bob, doubtless the pangs of hunger, of association, of fellowship and of leadership that Colonel Culver had led him to desire training for young men who would receive the things that he lacked in boyhood and early life. And he gave his vast fortune for this Culver Foundation so that other boys coming on would know the meaning of loyalty, patriotism, cooperation and friendliness. To make friends is one of the great achievements of young manhood. Don't forget that, Bob. And don't make friends with boys who figure that you are getting gypped every time an inhibition or law is encountered by some of the boys who figure the law should not apply to them but should apply to everybody else.

I am wondering after you read this letter if you will read a brief sketch of Colonel Culver's life, and then try to imagine that you are a young boy who could be as successful as Colonel Culver and have all the money and then try to figure what you would do with it in trying to make the coming generation of boys happy. Horses, water, drill grounds, sport of all kinds in which you indulge, shower baths, restful places to sleep, and good food, Bob.

Of course, you don't get the kind of food that Mother bakes for her own son - none of these boys do, but neither do the boys at Guadalcanal or in Sicily and all the tough places in the world where older boys than you are dying. And they are dying because they were trained to not kick on food that wasn't as good as what Mother baked.

It would be a pretty tough go if you would lose your Mother, and yet you know that if you look ahead the time will come when you will be without her and without your father. Therefore, Bob, you have got to conduct yourself in a way so that you can take over when that

time comes, and only by practicing these hardships are you going to be able to make correct decisions when your head is in a swim.

You are a good, average, ordinary American boy, raised in a fine home. You have fine parents, Bob, parents who worked hard for the money to send you to Culver so that you might improve yourself - not that you might improve your parents. You think this over and figure how much you owe your parents and then you pay them back by just good, ordinary behavior. This will make them happier than anything that you can do. I know you will do it, Bob, and I know you can take it. But be sure that your associations are with boys who believe in construction and not in petty bickering because the food isn't just what every boy would desire.

In closing, Bob, put yourself in the place of the chef. Suppose you had to prepare the meals for the boys. The first thing that would be thought of is to give you muscle building food, give you a proper balance in diet so that you would be a healthy, strong boy able to repel disease. Maybe you wouldn't make it as tasty as some of the boys would like it. But you would send the boys back home with good bodies, better courage and more strength to carry on. Think this over, Bob, and I know that you will want to associate with a pal who knows what law and order are.

And lastly, put yourself in the position of that lieutenant who caught you leaving someone else's tent after taps had blown. Remember, Bob, that if this had been over in Sicily you would have been shot going from one tent to the other. That is how tough discipline becomes when war is on. And lastly, Bob, remember this - the brave man is a man who is not afraid to say the things to a man's face rather than to write a letter and not sign it. All through the years men have disliked that sort of threat.

But, Bob, you have strength of character, you have a fine brain, but somebody got you on the wrong track for the moment. Get right and stay right. You will thank your friends and your advisers at Culver a thousand times for trying to show you the principles of sportsmanship and character that you some day will teach some other boy. To be a Culver man is to be a man. Nothing finer could be.

Sincerely, Your Uncle,

Forrest C. Allen

FCA:AH

Director of Physical Education,
Varsity Basketball Coach.

The letter could have been a scolding rebuke citing the damage to Phog's credibility as a recommender and making it clear to Bob that he had cut himself off from any further benefits to such a nephew. But any idea of causing defeatism was not in Phog's character. Bob had shamed our family. Phog seemed concerned to help heal my brother's self-inflicted wound.

The early 1940s had brought many changes to the Allen family. The middle daughter, Jane, the one most celebrated for her perfect beauty, crowned as queen in Lawrence several years earlier, had married and departed for a future in a Chicago suburb with a young multi-millionaire whose company produced fine stationery. The company brand was possibly called Penworthy. Sadly from then on Jane made little contact with her parents. Now, under the name Jane Allen Mons, she occupied a walled mansion with many servants and security protections. Much later Jane became a recluse with an interest in far rightwing politics.

Aunt Bess kept a busy schedule. Besides having mothered three boys and three girls, she served her family in at least four other ways. All of them fostered Phog's career. First came her social activities. I don't know if the Allens owned that grand house at 801 Louisiana or whether it was a "perk" from KU with a budget for entertaining, but it was filled with people for teas and luncheons several days each week. I have heard that such high-grade housing, with funds for hospitality are bestowed at some universities to top-ranking faculty members in order to attract and hold them. Such fringe benefits are especially gratifying because they are not counted as taxable salary. I doubt that Phog's regular income could have sufficed to pay for all the teas and luncheons that Bess set forth for her guests. Aunt Bess regularly hired a caterer and a Negro maid server for these events. I know they were elegant occasions in the best of taste and refinement, attended by faculty wives, church ladies, and visiting celebrities of national renown. As a hostess, Bess would have thoroughly astounded anyone who had known her as a barefoot farm girl helping with all the chores and walking the muddy roads to Crackerneck School.

Bess thus enhanced Phog's reputation in the obvious ways but also in a certain less obvious one: her openhearted relationships with faculty wives must surely have defused the kind of petty jealousies which can sometimes arise even in a respected university when one star professor like Phog seems to be getting all

the glory.

Second, Bess used her brilliance and her eloquence to highlight her husband's gifts as a communicator. Phog's athletes paid constant tribute to his power as a speaker. They said his halftime pep talks fired their will to win like rocket fuel. Nevertheless, he thought his writing style to be primitive in comparison with his wife's. Bess could spellbind the newspaper reporters and ladies' club members with her picturesque examples and her perfect choice of words. When my mother, Ethel, read the frequent letters from Bess which passed from Lawrence to Independence, even I as a half-grown boy, I was struck by their clarity and beauty. Her first draft, like my mother's, never needed a word changed or superfluous phrase crossed out. Her language skill, Phog often said, not only awed him but gave him invaluable help in writing his books, articles, and press releases.

Third, Bess proved invaluable for her work in tutoring some of Phog's most indispensable players, often on the brink of losing their eligibility because of failing grades. A few athletes, like B.H. Born, seemed almost to sweat blood over any commonplace theme assigned for English class. With the simplest of leading questions, Aunt Bess tried to evoke a sentence at a time for him to write on his paper. She asked "how, when, who, why", squeezing out small bits of articulation. Though her questioning was kind and gentle, one famous KU athlete burst into tears and pleaded, "Oh, Miz Allen, couldn't you just write it down for me? You have it so easy."

Aunt Bess was keenly aware of the failure of many athletes at self-expression in words. She was saddened at the common helplessness with language which many of them evinced in their radio interviews, so her tutorials were devoted not only to maintaining sports eligibility, but also to helping these boys become more articulate for their personal futures. When Phog, in his later years began recruiting the tallest of the tall young men like Clyde Lovellette, Bess noticed an even more acute form of this athletic problem. Without stating openly that any one individual was very severely handicapped, she realized that such boys, extremely big even as children, has been encouraged to devote an exorbitant amount of their time and effort toward perfecting their playing skills instead of reading, writing, and developing a vocabulary. Surely most of them must have recognized the need

to fill in this deficiency after retirement from athletics in their early middle age. Michael Jordan, the high-flying basketballer of the Chicago Bulls, attempted to improve his level of post-retirement culture by touring Paris, and he reported seeing “that big art gallery, the “luge”. Of course, he meant the Louvre.

Phog himself, from his earliest boyhood had devoted most of his time to athletics, but he had somehow made himself into an eloquent speaker despite the odds. He must have had a very high IQ, and possibly his attachment to Bess, in their middle teens, helped him develop linguistic virtuosity. My aunt Bess often said she knew why basketball players at the college level approached manhood and a height of six and a half feet in a wretched state of intellectual malnutrition that stunted their verbal growth to the scale of dwarves. Therefore, she opened her heart and her house to these boys year after year, trying to thaw out their grey matter, melt away their blockages, start a flow of desire to achieve the easier release of their thoughts. She strove to change their ideas of “I can’t” to “I can.” The fourth contribution which Bess made for Forrest’s sake toward her husband’s success was her service in his osteopathic office. Well before his retirement at age 71, he had established an office in the same building with Mitt’s legal suite in order to treat the many unsolicited patients who besought his help. Bess served as his receptionist, secretary, and accountant.

About 1943, the youngest daughter, Eleanor, married a Philadelphia lawyer named Williams. She bore him a cute little daughter, Candace Williams, nicknamed Candy. This marriage soon broke up, for some reason I have forgotten. Eleanor soon found herself being courted by a businessman named Glenn from Beardstown, Illinois. They married and produced one son, named Allen Glenn. During this short-lived second marriage she found this husband to be coarse and vulgar, divorced him, and once more came home to Lawrence.

For a while she moved with her son to Culver while I was teaching there. Phyllis and I had our first two children out of three and all of us enjoyed the chance for a deep acquaintance with this pretty blond haired cousin. Soon, however, Eleanor returned to Kansas City for a third marriage with Dr. Bentley A. Nelson, a nose, throat, and allergy specialist. Bentley had a very troubled son with several forms of substance addiction. He committed suicide by hanging himself. Bentley also suffered a personality disorder, noticeable only in the hours of his home life.

He once hit Eleanor with his fist and broke her jaw. Bob and Mitt Allen came immediately and gave him a stern ultimatum which took a powerful effect on Bentley. Without further incidents, Eleanor lived with him until his death.

Away back in 1943, when Eleanor, the youngest chick, had left the Allens' nest, Phog and Bess quickly vacated their stately, grand, empty house at 801 Louisiana and found a cozier little place appropriate for the later years of their lives. They did not have to move far. They bought an unpretentious little bungalow to the southward in the same block at 831 Louisiana and they named it Peace Cottage.

Their oldest surviving son, Mitt, still resided in Lawrence. He maintained a law practice and often brought his pretty red-haired wife and children to Peace Cottage to be sure it didn't become too peaceful.

I have told these facts about all the Allen children from my conviction that the understanding of a man and his wife is influenced profoundly by the fates and fortunes of their offspring and their descendents. The only child I have passed over too lightly is Bob, my favorite. I will tell more about him later.

When I myself finished my undergraduate college degree in 1950, I enrolled at KU, lived in close contact with the Allens for an entire year, and got acquainted with Phog's world. Since the atmosphere of KU was the very breath of life for Phog, I should impart my impressions of the university as I did of Phog's children in the effort to describe this milieu so vital to his existence. He was 65 years old but still postponing his retirement. That honor got postponed until six years later, in 1956, Cousin Eleanor had come home to her mom and dad between marriages. Mitt visited frequently from his home in Lawrence. Bob came occasionally from Kansas City, and Mary Allen Hamilton with her children from Palo Alto. I feel obliged to report both the positive and the negative experiences I absorbed when in their close vicinity.

On the positive side, KU had given me a generous all tuition scholarship based on my success at Harvard in Cambridge, Massachusetts. I needed to live near Independence, Missouri, and help my parents accomplish a major house move. I was able to assist them with this duty on many of the weekends. In Lawrence, I loved the grandeur of Mt. Oread, the hill on which the campus was centered. I was 21 and I enjoyed sometimes jogging along the mud flats of the Kaw River where

the shrinking clay soil had split into billions of geometric shapes, as if imprinted by an enormous stamp die cutter. I made friends with amiable graduate assistants, assistant professors, and other underdog instructors of my about age. I had some interesting courses chosen to contribute to my specialty in world literature. These included the History of Medieval Russia, William Wordsworth and the Lake Poets, Old English, also known as Anglo-Saxon, History of Ancient China, and Creative Writing. The Allens found me a room in Mrs. Worley's tall old house immediately to the south of theirs and they often invited me to meals and evening visits in their Peace Cottage. Phog was frequently missing because of road trips with his teams.

However, as in life everywhere, I encountered some disappointments. The hill, majestic as it was in the midst of prairie country, had a steep north side which required me to make a long, slow climb in order to reach my classes. Bicycle access was difficult. I consumed many hours each week ascending and descending with no good place on the hill to buy breakfast, lunch or supper. My young faculty friends all carried huge loads of paper grading and classroom teaching work, compensated by mere starvation wages. I felt a foreboding that my own future teaching career would bring me a destiny much like theirs. They filled my ears with bitter complaints. They believed that instead of encouraging them to rise in their professions, a typical university was structured so as to cull out and sweep away all the weak drudges and replace them with a new naïve generation of like expendables. From my previous four year background at Harvard as a Phi Beta Kappa and Magna Cum Laude, I was stunned to receive my first flunking grade in any course. It was caused by my spotty attendance. I had assumed that doing all the readings both prescribed and recommended and pursuing topics in the library, I could come to classes and take the exams to prove my knowledge, as I had done at Harvard. However, at one first exam, I found myself denied a blue book and barred from the test without advance warning, and given only a big black "F" on my transcript. I had not foreseen such a technicality, but if it was based on attendance, I would have expected an "Incomplete".

The KU undergraduates looked very different from my peers back East. In those previous four years. I had known a wide array of non-conformists, taller, more often bespectacled and more often absorbed in their different specialties, which seemed already halfway attained. Harvard's only fraternity, a Sigma Alpha

Epsilon, or Sig Alphas, represented only a hideout for a few hard drinking students with no sisterly equivalent at nearby Radcliffe. Harvard fostered intramural sports like squash, to keep as many students as possible in trim, without requiring them to waste time traveling to other colleges. KU, on the contrary, offered little but the interscholastic “big games” which tended to make the student body into nothing but spectators. As for the fraternity and sorority effect at KU, I thought it was a majorcrippler of academic performance because of all the silly initiations, ceremonious events, and the great amount of boozing on weekends. The students dressed according to the fads and appeared to concentrate on social prestige and the worship of the starring athletic heroes. The place seemed like a higher high school, from which the less-gifted pupils had been flushed down the drain. Among the oldest four Allen children, Mitt, Jane, Bob, and Eleanor, fraternity and sorority life had been most enjoyable and beneficial, and Bob at least had done surpassingly fine work in the pre-med program, but surely the Allen children had managed to achieve true values from their fraternity and sorority experiences. I saw little but vainglory and idle distraction. On “big game” weekends all learning seemed to be forgotten. The entire student body adopted herd mentality and flocked by the thousands into and out of the stadium on cue.

The foregoing criticisms were impersonal, but I felt really burned personally by one professional hotspot: in aiming my own studies toward a master’s degree, I ran afoul of the Modern Language Association (MLA) guidelines. These endorsed only hackwork, the writing of a kind of humdrum, pseudo-scientific, statistical thesis which nobody would ever want to read. I had come to view literature as an art, not as a science. Such standards seemed paralyzing.

At the time, I must have been too young and unfocused to talk with Uncle Forrest about these issues and his major role in conjuring up those big game weekends. Though he was not to blame for the weekly setbacks in the maturation of so many young people, and the costs of their foolishness, he was the very chief provider of the excitement which, two days out of seven, drove the undergraduates wild and turned the university into a vanity fair. Could my beloved uncle have done otherwise than produce basketball mania? Basketball virtuosity was his aim. The mania came from elsewhere.

I can’t help wondering if I had become prudish, too judgmental and too

detached from my own boyish impulses. I decided to leave KU in the spring of 1951.

I secured a job for the following year at Penn State, located in the pretty little town of State College, later renamed University Park, Pennsylvania. I was hired to teach freshman English Composition. At the same time, I resolved to do more creative writing on my own. I was allowed to take graduate courses and I needed to find time for cultivating a girlfriend and exploring the nearby forests and mountains of the Allegheny Range.

At Penn State, for all its natural beauty, I found a life similar to the one at KU, but with all the negatives enlarged. Those negatives magnified the ones at Lawrence which Phog Allen with his basketball triumphs partially caused with his big game weekends, surpassing all the powers of the university administration to keep under control. The Greek letter organizations dominated student life almost completely. The fraternities and sororities at Penn State held a complete grip on the freshman pledges till far into the first semester. These freshmen, at least many of the substandard and remedial cases, were the ones assigned to my classes. By the time I could get their attention away from fraternity and sorority initiations their quiz records had piled up discouragingly for us all. I began to see how many short cuts and dodges they tried to apply to raise their averages: they brought in crib notes and plagiarized essays. It seemed each fraternity and sorority maintained files of purloined exams and complete collections of old themes written by freshmen in years past. These were duplicated and recycled as the overload of fraternity and sorority requirements continued to dominate. One freshman in my class broke his jaw in a contest to see which fraternity could gain the honor of catching a greased pig.

Alcohol was not sold in the town of State College, but from Bellefonte seven miles away it was freely available and brought back to Penn State by car loads and pickup truck loads. The Nitney Lions did not play half as well as the Jayhawks, but at Penn State students identified so totally with the Lions that each individual boy spoke of the team victory as if he had won it personally. It seemed that every weekend featured a Big Game and the celebrations lasted from Friday mornings till Monday nights. When the boys dragged back to classes on Tuesday, some still carried hangovers. The girls looked older and wiser, but not wiser in English

Composition. I saw little firsthand athletic activity, but only droves and tramping herds of students thronging the stadium and field house where they could freely smoke and drink alcohol from their satchels as they sat watching the games.

Somewhere in the offices of the university president and deans, there must have been much awareness and even shame over the damage to the students health and to the academic program but I heard of little or nothing being done to control the mania for Big Sports. I began to realize that the revenue from season tickets, gate receipts, and concessions were vital to the university's budget. Alumni support for scholarships and endowments depended on the nostalgia of the Old Boys. Why didn't the faculty rise up and speak out? One lowly professor I knew said that without the influx of money from the sports program and its devotees, faculty salaries might have to be cut as much as 20 percent. So the teachers held their tongues. In my first weeks at Penn State I received the offer to transfer my course load to a higher level and teach one certain English class for athletes in danger of losing their academic eligibility. If I wanted this class, I could receive slightly higher pay and benefit from lighter responsibilities. Student attendance would be optional, reading and writing assignments only superficial and no grades should be issued below the level of C. Of course, I declined this laughable proposition but it showed me how rotten the influence was which came from a gigantic sports program running wild. In such tightwad Republican states as Kansas and Pennsylvania, the politicians are unwilling to ask the voters to accept heavier taxes in order to finance higher education and research, faculty salaries, stipendiary scholarships, and all the rest of the essential university expenses. The deficit is made up by revenue from athletic delirium. I am sorry to preach on this topic. Phog Allen, and his family whom I love, had built their lives upon this dilemma. In order that my rosy account of them might not ignore all criticisms, I present this one scorching attack on Big Collegiate Sports for the reader to contemplate. At this time I wasn't conscious enough of their importance to bring up these subjects with the Allens and find out how they felt. Perhaps, they would have shown me that I had not delved to the bottom of the issue. Maybe if there were no overblown sports to cause bad consequences, there would probably be something else to inflame the youth: militarism, as in Nazi Germany; radical left wing student politics as in Pol Pot's Cambodia; or the drug-induced, dropout

epidemic among the hippies at the time of the Vietnam War. Young men, emerging from adolescence and being asked to grow up and start thinking as individuals, seem often compelled to release the animal within them. Young women give their men what is demanded. Foolishness and self destruction may be the inescapable part of growing up. Indeed, it had even been so, in Phog's own teenage life.

Surely, Henry Ford is not to blame for all the highway deaths caused by reckless driving of his cars. Neither should be Phog Allen, though he was a major creator of social phenomena that has produced anti-academic results at many colleges like KU and Penn State. I hold him blameless. I believe that Publicity has almost taken over the basketball game. If there had been no money, no radio and TV coverage, no stadium or field house, no university students and no university—I think that Phog would have coached the same way as he did. On only a simple marked court with goals at both ends, with only ten young fellows to coach, he would have been content to give them his all, without any renown. What he loved most was teaching youngsters to exercise the fullest versatility of their bodies and minds in order to make their point.

Phog's arrival at retirement age, in 1950, proved to be a major nonevent. With his energies unabated and new career possibilities still over the horizon, he continued working as director of athletics and the most celebrated basketball coach on the world's scene. In 1952 he coached the American gold-winning basketball team in the summer Olympics at Helsinki. Though he grew busier every year, Bess apparently had little trouble winning his agreement to cross the state line and attend reunions, weddings, and funerals of their Missouri kinfolks. He could not break all the engagements on his calendar but he tried hard to give family affairs a high priority. When he came to our celebrations he was greeted with great acclaim. His relatives, being mostly farmers, probably gave little time to following the basketball news or thinking of Phog as a celebrity. They simply liked him cordially as a person and the feeling was mutual. He still showed genuine interest in their rural challenges and their lives midst their cattle and their crops.

I remember most vividly his appearance at one particular wedding in the winter of 1953. I had succeeded in finding the girl of my dreams and we had set our marriage date for December 22, despite the risk of bad weather at that season.

My Phyllis and I were both school teachers, so we chose the first day of Christmas vacation for our nuptials.

Days before our happy event, the forecasters had warned of a coming blizzard. With the invitations mailed and the church building reserved we had no chance to shift the date. In Independence, I still had many old friends from high school times and Phyllis was sure to attract additional attendance from her teaching colleagues. My mother and father planned a reception for us which lighted up all three stories of their house on Main Street. But on the night before our wedding day, the blizzard struck. It snowed and blew with a bitter cold wind which piled up drifts chest deep. It caused closure of the thoroughfares, streets and driveways in town, and for many miles in all directions. The church hired somebody to plow out a small space in the parking lot, room for possibly a dozen cars but the drifts quickly moved in and made the space largely unusable. Inside the sanctuary, candles burned brightly, lighting up hundreds of empty seats. Just when the organ prelude ended and the ceremony began, who should arrive with smiling faces and pink cheeks but Uncle Forrest, Aunt Bess, and their daughter Eleanor. I could have fallen on my knees at the thought of their ordeal. How Phog's car, large and heavy as it was, could have charged through those 50 miles from Lawrence, I could not imagine. Since the town of Lawrence granted him any conceivable wish, he might have come with his own snowplow escort, but of course he didn't. We failed to learn how he actually got through. It seemed unexplainable. It added a glow of miracle to our sacrament.

The Allens, however, could not stay and visit at the reception. Phog had to drive back through the other half of the snowstorm in the wee hours of the night. He wanted to fulfill his next day's responsibilities in Lawrence.

Dauntless— brimming with life— mens sana in corpora sano— this is my best phraseology to describe the nature of Phog Allen. He faced every challenge as if nothing inconvenienced him, nothing troubled him, nothing hurt him. Only one thing wounded him to the soul. That was the death of his first-born son from typhoid fever in 1925. In the ensuing 28 years, even that scar had nearly healed itself away, at least for the temporary span of one man's earthly sojourn.

I could hardly believe that he would undertake that arduous winter trip for my sake. I had never been a good athlete, not even a very thoughtful or gifted

nephew. My eye doctor had made me aware of a serious genetic disorder in my retinas, which would lead to my total blindness in 1978. Nonetheless, Phog's unquestioning family love had made him overcome that blizzard to pay his tribute to my bride and me. Two years later he did me another favor which changed my life. As newlyweds, my young wife and I had begun building ourselves a home. In about 1955, I hoisted a heavy load of building materials onto my right shoulder, intending to carry them about a hundred yards. Suddenly something in my lower back felt crunched. If I had thrown down the load, I could not have picked it up again. So I stubbornly carried it to its place and found myself badly crippled. On my bed, I lay for a week so wracked with pain that I could not even turn over. We all thought I would never walk again, even after hospitalization and traction, which our family doctor recommended. Instead of taking his advice, I phoned Uncle Forrest in Lawrence. He said he would take me in treatment, gratis of course, if I could come, and if not, he would come to me. Lying out flat in the back of a station wagon, I was carried to Lawrence and was placed on his table, writhing in agony. He straightened me out on my back and compared my two legs against each other. My left proved almost two inches longer than my right, as if my pelvis was tilted. Immediately he knew the remedy. He stood at my left side and helped me raise my left knee. He took my left foot in his left hand and said he was going to slide that foot down along my right calf to its place beside the other foot. But while guiding this foot firmly along its track, he pushed that cocked-up left knee firmly to my right, across the axis of my body to an almost impossible extent, asking me to try keeping my hips level, evenly bearing their weight on the table. This was not a painful procedure, even though some bones shifted. I felt better. He repeated this adjustment several times, asking me to take a mental note of the manipulation. Then he had me stand up. I did so, feeling weak but otherwise comfortable. He said I would be all right, that I could walk to the car and ride home sitting upright if I wished. He advised me to be a little careful getting out and going to my bed, but he said that if I twisted and felt the adjustment slip, my Phyllis could follow the same steps and put me right. That all proved true. I had no more misery, found that both legs were of the same length, walked well again, and returned to work the day after.

Phog was not only a great coach with regard to training and tactics, but also

great in bringing his players back into action after their athletic injuries. His son Bob and Bob's sons, who all were to become eminent doctors, never disparaged the well-trained osteopath or chiropractor, since they knew the magic of their father's treatments.

My injury took place only a short while from the time when Johnny Mize, the acclaimed first baseman of the New York Yankees, had ruined his right shoulder, disabling his throwing arm. After trying the best doctors in his region, he came to Phog's same table and those healing hands corrected his dislocation in one treatment. He returned to New York to finish the season and, I believe, to win another World Series championship with the Yankees.

March 1st 1955 was a big red letter day for the whole state of Kansas and especially for my Uncle Forrest. It marked the opening at KU of the Allen Fieldhouse, a multi-million dollar sports palace, seating over 16,000 basketball fans and featuring a glorious life-sized lighted portrait of Phog in the lobby. He was lionized as never before.

While coaching, Phog had a big voice and a masterful carriage, but in personal relations, he did not dominate with any forces other than his good nature and his talent as a close listener. He was not a gum-chewing coach, full of self-importance. Nor did he have the habit of talking down to others with a mouth full of his own clichés.

Although always immaculately neat and trim, he was not conspicuously robust in his physical person. I was five feet ten and a half inches tall in 1965, and weighed about 165 pounds. At that time, nine years after his retirement, he told Bess he would not be wearing his tuxedo anymore, so she gave it to me. It was almost a perfect fit except for perhaps an inch of difference at the waistband. Since I was forty-three years younger, this suit made me aware that part of his dauntless vitality stemmed from his radiant health and fitness. He had stayed vigorously "in shape" into his seventies. He was now eighty years old, but I think he could still have managed to wear the tuxedo if he had wished.

When he retired from his profession at 71, back in 1956, with eighteen more years to live, he would have been glad to continue teaching basketball if his power to hear had not begun failing. KU would never have willingly let him go, but deafness limited his 360° awareness of his surroundings and his understanding of

people. Still determined to be useful and to continue as a breadwinner, he turned to his osteopathic practice for the best fulfillment available. His patients came to him from all over America and from abroad. Face to face with them in a small room, he could understand their needs and hopes. His reflexes and his comprehension were instantaneous. He was famous and secure, but always sensitive to human suffering and desirous of being useful and effecting his cures in one visit, at minimal expense. He took the injuries of his patients to heart as if they were his own. Many of those he treated hugged and kissed him as they left and called him a miracle worker, as I had done after his correction of my back injury so many years before.

Considering how he managed his deafness revealed for me a great lesson about the value of possessing perfect health. Bodily strength and energy are surely the wellsprings of optimism, leadership, and a sense of humor. Phog embodied all these qualities. He seemed able to forget himself, and concentrate on being useful. He had no Achilles heel, no burden of guilt, no unpaid debts, no painful regrets. Even after age 80, he kept regular appointments at his osteopathic office, tried to remain sociable, and played a very superior game of golf.

The same could be said for his youngest son Bob, who was thirty-four years younger, but a perfect chip off the old block. After his basketball stardom, and some graduate study, he had enlisted in the army during World War II, returning afterwards to finish medical school. He trained in general surgery. In Kansas City at St. Luke's, the finest hospital in the region, he entered a lifelong career, working longer daily shifts than other doctors could have endured. His hair turned prematurely snow white before he was 40. His noble, erect posture became hunched and painful from long hours bending above his operating table. He somehow remained cheerful and ever-loyal to his extensive family, always giving medical advice and performing surgeries, minor and major, for his relatives at no charge. We could never have repaid him. He gave to us his services from the heart with no obligation.

One day, in the late 1950s, Phog telephoned my mother and said he wanted to order a tombstone for his father William's hitherto unmarked grave. She made notes of the essential details, ordered the monument and had it installed in Woodlawn Cemetery at the right location, incidentally observing that the birthdate

of his first wife was shone incorrectly on her stone. Actually she lived from 1863 till 1904. The mistake has never yet been corrected.

A few weeks later when Phog came to Kansas City on business, he drove on out to Independence to see the stone and to thank and pay my mother Ethel for the expense. He expressed heartfelt gratitude and relief in seeing this filial obligation completed after about 22 years of neglect. I do not know why the Allen brothers, once such a close knit team of basketball players overlooked this duty until Phog took it on individually in his early years of retirement. Perhaps the reader can surmise an explanation which clarifies the boys' feelings toward their dad, his remarriage and their interaction with him in his old age.

Phog told a funny story of one day when he caused a near calamity. His paved single-lane driveway from his garage out to Louisiana Street filled almost the entire narrow space between his bungalow and Mrs. Worley's tall house at the next door south. In that black-topped driveway, a housepainter had set up his extension ladder to paint almost 25 feet high on the side of that old house. Without noticing the ladder, Phog walked out his back door, opened the garage, and began backing out his big black car, using only its driver's side mirror. Knowing that Phog was deaf, the painter foresaw his coming downfall and raised a hullabaloo. Phog heard nothing. As the car moved backward almost ready to trip the ladder, the painter said he prayed for his paint to thicken enough to let him hang by his brush. On came the juggernaut. With only moments to spare, the painter shinnied down a few rungs and seized the frame of a second-story window. He got a toehold on its sill just as his ladder crashed to the driveway. White paint showered the car. As Phog stopped, someone inside the Worley house opened the sash and helped the painter crumple in.

The highly polished black car was easily wiped clean, and the driveway later sprayed black to efface all traces of the debacle. Phog's affectionate neighbors enjoyed a good joke on him. The painter had an unforgettable thrill. Phog tried to go along with the humor but his personality reflected a certain loss of self-confidence, like that which is felt so keenly by people undergoing a handicap. With each loss of self-confidence comes a loss of leadership and credibility, as the handicapped person begins to be seen, by some people, as a laughing-stock. More and more, Phog's deafness attenuated his past fame and self-esteem, so that in his

early and middle 80's, he sought seclusion at home and turned more solitary.

Toward the end, he seemed to cease trying to hear. He no longer insisted on catching every spoken detail. He satisfied himself visually by interpreting observed circumstances, facial expressions, and body language. If he possessed hearing aids, he found them of little use and generally laid them aside.

In the winter of his spirit, on January 4, 1970, he lost Bess because of a heart attack. His faithful wife and helpmate for sixty-two years, she had seen him slipping away into old age with tribulations which no helper on earth could ease. Her duties had all been met. She had kept his big house, borne and mothered his six children, edited his writings, tutored his players, coordinated with him in teaching Sunday School classes for a quarter center, and had looked after the scheduling and bookkeeping of his osteopathic practice. She had lived her life with her husband as lover and leader. Now she unfastened her marriage ties with him in Peace Cottage to go and wait in the Great Beyond.

During his final years of the early 1970's, I was living with my family, in northwest Indiana and teaching at Culver, so I never saw him anymore in person. It was reported that he spent his last few years playing a bit of golf, at least on the putting greens, but mostly sitting on his sofa before the television set and watching worthwhile programs and major sports events, with the volume off. I don't recall that he ever wore eyeglasses or hobbled when he walked. He often felt a troublesome tickling in his left ear which he could best relieve with the tip of the handle of a thin artist's paintbrush. One evening, sitting upright, he dozed off there with the small paintbrush still inserted in his ear canal. When he was touched on the shoulder to come to supper, he startled, turned his head suddenly, caught the brush on the sofa back and drove it through his eardrum. Though his other ear was not ever injured, that right ear was the less useful one of the two, so now Phog was profoundly and irretrievably deaf.

His heart still remained full of the victory cheers which had exploded above his basketball courts many thousand times during a long life. Now he was to hear them no more. On September sixteenth of 1974 two months short of his 89th birthday, he left this world behind. When my own day comes, if I go to the BETTER WORLD, I'm sure Phog Allen will be there.

September 5, 2016

