

## Judy Pridgen

Late November 1969, Steve and I were married at his parents' home on the farm in Chuckey. It was the Thanksgiving holiday. Steve was teaching in the public school system in Ponte Vedre, FL so we left Tennessee for our great adventure together in Florida. We had a small duplex on the beach in Jacksonville Beach. Our lives were filled with sun, fun and togetherness there. I remember those long walks on the beach looking for sharks teeth. Seems we did that most every day or we would go to the beach to fly kites. We had not a care or worry in the world...we were together.

In March of 1970 we learned that we were going to have a baby...great joy and excitement filled our hearts. We knew it would be a boy and never for a moment considered that it might be a girl. We would name him Atticus and that we did. We spent our free time riding around our neighborhood and in Ponte Vedre on the famous bike for two which Steve later modified into a bike for three.

By early fall my nesting instinct began to set in and I started to have a recurring dream. In the dream it would be time for Atticus to be born and as we drove to the hospital in Steve's old car (Cecil, I believe he called the car)...we would approach the toll bridge going to the mainland to the hospital and realize we had no money to pay the toll...we couldn't get to the hospital to deliver the baby. I had the dream night after night.

Steve being his usual resourceful self decided to end this bad dream. I later realized he too became worried about this. He collected all the coke bottles he could find and headed of to the local *Seven Eleven* (a major land mark in the neighborhood) to redeem the deposit on the bottles. When he returned home with his fist full of dimes, he taped dimes all over the dashboard of the car so we would be prepared. Thank goodness he did that because Atticus was born early and was in a hurry and there would have been no time to look for dimes that night when I went into labor.

Thank you Steve. We all miss you.