

**A STORY OF ONE LIFE BY:
CHARLES E. BRANDT
OCTOBER 7, 1996**

The Keystone Kid

On February 8, 1920 a new fat baby boy was born to my parents, Idena Rosenstiel Brandt and Charles Christopher Brandt. The birth took place in the front bedroom of the double house known as 809 N. Keystone Ave. Indianapolis, IN. Doctor John Little, the family doctor, attended this birth. As it happened it was on the same day as the birthday of Mother's Father, Samuel Rosenstiel.

I was the fifth child born to my Mother. Her first was Catherine, 1906, then William Charles, 1908, and Ralph Samuel, 1910. This family lived in a small frame house on the North side of 13th Street just East of N. Illinois Street. Dad worked for a while at the Atkins Saw Works as a saw sharpener. He soon tired of this work and then became a Carpenter. After working the trade for several years he started to take repair jobs for several of the Real Estate management companies downtown. Work progressed and it wasn't long before he had built several double houses on the East side of town. The house on Thirteenth Street was owned by Booth Tarkington, and it was pretty small for his growing family, so in 1913 he built a double house at 809--811 N. Keystone Ave, and moved the family to the 809 side of the double. Compared to 13th Street this house was a spacious two story home. The first floor had a Living Room, Dining Room, Kitchen, a Front Porch and a small back porch. The second floor had three Bedrooms and a Bathroom. The partial basement had a Laundry area, fruit room under the stairway, a coal furnace and coal storage bin.

However, Louise Evelyn was born during 1917 and I followed in 1920. So the spacious double was quite crowded with three teenagers and two babies. But they managed. Since I had plenty of older brothers and sisters, I was always being told what and what not to do. Of course I objected to all of this direction and would get stubborn at times. Then Mother would step in and take me to the fruit room in the basement. Of course this room was where the boogeymen lived and they didn't like little boys. So I had to cry and yell for quite a while and finally learned that as soon as I stopped, that the door would open and Mother would hug and love me again.

I played in the sand pile in the backyard. Mother would take the streetcar to go downtown to shop and when she returned she always had a Tootsie Toy car or truck for me. I would run these toys all over the sand pile and would dream of the day that I would be grown and could have a Red, Yellow, or Blue Truck of my own to drive. When I was four years old, I had a scooter with a round steering wheel. I was on the front sidewalk and was scooting down to my friends, Larney Shipman's house, which was two doors South of 809. I turned up into Larney's yard, a little embankment, and the scooter fell on my right leg. Of course I was in great pain, so I had to yell and cry. Mother was in our basement doing the laundry, and was somehow alerted to my predicament, for she soon appeared and picked me up and carried me into our living room. She laid me on the couch, changed her clothes, and then carried me up to Tenth Street. We boarded a streetcar and went downtown. She carried me up into a building where a Doctor said that the leg was broken just below the hip. So he set the break. Mother then carried me back to the

streetcar and we rode back to Keystone. I slept in the front bed room in Mother and Dad's room on a cot, so I spent the next several weeks on the cot with sandbags on each side of my leg, until the break had mended.

One Fall, Mother and Dad took me out into the Country to look for Walnuts. We found plenty and took them home where we put them up in the Attic of the garage to dry. During the Winter the rinds turned brown. Dad showed me how to get the nuts down from the Attic and to take a hammer to remove the rinds. Then how to hit and break the walnut open and remove the fresh nut meat. U'm'm'mh good.

Mother and Dad also liked to make sauerkraut in the basement. Mother would cut and shred the cabbage to her liking. It was then placed in a large crock and vinegar, sugar and other ingredients were added. The crock was covered and allowed to set until the kraut had cured. This sure kept the basement abound with an odor which is hard to forget to this day. But if you liked and craved sauerkraut, their concoction was something to remember.

During these years I was known as Junior since Dad and I both had the name of Charles. On Sunday afternoons, brother Ralph would take me with him to the Junior League meeting at the East Tenth Methodist Church located at the corner of Tenth St. and Keystone. They would sing "Junior, Junior be a booster" and Ralph always thought they were singing to me since my name was Junior.

EXTRA----EXTRA---EXTRA

I started my formal education at Public School #15 which was at the corner of Michigan St and Keystone. It was in January of 1927, since I would be seven years old in February. I was in the 1-B, midterm. I did not know that Dad had bought a lot on the North side of town, at 3728 N. Guilford Ave. and had built a large two story home at this address. This was not a double house. It was yellow brick veneered and had a fireplace in the living room and one in the basement in the social room. The first floor had a large living room across the front of the house, a large dining room, a kitchen with built in cupboards and a breakfast room. Then there was a Sun room which Dad used as his Office. There was a half bath off of the Kitchen. The Second floor had four large bedrooms, two bathrooms, large center hallway and enclosed stairway to the floored attic space. The basement had a large social room under the living room, a large laundry room, a fruit room under the stairway a large coal furnace with coal bin and automatic gas water heater. The furnace was changed to an automatic Oil fired furnace after several years. The garage was a three car garage with rolling garage doors. I know that Mother was surely in Heaven to be in this home after raising her family as she did and I know that Dad was proud as could be to know that he had been able to build such a fine home for his family.

We did not have much furniture to fill this when we moved in. I remember our first night. Louise and I just walked around the first floor which was quite empty for we were afraid to mount the stairs to the second floor. Mother finally convinced us that it was safe and that nothing would happen to us, so we went upstairs to bed. It was really very exciting. Catherine was attending Indiana University at this time so she did not get to experience the exciting move to 3728 Guilford. Bill was attending Cincinnati University, and Ralph was just getting ready to attend Butler University. Louise and I started to go to

Public School #66 which was five blocks away at 38th Street and Broadway.

My grade school days were filled with many experiences. School #66 was good to me. One of my best friends was Bob Moore who lived right behind us on Carrolton Ave. His Dad was a Heart Specialist and he always drove a new Pierce Arrow automobile. The headlights were formed into or out of the front fenders. Bobbie went to Medical school and then joined the Army Medical Corps, where he became the first fatality from Indianapolis in the Korean war about 1951.

Then Bob Cusack lived two doors North of us on Guilford Ave. His dad was in the Restaurant Supply business. Because of Bob Zcusack went to Medical school, became a Doctor and moved to California. There are several Cusacks in Movies and I often wonder if they are related to Bob. One of my best and longest friends is Bob Kershaw and his wife Barbara. Bob and I were in the Boy Scouts at the Broadway Methodist Church. The times that we had as Boy Scouts will have to be put in another book for they are too varied to be included in this essay.

I traveled from the first grade through the eighth grade at School #66. During this time I had a newspaper route to deliver the Indianapolis News. On Memorial Day after the Speedway Race I would stand in the middle of Thirty Eighth Street at College Ave and sell Extras with HowdyWilcox. We yelled Extra-Extra-Extra and sold to the cars as they came by. We also sold extras at any other time that a big event happened in the Country, We covered the Election of Herbert Hoover when he became president and also the election of Franklin Roosevelt in 1932.

The Coburn Chronical was a school paper which had poems and articles from various students in school. It was several pages stapled and bound in a cover designed by a student. The paper was printed in our school print shop and then distributed throughout the school. I think it sold for a nickel. When in the eighth grade I was the business manager for the paper so I got to deliver the paper and collect the nickels. I was also on the traffic patrol and worked up from the Guilford Ave corner to the Broadway corner. I also got to raise and lower the flag on the school flagpole.

There were only ten or twelve students in our midterm class so we graduated from School #66 in January 1934 to start at Shortridge High School as midterm Freshmen.

In The Land of Milk and Honey

Shortridge High School was one of the newer schools in the City and was located at the corner of Thirty Fourth Street and Meridian Street. It was a little over a mile from 3728, so I walked to school every day. Of course Louise was a Senior when I was a Freshman, so she got to drive the Plymouth Sedan to school and would sometimes take me or bring me home. I was with Dad when he bought the new Plymouth for \$750.00 cash. This car served us for more than ten years.

My Freshman year was not too exciting. I was very small when I entered High School for I was about 5 ft. and weighed only 95 lbs. Brother Ralph was playing football at Butler so I thought that I should play ball in High School. It did not take me long to find out that I was the smallest tryout and that I had no business trying for this activity. So, since I was taking E flat Saxophone lessons I signed up for Band and played in the Band all during my High School days. But I never practiced enough to become proficient

and master the instrument. I took all of the courses that were offered for me to take, but really did not have any direction as to what I was doing. We did not have School Counselors who helped in the guidance of the students. Mother and Dad had not been through too much High School so they were not too interested in the subjects which I was studying. So I will have to say that I successfully floundered through High School. Just average grades.

I did have fun in school though, for I met many people who are still my friends to this day. As a Sophomore I had several girl friends and that is why I did not finish my Boy Scout work to obtain the Eagle Scout rank. I did obtain the Life rank and only needed several more merit badges to qualify for Eagle. As I look back on this period I know that this will always be a great disappointment to me.

During my Junior year, I was elected Treasurer of our Senior Class to be. I enjoyed this honor very much and upon Graduation, a group of twenty five of us each put in about Fifty dollars apiece to sponsor our Graduation Ball. Since I was Treasurer of the Class I sort of spearheaded the group. We reserved the Indiana Roof Ballroom, where I engaged Earl Father Hines and his band from Chicago. We had tickets and invitations printed. Our Graduation Ceremony was held in the Cadle Tabernacle down town. Afterwards all those going to the ball went to the Indiana Roof Ballroom where we had a great time and enjoyed an event to remember. All of the bills for the affair were satisfied and the Sponsor Group each got his ante back and about twenty five dollars profit.

After graduation I worked with Bill and Ralph doing carpentry repairs and painting houses. I did not know what or where to study for my Life's work. Dad took me to Carnegie Tech in Pennsylvania and several other Universities. I finally decided to study Engineering so there was only one answer to the problem-----Purdue University.

PURDUE FOREVER

I really don't know how to attack this chapter, for it is so important, not only to my life but to every life which may have the opportunity to read and follow this diatribe. I view the years which we may have the opportunity to spend in College as the most important years of our lives. These are the last of our development years. This is what we have been pointing for since the day that we entered grade school. There has been so much for each of us to learn. Each of us will most certainly learn the lessons in a different way. When we reach this point in life, we should have decided where we are going and how we are going to get there. I decided to study Civil Engineering since this was the closest curriculum which was close to construction. Purdue did not offer specialized construction courses when I started, so I chose the broad subject of Civil Engineering.

One of the first things which I had to decide was where I would live while at Purdue, so I chose to go through the Greek Letter rush program and visited many of the Fraternities which had houses on the Campus. Of all the ones I visited, I chose Phi Gamma Delta whose House was at 640 Russell St. right at the corner of the Campus. I lived here for four years while at Purdue. It was a great experience and good friends. I did not know it at the time, but this housing choice of mine proved out to be very wise for I found that I was going to be visiting the Pi Beta Phi Sorority House which was located at the opposite end of Russell St. at State Street.

I was able to pass all of my Freshman Engineering classes, keep up with the Fraternity activities, and go out and attend the activities of the Purdue Student Union, and I also signed up for classes in the ROTC Military program. The next year was my Sophomore year. I spent more time at the Student Union Activity for I was pointing to be awarded a Vice-Presidency for my Junior Year. I was successful in this endeavor for I did become a Vice-President of the Union Activity. But my classes suffered. I failed to get passing grades in my Mechanics and Calculus courses during the second semester of my sophomore year, so this was very discouraging to me. However, another event was to happen which would change my entire life forever. I saw Calista Creel who was a Freshman worker on the Student Union, but I did not get to know her until the next fall.

When I returned to school in the Fall, I was in charge of the used book exchange which the Student Union sponsored. Calista returned also, so she came out to work on the exchange. One day she asked me to help her find a particular book, so since I was the Vice President in charge I said that I would help her if she would have lunch with me. Cool, don't you think? Naturally, she had to condescend to my terms. Thus started a relationship which has lasted for more than Fifty Years. I discovered that she was a Pi Phi who lived at the other end of Russell Street, that she was from Angola, Indiana, her father was a medical doctor in Angola and all about her sisters who were still there. So we had several dates after school and on the week ends. We attended several of the Union dances and I found that I could really dance with her like I had not been able to do with any other girl whom I had dated. She concentrated on my study habits when she found out about my grades and made me concentrate on my school subjects. As a result, I passed all of my courses during the rest of my college career. By the end of my Junior year I realized that I was hooked. I had chased her so hard that she had caught me. During my Senior year, I received another disappointment for I was not elected to the Senior Student Board because my grades would not qualify me for the job. This was a real setback to me, for I had really been pointing for this job. But Calista was appointed as a Junior Vice President, just as I had been, so we still enjoyed all of the perks which the Student Union Board offered.

By the end of my Senior year we had agreed to become engaged to marry and made plans for our future down the road. During June of 1942, I received my commission in the United States Army Reserve as a Second Lieutenant Field Artillery. The United States had entered the War against Germany and all of my classmates graduated and were shipped immediately overseas, for Field Artillery Officers were desperately needed. However since I had failed subjects during my Sophomore year I had to repeat the subjects and then take the required subjects that followed. I think I needed three subjects so the school and Army did not call me in June, but allowed me to stay in the accelerated system so that I graduated from Purdue with Calista's class in December 1942. She wore my engagement ring so we were pretty sure as to what our plans together would be.

WORLD WAR II

I was a 2nd Lt. Field Artillery, Graduated from Purdue and awaited Orders from the Army. I didn't have to wait long, for I was ordered to report to the Replacement Center Fort Bragg N.C. on January 16, 1943. I arrived and was assigned to take a two week

Refresher Course at the Artillery Center. Classmates were Officers of all ranks who were being reassigned from the African Campaign, so they had been in Artillery Action. Our commanding Colonel of the School saw that I was fresh out of Purdue, so he had orders issued which assigned me to teach Gunnery and Surveying at the two week refresher course, and this was to be a one year assignment. I asked the Colonel if I could have a weeks leave to return home to get married. He agreed to this, so I returned to Indy and on March 31, 1943, Calista and I were married in Angola, Indiana, at the Congregational Church. I was in my Uniform and when the service was over all of the men attending were crying, so I thought that I had really done something awful by marrying one of the towns sweet young girls.

I returned to Ft. Bragg and was teaching classes and finding an apartment for Calista to come there and be with me. But the Colonel called me in about early May and said that he was sending me to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma to take a three Month Officer Basic Course at the Artillery School. The Colonel's son was finishing the Advanced Course at Ft. Sill and needed his automobile to be returned, so would I be willing to drive his car out to him. I agreed, if I could go past Indianapolis to pick up Calista and take her to Ft. Sill with me. So we arrived at Ft. Sill and checked into a Motel. I reported for School and Calista had to look for housing without a car. She found that people with housing did not like to rent to 2nd Lieutenants, for they did not make enough money to pay the rent. So she told them that I was a Lieutenant and she thought I was a 1st Lieutenant. We found several places, for it seemed that every week I would come home and she said we were moving to better quarters.

The three months past in a hurry so we were ordered back to Ft Bragg. We took the train to Indianapolis where I got the Plymouth off of the blocks so we could drive it on to Bragg. I continued to teach the two week refresher course and Calista looked for housing again. She was more experienced now, so she was more successful. About February 1944 my years duty was coming to an end, so I received orders to return to Ft. Sill to take the three months Advanced Artillery Course. So we packed all of our belongings in the Plymouth and headed across the Southern States back to Ft. Sill. This was a trip to remember for we had tire trouble, since tire rationing was on.

But we did arrive, Calista again had to find housing. I took and finished the Advanced Course, and then we were ordered back to Ft. Bragg to the replacement Depot for assignment. When we arrived this time, my orders did not send me overseas for action but sent me back to Ft. Sill for a one years assignment to teach Gunnery and Surveying at the Artillery Advanced Course. So again, we returned to Ft. Sill, found better housing and settled down for another years tour of duty. We met many good friends and had many exciting experiences. Before long I received a promotion to 1st Lt., so the increase in pay helped a lot.

During April 1945, our Colonel, who headed the Advanced course informed me that he was going to send me, along with four other officers, to go to the West Point Academy for a one months tour to teach the Graduating Cadets who would become Artillerymen. Of course this was quite an honor for me, but when I told Calista about it she said that I could take her to Indianapolis and leave her there, for she was pregnant with our first child. The West Point experience was something else for me. Very maturing, --I learned a lot. So we returned to Sill again and I thought that I was in good shape for the school would need me to teach the West Point Officers when they arrived to take the Advanced Course.

However, the Army and President Harry Truman had other plans for me. The War in Europe was over, so all efforts were being concentrated in the Pacific for the invasion of Japan. Any Officer who had not served overseas was immediately ordered out. We had to close up the house at Ft. Sill, get Calista to Indianapolis, and I reported to San Francisco. By the middle of August I was on a troop ship headed for Manila. About half way over, the loud speaker came over the ships audio---Now hear this, Now hear this – The Japanese have surrendered. The war is over. We had dropped the Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima. Many people were killed, but the Presidents decision saved untold America lives, including mine, for I was a 1st Lt Artilleryman who was used as a forward observer to direct Artillery fire and it was common knowledge that we were expendable and did not expect to have much longevity of life.

Needless to say, our ship did not turn around and return to the States. We arrived in Manila then boarded again and went to Okinawa where we set up a tent camp and the next day one of the strongest Typhoons hit us and blew our Tent camp away. So before long we boarded ship again and sailed to Inchon, Korea. I lived in Japanese officers quarters at a munitions factory which was used by the Japanese when they occupied Korea. We were situated half way between Inchon and the Capitol of Korea, Seoul. We were the Service Command for the troops stationed in our part of Korea. I ended-up being the Recruiting Officer for any enlisted man who wanted to extend his enlistment or who wanted to make the Army his career. This job carried the rank of Captain, so I received my tracks in January 1946. Of course our daughter, Sarah Lynne, was born in November 1945. I was not able to be with Calista at this time for I was on the other side of the World. By June 1946, my tour of duty was over and I was eligible for rotation. Orders came to return me to the States. When our troop ship, the LeGrande Victory docked at Seattle, I got off of the ship and got down and kissed the good old earth of these United States and said to myself that I didn't care if I never left this soil again. We took the train across the U.S. and reached Indiana about the last of July 1946. Whereupon I took a taxi to 402 N. Arlington to see Calista and our daughter Sally. I hope, that you can imagine just how excited that I was, when Calista bounced out of the door at 402. We had not seen each other in over a year and had not talked during this time. We had so much to catch up upon,---it was great, so she finally had to take me inside the house to see our daughter Sally. Gosh--how exciting. Sally was just standing in her playpen when I walked over to look at her. She looked at me and smiled as if to say, “Hi Dad.” So I picked her up, walked with her and hugged her. It was really great. Everything seemed to fall in place, so it wasn't long before it almost felt like I had not been gone at all.

IS THIS MY LIFE'S WORK??

Dad had approximately thirty rental units which he had built, owned and managed. So he was always busy repairing this or that, cleaning out the vacants, collecting rents, painting, etc. Bill and Ralph were kept busy helping Dad and then they did maintenance jobs for a real estate manager downtown. They suggested that I come in with them for they could always use another two hands. So I went right to work, for now I had two more mouths to feed. Dad had taught me a long time ago that I was really a fortunate young man, for I had been born with a silver spoon in my mouth, "I didn't have to work

for a living" ---I could starve to death. So I put on my overalls, bought a saw and hammer, and became a Carpenter's helper. Not bad for a Purdue Engineer and a Captain of Field Artillery, don't you think.

We also needed a place to live. So Dad had a vacant one half of a double house at 911 N. Bosart Ave. He said that we could live in this house, if I would help him manage his real estate. So furniture was bought, and curtains were hung and we were now ready to face the world. Calista had a place to take care of her daughter. It didn't take her long to make a home of 911.

After working a year with Bill and Ralph, Dad decided to build more double houses. He bought about eight lots North of the Fairgrounds, he drew plans for a double house, we got permits and started in. I had never built anything, so it was all new to me. During March 1948, I was setting the floor joist on one of the houses when I committed a terrible Carpenter error. While trying to remove a bent over nail, I hit the head of another hammer and a chip of steel from the hammerhead flew off and went right into my left eye. It entered the lens and destroyed the sight in this eye. It took several weeks for me to recover from this accident and to make matters worse, Calista informed me that she would have another baby in September. I did recover from the eye injury for I have been more than Fifty years now with just one eye. Then in September, Calista gave birth to our second daughter, Joyce Anne.

Our Bosart House had a front porch, living room, dining room, kitchen, small bedroom and a full bath on the first floor, and a big bedroom on the second floor. The basement was only one half with laundry area, and a coal furnace and coal bin. We had one car which I drove to work, so Calista walked to the corner at Tenth Street to buy groceries, and whatever. We had finished the double houses, and Dad let me buy two of them on contract. He had already given us a big double up on Park Ave. so now I had three rental units to manage. These really helped with the finances, for our rental maintenance business did not produce much income for three families. We just had the 1/2 Ton Chevy truck which Dad had, so in 1949 I decided to buy my own truck. (Remember the little kid playing in the sand pile on Keystone Ave.?) I found a used Dodge 1/2 Ton pickup truck that was just right for us. Now Calista had a car to drive with her two daughters, and Bill and Ralph and I had two trucks to do business with.

Since I was a Purdue Civil Engineering graduate, Ralph kept after me to apply for a State Professional Engineering License. I had been out of school for more than nine years, been through World War II, and had not been practicing Engineering. A two day test was required, and recommendations from three Engineers was required. I applied and took the test two times and was then registered as a State of Indiana Professional Engineer and also as a Registered Land Surveyor, since I had graduated from Purdue. The Engineers License qualified me to design, and Seal architectural drawings for construction projects. The surveyors license allowed me to stake out any building project, set building lines and grades, determine building excavations etc. During this period, friends have been good to me. I have been busy with Kitchen remodels, Garages, Room Additions, etc. But something seems to be lacking. So Calista and I had purchased a lot on N. Campell Ave. in Irvington and I announced to Bill and Ralph that I was going to Design and Build my own home on Campbell Ave, so would not be working with them while this was going on. I also found two lots on Dearborn Ave. that would take double houses so I drew up a double house for these lots and started to build them at the same time that I started 911 Campbell.

We finished 911 Campbell in October 1951 just in time for Sally to enter the first grade in the new grade school, Public School #77 which was at the corner of Arlington Ave. and Pleasant Run Blvd. Our Campbell Ave home had been designed for a growing family, with a two car garage, and it proved out to be great for our family for we lived in this home for more than thirty five years before moving to smaller quarters. On March 7th, 1953 Calista gave birth to our third child. We named him to honor my Dad who has done so much to make our lives so successful. We named this baby Charles Christopher Brandt II and decided to call him Chris.

During the spring of 1954, I attended a Republican Party Picnic at German Park on the South side of Indianapolis. Mayor Alex Clark was there, and I had known him from Boy Scout Camp. He asked me if I knew any Registered Professional Engineers, whereupon I pulled my billfold out and showed him my registration card. Two days later I was on a job working when I received a call from the Mayors Office. It was Alex and he asked me to come down to meet him in his office on Thursday next. I met with Alex and he asked me to take over running the Building Commissioners Office of the City of Indianapolis. The Office required a Registered Engineer and since I was in Construction work he thought that I would be perfect to help him out. His present commissioner was Alcoholic, was in the hospital, and the office was being run by political appointed Building Inspectors, most of whom were on the take. So Alex was getting all kinds of bad publicity over the operation of this Office. I did not have a formal Office for our business, we did not have secretaries, and I barely knew what the Building Commissioners Office did, except that no building project could be built in the City without Building approval. Every Building had to be inspected by the Building office before it could be occupied. All Electrical, Plumbing, Heating or Air Conditioning installations had to be inspected by the Commissioners Office. Elevator installations and all sign installations were regulated by this Department. It was no little job, so I was quite honored to have it offered to me by the Mayor. Needless to say, I took the job, studied the City Ordinances, worked my fanny off, stayed through six months of Democratic Rule and learned more in these three years than a four year College course could ever have taught me. I knew all of the Architects, Builders, Electrical Contractors, Mechanical Contractors, etc and they knew me. But most of all, I learned what A General Building Contractor was, and learned how to work and operate as a General Contractor. So I had discovered what My Life's work was going to be: A General Building Contractor.

THE BUSINESS IS INCORPORATED

I left the Building Commissioners Office in June, 1957 because the Democratic Party took over the Mayor's Office. Dad was in poor health, so we had the responsibility of managing all of his rental property as well as trying to start a General Construction business. One Architectural firm gave me a job to build a Manse on 106th Street for a new Presbyterian Church which they were designing. We completed the project and then started to bid the educational building for the Church. I got the plans for the building, took off the materials, and compiled the estimate to submit our construction bid. We were the low bidder at \$125,000.00. We had never worked on a project of this magnitude, so Bill, Ralph, and I were quite leery as to what the final outcome would be. But Ralph was the job superintendent, I kept track of construction costs, and glory be, we finished the

project, paid the bills and had a little profit left over. We bid and finished several more projects during 1959, so it soon became evident that we should change our operation from a partnership to something else.

Since Dad was known in the City as a residential builder, we decided to honor him by naming the Company after him. So the Charles C. Brandt and Company, Incorporated, was formed by Bill, Ralph, and Charlie, the three sons, in 1960. We dated the business back to 1907 which was about the time that Dad had started to do work on his own.

Dad's shop was located at 1505 Massachusetts Ave. We worked out of the shop until we needed more office space. I was able to purchase a corner lot next to the shop and we set up an office in this building. As time passed I was able to buy all of the surrounding property until we owned almost the whole block. We continued to increase the Office space and soon had a construction office which enabled us to hire more help to run the office. We had been operating as an open shop contractor, so we did not try to do work downtown. As time passed several clients wanted us to perform work downtown, so it wasn't long before our progress was recognized by the Carpenters Labor Union. The Union promised a steady source of competent carpenter labor so it wasn't long until we became a Union shop. It has its advantages, but probably made our jobs cost more to do.

It was in December, 1964, that Dad passed away at the age of 84. He was a man who loved his family and he was a strict father as he guided his children to maturity. It was hard to let him go, but we were ready to face the world without him. The company continued to grow, for each year we performed more construction work than we had the year before. I designed and we built several office and warehouse buildings. I estimated and compiled construction bids for several Church buildings, theaters, restaurants, and office buildings.

When Dave Brandt graduated from Purdue in 1960, he came to work for the company and took over management of the office work. This helped tremendously. Then Chuck Brandt who was a Civil Engineer from Purdue came with us in 1962 and he proceeded to take charge of all of the field work. With these two working, we were able to perform the volume of work which we produced during the sixties.

THE FAMILY GROWS

Our home at 911 Campbell Ave turned out to be just right for our family. We had a large living room with a fireplace, good dining room, large kitchen with large breakfast area, full bath room, a den; and a big bedroom for Calista and me. The second floor had two bedrooms and a full bathroom and two attic spaces. After Chris was about three or four I completed the south attic for his bedroom. The basement was fully excavated and completed with a large social room and fireplace, a large laundry room, furnace room, and another large activities room. We had expected the children to grow up using the second floor and then when they left the nest, Calista and I would just have the first floor to live in.

Sally, Joyce, and Chris, all walked to school #77 for their grade school days and then went to Howe High School. We have always rated their elementary educations as being excellent. During these years, the family took many summer vacations together and had many exciting experiences.

The girls would have to use a lot of hair spray on their hair, and the odor of this

spray was very obnoxious to me. The odor would drift down the stairway and seemed to drift right across our bed. Well, finally I had had enough of this, so I stormed up the stairs grabbed cans of spray, took them outside and dumped them in the trash barrel. Of course this action upset the girls, for they cried, and cried, for I had taken away their beauty equipment. Chris couldn't stand to see his sisters treated this way, so he went out and retrieved the spray and returned it to them. I saw that I couldn't overcome this concern so I let the matter drop.

When Chris was about ten years old, he received an electric train for Christmas. He and I proceeded to set up a train table in the basement activity room. We worked for several nights on this project and finally had the train operating on the table. It just went around and around on the track. I had never had a train as I had grown up, but I had always envisioned what it would be if I had one. So I described my vision to Chris and he agreed that it would be a lot better than the table that we had just completed. So we began to dismantle our train table to get ready for the larger and better layout. But---this was as far as I got, for I never completed the dream layout and I never knew just how disappointed Christopher was---{until many years later when he informed me that he would not need my help to build his own dream train layout at his own home}.

As our children reached the age of sixteen they took drivers Ed and obtained their drivers license. This was great, for Mother would not have to taxi them to all of their activities. So I bought a used car for them to drive. Sally first, then Joyce and finally Chris. These cars gave them a lot of independence and freedom and I am very proud of all three for the way in which they used these cars. We did not have one traffic ticket nor did we ever have an accident. So I think that they deserved this family perk.

When Joyce was ten years old, she was diagnosed to have Diabetes. This disease, or condition stayed with her for the rest of her life. By the time Joyce was 32, she had laser treatments in both eyes, to save her eyesight, and then both of her kidneys failed and she was put on dialysis to flush her blood. I took her to the medical center, to have this done and could hardly stand to see her undergo this procedure. So it was determined that she was going to have to have a kidney transplant if she wanted to have any life expectancy. So her brother Christopher was tested and agreed to give her one of his kidneys. In June 1980, Calista and I put two of our children on the operating table, and the surgeons transplanted one of Chris's kidneys into Joyce Anne. This was a traumatic experience even for the parents, for operations of this nature are a very risky business. The good Lord was with all of us though, for Chris recovered, and Joyce became a new woman. She has never rejected her brothers kidney, so it must have been good stock, and at this writing, some sixteen years later, she is still going strong and enjoying good health.

Sally graduated from Howe High School and entered Ball State University to start studies to become a Teacher. Then Joyce Anne graduated from Howe and entered Purdue University to study Home Economics. Chris graduated Howe and entered Ball State to study Architecture.

After graduating from Purdue, Joyce Anne and Bill Freeman were married on June 20, 1970. Sally married Jim Borse on August 26, 1972. Chris was married to Janet Carija on June 5, 1976. So all three children were married and had left the house on Campbell Ave. We also moved Aunt Joyce to the Methodist Home during 1967 and moved my Mother to the Methodist Home in 1968. So the family has grown and has moved out into the world to be on their own.

WE DISCOVER FLORIDA

The Charles C. Brandt Construction Co. continued to grow, for each year we produced more construction than we had the year before. We added onto our Office building several times and employed more help in the office. During 1970 Dave Brandt left CCB Co. and started another construction company which was to operate without Union labor. We all participated in this company. So Ralph's son, Ralph Jr., came to work with us and took over Dave's job as office manager.

Calista and I had taken several vacations to Florida and in 1971 we were in Naples Florida and saw the start of a housing project known as the Glades Condominiums. The developer urged us to invest in an apartment but we resisted, for we said we would return in February 1972. We did return and invested in an apartment that would be completed in June or July. So we returned at this summer time to put furniture in the apartment. We had not expected to use this apartment for a while, so we did not pass up the opportunity, which we had, to rent it for the coming winter months, December, January and February. However, on September 28, 1972 I suffered a heart attack and was put into Community Hospital. I spent four weeks in the Hospital, then had to stay at Home during November and the Doctor gave permission for us to go to Florida during the first of December. We called our tenants whom we had rented the apartment to, explained my predicament, so we were able to go to Florida in December for me to continue my recuperation. It was really wonderful to spend the winter in warm Florida.

We continued to spend three or four of the cold winter months in Florida and then return to Indy so that I could work at the Company. Aunt Joyce passed away during the fall of 1974 and Mother followed on July 31, 1975. Joyce left her Farm up in Benton County to Calista, so we formed a corporation named Branco Inc. in 1975. We also transferred several Bank stocks and a Mutual Fund to the Corporation and opened an account at Merrill Lynch to hold these investments and had a bank account in a local bank. (I am the President of this Corporation, Calista is Secretary and Treasurer and Sally, Joyce and Chris are Directors along with Mom and Dad. Calista is the majority stockholder, so she controls all actions of the Company. We formed this Corporation so that the income of the Company could stay with the Company, so the farm would not have to be sold because one member would want to sell down the road, and it could grow to form a financial base for the Owners in the future. The farm is still known as the Eastburn Farm owned by Branco Inc. After Mother died in 1975 I inherited one of Dad's doubles on N. LaSalle and the home at 3728 Guilford Ave. This was in 1976. I had been taking care of the doubles which I had. Cleaning out the vacants, collecting rents, performing the maintenance as required, when I finally realized that it was really a full time job, so with the work required at the construction company, I decided to sell all of the income property which I had on contracts of sale. I was able to find buyers for each piece, so the property was sold with interest and it took at least another ten years for the sales to be consummated.

Since I was spending so much time during the winter months in Florida, I turned the operation of the Company over to Chuck Brandt and I became the Chairman of the Board. This arrangement proved successful for the Company, for it continued to grow and flourish. More people were hired to be project managers whose job was to estimate projects and then to do the office work to run the jobs which we were awarded.

During 1977, Calista and I purchased a lot in Lely estates in Naples and decided to

build a home on the lot. I designed the home and we started it in the spring of 1978. I hired the sub-contractors, carpenters, cement men, roofers, painters etc. and just had a great time getting this home built. It was a lot different than building with CCB Co. for I had no organization to help run the job. This house was located at 342 Pinehurst Circle in the Pinehurst addition of the Lely Estates and was situated on the Tee of the second golf hole of the Hibiscus Golf Course. We sold our condominium in the Glades when we moved into 342. Naples, FL was growing like a weed and still is. I thought that CCB Co. should come down and enter the construction market in Florida. So I went up to Gainesville, FL at the University of Florida, to take the State License Examination for General Building Contractors. I had already received a State of Florida License as a Registered Engineer, so I was Licensed to draw and seal construction Plans for Residential and small commercial buildings. Then I bought two vacant lots in Lely, and had Chris design houses for the lots and then proceeded to construct the houses. I did not get the help which I needed from Indpls. so I saw that construction in Naples was too much for me. So after completing the projects I didn't try any more.

I TAKE RETIREMENT

Christopher had graduated from Ball State University's School of Architecture and came to Indianapolis to work for several different Architects during his internship. About 1980 he took the State Board examination and became a Registered Architect. Therefore, he set up his own Office to practice his profession. Bill Freeman, who was married to Joyce Anne had been working for the Schweitzer Corp after graduation from Purdue. I suggested that he take the State Board of Registration test to become a Professional Registered Engineer. This he did and thus received his License to practice Engineering in the State of Indiana. After his Schweitzer experience, he worked for a Company which designed and manufactured automotive fans. Large ones for Caterpillar Tractors, or small ones for smaller needs. About 1979 Bill was caught in a family hiring situation, and found himself without work. We were going to establish a machine shop for him when Chuck Brandt said that he should come to work for CCB & Co. Well, Bill did not have any construction experience, but he was a Purdue graduate and a Registered Engineer, so his background was compatible for construction work. So he was put out in the field as a construction superintendent and worked in this capacity for two or three years. Then he came into the office and became a project manager to estimate and manage construction projects. His training and his own business ability has proven him to be a valuable asset to the Company as shown later on.

Brother Bill had retired in 1980 and had sold his CCB stock to Chuck and Dave. Then in 1981 Brother Ralph sold his one third share of stock to Ralph Jr. I followed by selling my one third share evenly to Chris and Bill Freeman. Since Ralph Jr. was now a one third Owner in his own right and the other three shareholders each held only half of a third, friction started to build between the younger men. Ralph Jr. started to try to show authority in running the operation as the Secretary, Treasurer and was thus usurping management power from Chuck Brandt, who was the oldest of the stockholders and was the President and Chairman of the Board. Bill, Ralph, and I were retired and did not have anything to say about how to run the Company.

Dave Brandt, was successful running his non-union Company and soon wanted to

be without three retired shareholders so he offered to buy our shares and made a deal with Chuck to trade shares between Dave's Company and CCB Co. So it was that Chuck now owned one third, Ralph Jr owned one third, and Chris and Bill Freeman split one third. Chuck was President and Chairman of the Board, Ralph Jr. was Secretary-Treasurer, Chris and Bill were on the Board. Chris was not actively engaged in the operation of CCB for he was doing Architectural work in his own Architectural Company which was located away from CCB & CO.

Soon after all of the above changes took place at the Company it became quite evident that the operation of the company was suffering because of the in fighting which was occurring between Chuck and Ralph Jr. Ralph Jr. wanted to be President and thought that he was better qualified to lead the Company. As the Treasurer he was responsible to produce the operating financial statements of the monthly business to the Board.

However the volume of business had increased so that these statements were not delivered until three months later, after being approved by the Company accountant. As a result, no one could tell whether the business was being profitable or not at the time that work was being performed. Ralph Jr. blamed this failure to produce the statements on the computer system which he had bought and installed, and was for buying a new more elaborate system. It was quite evident that the accounting and book keeping requirements had outgrown Ralph Jr's capabilities, and that a certified accountant should be hired to perform this critical part of the operation. Ralph Jr. was not qualified to estimate construction work and had not spent time in the field working with the carpenters and laborers. So Chuck, Bill, and Chris decided to make a buy out offer, which Ralph Jr. did not accept, and then decided that his services with Company would have to be terminated. Chuck gave notice to Ralph Jr in December 1982 that his services would terminate in March 1983. This decision turned out to be disastrous, for in April 1983 Ralph Jr. filed a lawsuit against e Chuck, Bill, and Chris and sued the three individually for the dismissal . So the threat of this lawsuit weighed heavily on Chuck, Bill and Chris for the next year until it was scheduled for a hearing in 1984. Luckily for everyone concerned, a settlement was made without going to court and Ralph Jr. was terminated and separated from the Company. His Dad, Ralph Sr., never spoke to me again, even until his death in 1994. I tried many times to make contact with Ralph after this, but he thought for sure that I must have had something to do with all that had transpired, and did not realize that I had been retired just like he was, and did not have any authority with the company.

I must say that I am very interested in the welfare of the Company and probably always will be, for I did have a lot to do with the formation and operation of the Company in its early days. After the lawsuit with Ralph Jr. things happened very quickly and many changes were made. Chuck had always wanted to be in command of his own destiny, so in 1986 he resigned as President of the Company, but retained his Board Chairmanship and turned the daily operation of the company over to Bill who was then titled as President of the company. Chuck did this so he would be able to spend his time and efforts toward being a developer. He made connections with a young developer who was able to find projects which had been designed and were ready for development, but lacked the necessary financing. They were able to obtain financing from savings and loans, and other resources, but were required to personally guarantee the mortgages. Charles C. Brandt Company had built up enough treasury, so that the mortgage companies were very anxious for the business. Before long, the Brandt Treasury was used up to complete the project cost overruns, and the completed projects were not rented to bring in enough rent to make

the mortgage payments. So by 1989 everyone was looking to Charles C Brandt and Company to continue to make the payments as they came due. But the Company was out of money.

So Chuck's development activities were brought to a stop. Efforts were then started to sell each of the projects back to the mortgage companies and proceedings to establish bankruptcy were being investigated for the Company. Bill had been in control of all of the Company business construction through the years that all of the development had been going on, but he found that without the financial backing which the Company had built up, that now the companies bonding power had been lost. Therefore, he could not accept or perform any new contract which required a performance bond. So this just emphasized the need that bankruptcy was the only way out of the dilemma.

Chuck also realized that the Company was in dire trouble, so in 1992, without talking to anyone about it, he counseled with his attorney and accountant and came up with an offer to sell his stock and interest in the Company to Bill and Chris. This offer would mean that Bill and Chris would be indebted to Chuck until they had paid off his purchase price for his stock and equity in the Company. It also meant that from this point forward, Chuck was just an employee of the Company. Bill and Chris accepted Chucks proposal and immediately set about to rebuild the fortunes of the Company. Work came into the company, it was figured and performed and within two years of hard work the fortunes of the company had turned around. At the present time the company has unlimited bonding power, a tremendous backlog of work, and just one more year to pay off Chucks buy-out agreement. The Company is now in the hands of my heirs, Bill and Chris, and I am very proud of them.

In 1994 the name of the company was changed to Charles C Brandt Construction Company. Then in 1996, Bill thought that the location at 1505 Massachusetts was not large enough to support any future growth of the company, so he started to look around for different quarters. The Madden Furniture Co. was at Sixteenth and Sherman Drive. It has several large buildings and lots of ground. A proposal was made on the property and it was accepted, so the company was moving. Chris, as the Architect, designed a new office for the second floor of one of the buildings and a new entrance to the building. During the early months of 1996 work was performed so that the company occupied the new modern offices in July 1996. An open house was held to celebrate the occasion with old clients in attendance as well as sub-contractors, suppliers, and other interested people. It was a gala affair and was well accepted so that all could see that the company was well positioned to move forward during the coming years.

P O T P O U R R I

While in Florida in the fall of 1987, I had another light heart attack. I was not hospitalized very long, but had to take it easy. Because of this occurrence, Calista and I decided that the time right for us to sell 911 Campbell and find a smaller more condensed home for us to have in Indianapolis. We no longer needed the family house with yard and trees to take care of, especially since we were now spending six or seven months of each year in Florida. The Washington Trail Addition was being developed south of East Washington Street off of German Church Road. The houses were all single family, two bedroom,

two bath with living room, dining area , kitchen and attached two car garage. We agreed that the home would satisfy our needs, so we contracted to have the home constructed at 10964 Mount Vernon Trail North. They would start in January 1988 and be completed by June 1, so we had to get ready to sell 911. We listed the house with a Realtor and left for Florida. Within a week we were called in Florida with a proposition on the house. After a little dickering, we agreed to sell and give occupancy about July 1. They called about May 1 to report that the house was finished, so we returned to Indy and made plans to move. We have now been here about eight years and I must say that the house has served us well.

Our life in Florida has been very full each year because so many of our friends have also purchased property in Naples. My sister Louise has been there for almost ten years. Calista's sister and brother-in-law have been there for almost ten years and have lived in the house which I built for them. Then the Lindners, Daltons, Kysers, and Jacobys to name a few are all still in Naples. So we enjoy quite a large Indianapolis community during the winter months that we are there.

The farm in Benton County, Indiana which is just East of Fowler, Indiana has been very interesting for our whole family. Each year we plant and harvest over one hundred acres of corn and over one hundred acres of soy beans. We hired a farm manager to oversee the operation and he has a neighbor farmer to plant and till the soil. In 1980 we decided to remodel the farm house and add a new front porch and a new room at the side. Plus we put a new roof on the house and remodeled the kitchen. We furnished the house with spare furniture which we had and soon all of our children had spare furniture to carry up to the farm house. Then on Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Labor Day the whole family, all Grand children, dogs, cats, their friends etc. would gather at the farm for a picnic lunch of baked ham, or fried chicken, or baked turkey with all of the trimmings, or whatever else that Calista could think of. I am sure that each of the Grand kids will have some fond memories of the times which they had at the farm.

As I said when I got off of the ship from Korea in 1945, I didn't care if I never left the United States again, so Calista and I have not been too much for foreign travel. But in 1979 we took a trip to Scotland with Dave and Elizabeth Lindner to play golf. What a time!!! We contracted with Golf International out of Canada and they arranged the airfare over and back, reserved the hotels for us, and made tee times at the various golf courses which we played. It was very exciting to tee up and play the Old Course at St. Andrews. Even as the duffer which I am, I had a great time. We also played Gleneagles and stayed at the Hotel there. Calista and I invited Dave and Liz down to our room for cocktails before dinner, so I called room service and ordered a cheese snack tray. Well the waiter knocked on the door and entered the room with a 30 inch tray on his shoulder that was just overflowing with all kind of cheese and crackers. I nearly fell over, for I had not asked the price for such a tray. My curiosity got the best of me so I called room service right away and inquired as to the price of such a tray. He answered "Fifteen Dollars, U.S." We all fell over and dug right in to enjoy this bargain.

During the summer of 1994, the fifteenth anniversary of the United States landing in Normandy, France was celebrated. Brother-in Jeff had participated in this invasion of Europe and was wanting to go over there and see again where he had been. ATA, the airline based in Indianapolis was having a special tour for the veterans who had been in the Normandy Invasion. So Calista and I decided to send Jeff and Phyllis on this trip since they do so much for us when we are not in Naples. Then, at the same time ATA had a

special tour lined up for people who would like to tour England. So Calista and I signed up for this tour and were on the same plane when it crossed the Atlantic Ocean. We had a great trip too, for we saw Bath, Stonehenge which I had been wanting to see since geography class in grade school, Wales, North England, and Yorktown, London, and many other sites in England. These two trips represent the only tours which we have been on outside of the United States, except for several tours to different parts of Canada.

Calista and I have now been married for more than Fifty years. I can assure you that this is a long time for any two people to live together. We are constantly asked how did we do it, what plans did we make along the way so that we could stay together, how were we able to save enough finances to allow us to have the life which we now have. All that I can say to these or any other questions which one may put to us is---I don't know, it is sure a mystery to me, for we never planned for the future, never put aside for the future. The Future was a complete unknown to us. But I am going to say this, ---I could not enjoy the life which I now have had it not been for my wife, Calista. She never wanted to keep up with the Joneses, never asked for more money than what I was providing, and she always saw to it that her children were clean and dressed and acted as if they were young ladies and gentlemen. No--I must say that a man's success can definitely be attributed to his wife's actions.

Now, what other words of wisdom may I leave for posterity to mull over:

1. Be honest--Don't cheat your friend or neighbor out of a penny.
2. Live by the Golden Rule---Do unto others as you would have them do you.
3. Remember--it is no sin to be poor --but you will find that it is mighty inconvenient.
4. Wealth comes from the Land, The Land is here forever. Those who know the Land are those who Love the Land and they are the ones who OWN the Land ---*JUST FOR A LITTLE WHILE*. (By Willa Cather)
5. Wealth is like a viper, which is harmless, if a man learns how to take hold of it and use it; but if he does not, it will twine around his hand and bite him. (*St. Clement*)
6. Disappointments are sure to occur several times as one goes through his life. He is the man who will not let these disappointments get the best of him, but will use them to learn and how not to let an occurrence happen again.

The tale disclosed in these pages is that of just one man who was privileged to be born and travel this earth. It is probably not exciting reading to anyone but him, but I hope that whoever may try to wade through this tale, that they may receive some benefit from the story.

“UNCLE CHARLIE”

While growing up, he was always known to me as "UNCLE CHUCK." After my graduation from Shortridge High School, my decision to attend Purdue and join Phi Gamma Delta fraternity was in part to follow in his footsteps.

When my brother "Chuck" joined the company in the early 60's there was a potential name conflict, hence his name changed to "Uncle Charlie".

I remember family gatherings at the house on Campbell Avenue and how proud "Uncle Charlie" was as he took us in to display his computer skills while Aunt Calista scurried around preparing the meal. She was a wonderful person and it was obvious that he truly loved her and had the utmost respect for her.

I remember the first time I took my family to his condo in Florida at Christmas and seeing a plastic snowman floating on his pond in 75 degree sunshine while there was sloppy snow on the ground in Indy.

Webster defines a "MENTOR" as a person looked upon for wise advice and guidance. For me, no one could have been a better mentor in my business world than Uncle Charlie. He taught me the values of honest and fair dealings with the utmost of integrity. The "Brandt" name continues to command respect in the construction community mainly because of the foundation created by Charlie, my dad Bill, and Uncle Ralph. I have worked hard to instill these qualities in my children and the people who now own and run Brandt Construction, Inc. I thanked him profusely for that gift.

Uncle Charlie led by example. He was not only a loving and caring husband and father, but was committed to giving back to the community and the industry that has been so kind to the entire family. In 1954, he accepted an appointment as Building Commissioner for the City of Indianapolis and successfully completed a four year term. He supported my membership in Associated General Contractors and later as State President of Associated Builders and Contractors.

He even taught Pat & me to play "Hand and Foot" a two person card game that we play often. Every time we play we chuckle as we discard remembering Uncle Charlie telling us that it was our turn to "discharge."

Uncle Charlie leaves behind a legacy that we in the Brandt Family can be proud of for years to come. He will be missed by all who knew and loved him.

Dave Brandt