

## **Three Fine Men**

### **Ferguson Meadows, John McNair & Bob Green**

During the last month I attended the funerals of some dear friends. One was for a professor I had hired at Kent State over twenty-five years ago. He had a career marked by many successes. Fergie, as we knew him, was an African-American who walked in many worlds. He was a Ph.D. who came from a small town in West Virginia, and although they valued education, these opportunities were limited. He was a career Army Officer in the reserves and was very proud of his country and his service to it. Fergie walked in the African-American and Caucasian worlds too, with the congregation at his funeral being divided almost in half to honor his tolerant and accepting attitudes. In short, Fergie was a good friend and successful academic who died too soon...a victim of cancer at fifty-eight years of age.

Another friend was stuck down by a heart attack at age seventy-five. John was a golfing buddy of mine, who had retired some years ago after a successful career in the retail business. John was a gentleman and was always the best-dressed player on the course. While most of us would wear Dockers or shorts and a golf shirt, John would always wear nice slacks and an almost new golf shirt, which matched his socks. We would solve life problems while waiting for our next shots...and share the joke of the week with one another. After each round of the Great Summit Golf League, we would have lunch and present the traveling trophy (a former bowling trophy donated by Jim Myers), to the person

who had had the best day. The first time we awarded it, it was given to John and the waitress kissed him. We kept re-awarding it in hopes of another kiss, but the rest of us were never so lucky (probably because of the way we were dressed!).

A third friend died this past week. His family said that his body just wore out. I loved Bob because he had such a great sense of humor. He was ninety years old and in his later years joked mostly about being old. He enjoyed being teased about his age and always had a comeback that was clever. Once when someone was talking about the Revolutionary War, another friend said, "Was that the way it was back then Bob?" As quick as a flash Bob said, "I never got along with that Patrick Henry!" Right before he died, he told his family, "At my funeral there will be no reason to have flowery speeches about me. Anyone who knows me will already have formed their opinion about me...and nothing you are going to say is going to change it!" At first you might wrongly think that Bob was a curmudgeon, but in actuality he was a teddy bear. I liked Bob because he talked straight and had a great sense of humor.

I will miss all of these men and admire them for different reasons...Fergie, because he understood people from many different walks of life, John because he was such a gentleman and Bob because he had a great sense of humor. I aspire to have more of each of these qualities in my life.

12-20-01