

Lois Drodge's remembrances of Roelof C. W. van der Heyde

Ralph loved the outdoors. He often watched Titia, his wife plant flowers and often helped her with the shovel or hoe whenever she needed his help. Ralph had a small tomato patch and every season we could count on having a bowl full of tomatoes freshly picked.

He was a walker. Walking his dog, most of our children will remember Baron, either early morning or late at night. In fact, he got himself in trouble on his LAST walk. He walked to the barbershop approx. 2 miles away and on his way home fell in front of his neighbor's driveway. Thank goodness Debbie and Charles were there to tend to his needs. HE SAID HE DIDN'T WANT TO BOTHER ANYONE.

After Ralph wasn't permitted to drive any longer, which he hated, he would ask if I would take him to the store to buy groceries. One day shortly after Wal-Mart had opened, I asked him if he would like to go there. He said yes, he was always willing to shop anywhere. He went up and down the isles buying some, looking for other things but he could not find the kind of nuts he always bought at Kroger's, I wanted to ask a clerk but he had had enough of Wal-Mart and said "Let's get out the H... out of this store.". I never took him back there again.

This is the kind of man Ralph was. Many years ago, Titia and Tanya took their yearly trip to the Smokey Mountains. I invited Ralph and Arne over for dinner. I had ham, potatoes, green beans and dessert. They were looking forward to a home cooked meal, maybe fried chicken. What I didn't know until much later, was that Titia had made a ham for them to eat while she was gone, and they had ham all week previously to our dinner. He was so gracious and never said a word to me about having ham all week and then having ham again.

He read many different books, in fact, half of his living room have bookshelves around the walls. I love to read also and told him. So one day he brought over a book for me and it was in Dutch. I returned it the next day and we had a good laugh over that.

Many times when I was outside working in the garden he would come over and stand and talk and we would laugh at some of his jokes, which sometime I couldn't understand but would still laugh with him. I will always remember his laughter and how his whole face would light up.

I will miss you Ralph.