



Birthdate: August 17, 1936

Birthplace: Garden City, Kansas

Marriage: September 14, 1963

Married Where: Denver, Colorado

Children: Debra, Lee Ann

Grandchildren: Four

Occupation: Marketing/sales

Hobbies: country music, history, vehicles

Forrest was born to Otto and Dorothy Toadvine-Uppendahl. He had two older brothers, Don and Cliff who are now deceased. Forrest's dad was an itinerant farmer and builder. They lived in a rental house in a small town in Scott County, KS. There was no electricity or indoor plumbing. The children attended school in a one room schoolhouse with about ten students total. Most of the family's food came from his mother's garden which Forrest helped with. While the family was in Kansas, they made several moves to farm different properties. They lived close to Forrest's maternal and paternal grandparents which gave him a close connection throughout their lives.

Forrest's dad always had an interest in politics which planted a seed for Forrest. (Keep in mind that Forrest was five years old when World War II (WW II) broke out with the bombing of Pearl Harbor Dec. 7, 1941.) Forrest and his dad would go to events together and Forrest was taught him to get in front and put his hand out for a handshake. Forrest has continued this habit to this day. Living on a farm, Forrest learned to drive a tractor and like a typical little boy was attracted to cars. He has always had an eye for a nice vehicle.

The family made shopping trips to Colorado - always at Montgomery Ward Catalog House in Denver. There was much to interest a young boy from western Kansas - streetcars, escalators, big buildings, restaurants, etc. In 1948 the family moved to Boulder, CO buying their first house. Forrest finished junior high and high school there, and then attended University of Colorado (CU) majoring in Business - Marketing, graduating in 1958. During this time Forrest's parents divorced. His mother worked at the university.

After graduation Forrest worked for Pittsburgh Plate Glass (PPG) in inside sales (meaning he spent a lot of time on the phone). He quickly realized this job didn't seem to have much of a future. In April of 1959 he received his draft notice into the military. He served his two years in the Army mostly in the southeast where he learned about the world outside of Kansas and Colorado, particularly racial segregation. While in the military he had administrative duties. This certainly served him well in the years to come. Forrest became a commissioned 2nd Lieutenant in the Army Reserve in June 1962.

Upon his return to Colorado, Forrest got a job with Montgomery Ward in Denver. Interesting how that childhood fascination with Ward's came around as a career move. Of course, there was only one other game in town - Sears Roebuck - and they didn't have a management trainee program.

This was the beginning of Forrest becoming a “road warrior” as a catalog store manager. Now Forrest had a job and income and could buy a car. Some of his cars he almost drove into the ground.

While learning the ropes at Ward’s, Forrest was introduced to a part-time employee who was working there during Christmas break from school. She, Elaine, gave him a smile and wink and the rest is history. They married in Sept 1963. Elaine had been attending Augustana College (University) in South Dakota. but never finished her degree until they moved to Joplin, MO years later.

In Feb 1963 Forrest was transferred to Santa Fe, NM. Once settled, Elaine worked at the NM School for the Deaf and a financial services firm until their first child, Debra, arrived in 1965. Their second child, Lee Ann, arrived in 1967. Before they married, Forrest asked Elaine if she was open to moving around since that was what he knew would happen as he grew his career; he was correct about that. Elaine became a “corporate wife” following her husband’s career and raising the children. Forrest became a “road warrior” as his territories covered many states he needed to visit on a regular basis.

In 1969, the family moved back to Denver as the Sales Promotion and Field Operating Manager. Next move was to Chicago (in the corporate offices) in 1971. Forrest was the first Sales Agency Territory Sales Manager at the age of 34. Here the travel was a bit different – just a long drive from a western suburb (Bolingbrook) into the city of Chicago. With each promotion came expanded responsibilities and larger territories. In 1975 they were transferred to Baltimore, MD and back to Denver in 1979. Living in different locations provided the opportunity to know the history of each territory well. Forrest enjoyed delving into the history and visiting all the unique sights in the area. Forrest knew something was in the wind when downsizing began. In October 1984 Montgomery Ward and Forrest parted ways. Forrest was always a top performer but after 23 years he wondered what would come next.

Without much of a hiccup, in December 1984, Forrest found an ad in the newspaper that seemed to be written with him in mind – even though it was a totally different industry. The responsibilities were similar. Forrest was the Franchise Development Regional Director. The company was a new venture, Poppingo Video, located in Wichita, KS. The company was successful and eventually was bought by National Video. Forrest’s job ended in August 1987. Now as an “empty nester” Elaine started work at Wichita’s Institute of Logopedics as an Oral Muscular Therapy Assistant. Forrest got a new job with Spot Not Car Wash in September 1987 as Vice President Director of Franchising and Marketing, in Joplin, MO. Forrest made that drive every week (192 miles) for three years. He recalls being stopped for speeding in the predawn hours as he drove from Wichita to Joplin. Finally, in 1990 they sold their house and moved to Joplin. With little encouragement Elaine went back to school and completed her degree at Missouri Southern State University in 1995. Spot Not was sold to Raco Car Wash, but Forrest didn’t lose his job. After ten years with the company, it was sold and once again Forrest was out of work and wondering what was next. Now he was 60 years old.

As had happened in the past, he saw an ad in the newspaper advertising GE Capital Assurance looking for folks to sell long-term care insurance. Now Forrest learned about insurance and started off in a new direction. He thought in this job he could set his own hours and relax a bit. As usual, Forrest was successful earning the cherished recognition in the Million Dollar Club (meaning he produced a million dollars in sales). Forrest spent 18 years in the insurance business (company is now called Genworth).

In 2007 another change was on the horizon. Elaine was diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment which led to Alzheimer's. They did not let this slow them down. They continued to make road trips to family reunions and visits with their daughters and grandchildren. Forrest continued in the long-term care insurance business from which he learned a lot he could use as Elaine's disease progressed. Elaine passed away in March 2022.

Forrest is still involved with the Rays of Hope and the Open Space Visitor Center on Coors. He treasures his family – young and old – and has fond memories of his two dachshunds, Houston and Tucker.

*This is the Reader's Digest version of Forrest's 363-page autobiography. What a memory!