

Hayden Hamby – 3rd Place

Congressional District Three

Teacher: B. Thomas

Central Freshman Academy

“The Best Marriage I Know”

The perfect marriage, in my opinion, is between my grandparents. They were born Ann Hope Pennington, and Robert Emmet Hamby. Ann Hope Pennington was born and raised in Mobile, Alabama. She had two sisters and a brother. She went to St. Matthew’s in Mobile for elementary school. She then went to Bishop’s Toolen, also in Mobile. She didn’t go to college, but is currently working as a Physical Education teacher at St. Patricks in Phenix city, Alabama. Robert Emmett Hamby was born and raised in Mobile, Alabama too. Then he attended Bishop’s McGill in Mobile. He attended college at Embry Riddle, an Aeronautical University. Robert and Ann married on September 17, 1955. They had their first son November 25, 1956. Their first daughter was born September 20, 1958. Their second daughter was born August 21, 1963. Their final child, a third daughter, was born January 15, 1966. They celebrated their 50th anniversary September 17, 2005.

Robert was in the air force. So he, Ann, and their family moved around a lot. They lived in places like Japan and Canada. Robert was sent to Vietnam to take control of several air force bases. He was exposed to Agent Orange, which caused him to have cancer all throughout his life. Robert and Ann were happy together, through thick and thin.

I can honestly say, I have never *ever* seen my grandparents fight. There has never been any argument, no raising of their voices, nothing that could suggest that anyone was unhappy at one time. They loved each other. You could see it when they looked at each other. There was never a time that I saw one not happy with the other. They were almost like soul mates, perfectly made for each other. Their lives together were happy and incredibly special. They loved each other no matter what happened. They came up with mutual agreements, they had long conversations, and they were deeply in love.

My grandparents marriage was much more than just a marriage, it was a friendship and a partnership. Neither partner got more or less work. It was divided down the middle. They taught me that love had a way of brightening up every day, that people were connected spiritually, and that love makes the world spin 'round. There was nothing that anyone could say that might make either one upset. Their marriage also taught me that it was okay to love, that not everyone was going to break your heart, and that when you found the person you would love, you would know it, every time you looked at them. Love pulls at your heart until you give in and a happy marriage is just another personification of that.

My grandparents loved each other so much that it was visible to everyone. When my grandfather died, May 7, 2009, it devastated everyone. The devastation was most visible in my grandmother. There was proof that there was no pretending, that their love was real. Every single second of it. There was no regret in her mind. They loved each other, and that was final.