



chapter 5.1

EVELYN MARIE BROWN

Kiree & Orville's first-born (b. 1932)

Evelyn Marie Brown was born to Kiree (Hartley) & Orville “Jake” Brown, on December 29, 1932, in a house west of Arno and not far from Grandma Hartley’s Williams Hollow farm. She was a late Christmas present to the family.

Her parents had only been married on Valentine’s day earlier that year, so it wasn’t long before the Brown family began to grow. This little baby girl became the first grandchild of Ira and Mintia Hartley even though Grandpa Hartley had already passed away three years earlier.

Evelyn, an admitted “Daddy’s girl,” would enjoy the family spotlight for about 13 months when her sister, Jana Lea, was born. Being of such close age meant the girls would end up doing everything together—they’d walk to school together, take violin lessons together, and sit in the front seat of their parents’ Chevy pickup as they traveled to and from Nebraska where their father worked for a large corn farm west of Omaha. Just about every picture of Evelyn as a child had Jana Lea right next to her.

Evelyn’s earliest school years were in Nebraska. As she got older, Evelyn would walk quite a distance from the Brown farm to Black Oak School to the west a couple of miles. That was because, in the mid 1940s, Evelyn and her family moved back to Missouri for good. She graduated the eighth grade from Black Oak School.

In 1947, Evelyn attended Ava High School where she met her future husband, Boyd Elliott. They were married on September 1, 1948. Evelyn and Boyd lived in the Sweden area, east of Ava. Once Boyd’s parents, Viva (Ingram) and Jerry Elliott moved into Ava, Evelyn and Boyd moved to the old Elliott farm. It was there that their first child, Gerry Marie, was born in the following year, September 27, 1949.

Next, Evelyn and Boyd lived in Hannibal, MO, where Evelyn worked in a grocery store, and Boyd worked in trucking. Near the start of the Korean War, both Boyd and Evelyn obtained work at the Sunflower Ordnance Works in Sunflower, KS, near the town of DeSota.

When the end of the war caused a great slowdown at the munitions plant, Evelyn and Boyd moved to Wichita, KS,

ca 1947-48—Evelyn
at Ava High School



where work was available. Evelyn and Boyd's second child, Judy, was born May 8, 1955, in Wichita.

As it had in other places they had lived, alcohol abuse continued to plague Boyd in Wichita. Seeing no end to it, Evelyn returned to her mother's home in Ava with the girls, and she divorced Boyd that same year.

While in Ava, Evelyn began to study her Bible, and she became active in the Ava General Baptist Church. She worked for a prominent Ava attorney, Quentin Haden. But at some point, she felt she needed to strike out with the girls and begin a new life.

During this period, Evelyn's Uncle Eldon Hartley was visiting from Wichita, and he told her that Boeing was hiring back in Wichita. So she went back to Wichita and applied at Boeing; she was hired in the time card department that same day.

It was still in 1955 that Evelyn met Bill Gardenhire, also working at Boeing. Evelyn and Bill were married on December 8, 1956. Both working, they were able to afford one of those nice three-bedroom, single garage houses that were being built all over Wichita at that time. Theirs was on 30th Street a few blocks west of the Seneca Square shopping center.

Six months later, in June, 1957, Evelyn's mother and her brothers moved to Wichita from Ava. They moved into her garage for the summer while her mother got situated and found her own place. Evelyn was pregnant at this time, and on October 27, 1957, she had her third child, David Gardenhire.

Evelyn and Bill separated when David was still a toddler, and they were divorced on May 18, 1961. Not long after-



Evelyn's Life in a Nutshell

- Born 1932 in Douglas County, MO
- Attended elementary school first in Nebraska and then at Black Oak School south of Ava
- Attended Ava High School until her married to Boyd Elliott in 1948
- Children:
 - Gerry
 - Judy
 - David
 - Kevin
- Currently lives near Avilla, MO west of Springfield



Evelyn, with husband, Bill Gardenhire, ca 1956

At left, Evelyn in a "glamour pose" 1955



Above, Gerry & Judy—1957

Below, Evelyn, with her son,
David, in 1962



ward, Evelyn moved her family to Dallas, Texas, where she wanted to go to school and to work. She was a dental assistant for quite a while in Dallas.

In 1963, Evelyn married W.O. Smithers, and they lived in Irving, Texas, west of Dallas. It was there that Evelyn had her fourth child, Kevin Ray Smithers, on November 9, 1964. But Evelyn found herself in an abusive marriage, and ended it after only a year or so.

Evelyn would stay in the Dallas area for almost twenty years. Always a spiritual person, Evelyn became moved by the teachings of the Mormon Church and joined it in Texas. Her personal testimony is that they helped her immensely, and she remains faithful in that Church to this very day.

In the 1980s, Evelyn left Texas, first living in Greenwood, AR, and then returning to the Missouri Ozarks around 1990, after her mother could no longer live alone. The two lived together at her mother's house on Glenwood in Springfield until the mid 1990s after which her mother went to a nursing home.

Evelyn lived close to her youngest son, Kevin, in Nixa, a suburb of Springfield, for a number of years. In 2004, Evelyn married a fellow member of the Mormon Church, Robert Calvin. Now 81 years old, Evelyn lives with him on a place just off old "Route 66" on the outskirts of the village of Phelps. She is not able to get out much any more. Care givers and church members help provide for her needs at her home there.

Where Are Evelyn's Children Now?

Gerry Marie Elliott was born to Jerry Boyd and Evelyn Marie Elliott on September 27, 1949, at her paternal grandparents home at Sweden, Mo. At a young age she loved animals, especially dogs and horses. Her Grandpa Elliott had a sawmill, and he would put her up on the big work horses that they used to pull the logs to the truck. When her parents moved away for jobs in the city, she sometimes could ride the ponies for rent at a park, or during summers with her Elliott grandparents who had horses to ride.

Maternal grandmother, Kiree Brown, was a school teacher, and her love of books wore off on Gerry and she would often escape to far away places that she dreamed she would see someday. Uncles James and Kenny taught her about basketball which, next to horse shows, is her favorite sport.

Gerry married James Richard Carter in March of 1969. Out of that union a son was born, Shawn Richard Carter, on August 6, 1970, the same year that she graduated from Cosmetology School. Gerry and Rick were divorced in 1974.

Gerry's second marriage was to Thomas Burton Jr., a Tennessee Walking Horse Trainer who she bought a horse from and she had started showing. They had a barn in Willard, MO, and in 1983, they moved the training facilities to Cedar Rapids, IA, where they remained until the fall of 1997, and they moved back to Springfield, Mo. She worked horses and gave riding lessons and was secretary of the Corn Belt Walking Horse Association (CBWHA), and she was show manager for the spring and fall horse shows for CBWHA. She also wrote articles for the shows for the *Walking Horse Report* in Tennessee.

Gerry's second passion is antiques; she collects antique advertising boxes and tins plus Scottie dogs among other items. She also buys and sells in a flea market where she works in Springfield, MO.

In 2009, Gerry's husband, Tom, had a stroke and they closed down the barn and got rid of all the horses, but they still go to shows and root for all their friends.

Judy Ann Elliott was born May 8, 1955, to Evelyn and Boyd Elliott, in Wichita, KS. Her most treasured memories growing up were times spent with her grandparents. She and her sister, Gerry, would spend summers with their Elliott grandparents. Judy felt a special bond with her paternal grandfather, Jerry Elliott. He had a saw mill and she loved playing house on the sawdust pile or going with him to the woods to get logs.

Judy never knew her maternal grandfather, Orville Brown, since he died before she was born. But she remembers visiting Grandma Kiree Brown in Wichita and spending time with Uncle Kenny and Uncle James. Uncle Kenny would take her to the Wichita Zoo. Grandma Brown would have a very positive influence in Judy's life. Kiree's family was very dear to her and Kiree always made you feel special, when you were with her.



Above, Gerry & Tom showing a horse in Minnesota in the 1980s



Below, Gerry with her son, Shawn Carter



Judy & Gerry in 1960.

Judy attended schools in several states but she graduated from Springfield (MO) Kickapoo High School in 1973. Judy married Frank Lott at the St. Joseph Catholic Church in Springfield on November 22, 1974. They were blessed with two wonderful children, Jamie Renee, in 1976 and Zachary James, in 1977. Both were born in Springfield. In 1980, Judy graduated from St. John's School of Nursing in Springfield, MO, and specialized in Obstetrics. Most of Judy's nursing career has been as a Nursing Manager in Obstetrics.

Frank was a Locomotive Machinist for the Frisco (now BNSF) railroad in Springfield. When the diesel shop closed for good, Frank was transferred by BNSF to Galesburg, Illinois. When that shop closed, Frank joined the Canadian National Railroad in Memphis, Tennessee. They now live in Collierville, Tennessee, a suburb of Memphis. Frank and Judy have four grandchildren and love being Nana and Papa!

Jamie Renee Lott was born to Judy and Frank Lott, April 19, 1976. She graduated from Galesburg High School in 1993. In 1997, Jamie married Adam Witt in Bremerton, Washington. They had one daughter and one son. Carmen Paige Witt was born June 19, 2004, in Tacoma, WA, and Keaton Lee Witt was born September 4, 2008, in Germantown, TN. Jamie and Adam were divorced in April 2013. Jamie enjoys her work as an Interventional Radiographer. She lives in Collierville, Tennessee and is devoted to spending time with her children.

Zachary James Lott was born to Frank and Judy Lott on August 14, 1977. Zachary graduated from Galesburg High

At right, November 22, 1974, St. Joseph Catholic Church in Springfield.

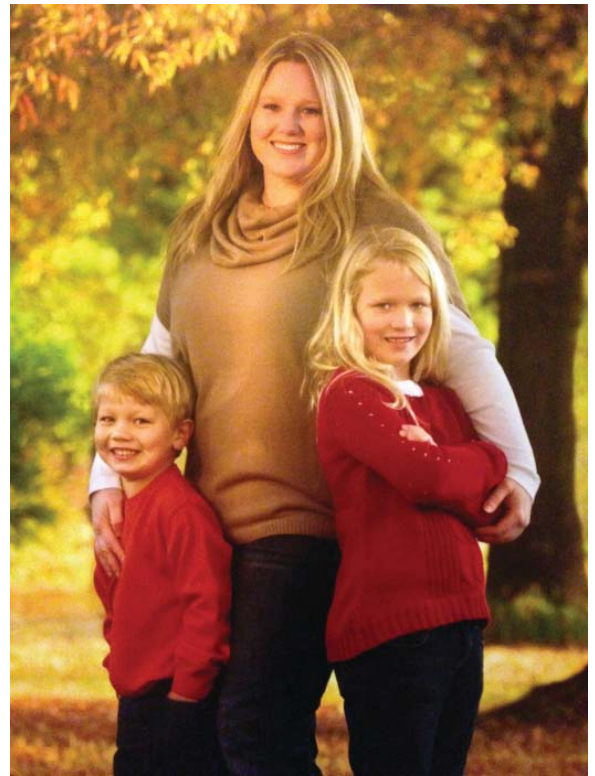
L-R: David Gardenhire, Gerry (Elliott) Carter Burton, Kenneth Brown, Judy (Elliott) and Frank Lott, Evelyn (Brown) Elliott and Kiree (Hartley) Brown.



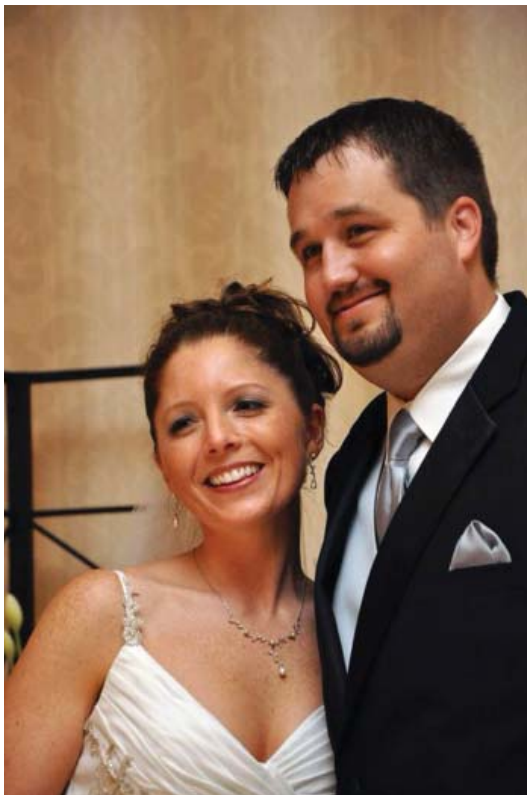
School in 1995. He attended GMI Engineering Institute in Flint, MI, and majored in Electrical Engineering. It is here that he met his future wife, Kristine Baumgard. Zachary and Kristine were married March 20, 2010. They are both engineers in the automotive industry. Their first child, Joshua Embry Lott, was born February 1, 2012. Carter Jacob Lott was born May 29, 2014. Both Zachary and Kristine are devoted to their children, and currently live in Rochester Hills, Michigan.

David Gardenhire attended schools in several states but graduated from Haysville (KS) Campus High School. After graduation, David joined the U.S. Navy and was stationed on the U.S.S. Bradley. While the ship was deployed to the Philippines, David met Teresita “Tessie” Onate. They were married on March 9, 1979, in the Philippines and returned to Wichita to live. They took up residence in Haysville, KS, where David’s father, Bill, lived.

When David and Tessie married, Tessie already had two children, Donna and Jaime. Donna accompanied the couple to Wichita but Tess’s boy, Jaime, elected to stay in the Philippines where she has a large family of brothers, sisters, and cousins. David and Tessie have two sons of their own,



Above, 2014—Judy’s daughter, Jamie (Lott) Witt, with her children, Keaton & Carmen.



At left, 2010, wedding of Judy’s son, Zach to Kristy Baumgard.

Below, 2014—Frank & Judy Lott with Zach’s sons, Joshua and Carter.





Above, David & Tessie, wedding day, March 1979, in the Philippines.

Below, David at Air National Guard in Wichita.



both born in Wichita; Romano born in 1980 and Joseph born in 1982. In addition, David adopted Tessie's daughter, Donna, when the two married.

David enlisted in the Kansas Air National Guard, and he retired from there. He also worked for many years with the Continental Bus Company.

Kevin Smithers was born in Texas and attended school there except for periods when he lived with his Grandma Brown back in Springfield. After high school, Kevin joined the U.S. Navy in 1982 and was stationed in San Diego, CA. While in San Diego, Kevin met Susan Enzenauer at the USO where she was working. They were married January 9, 1984, in San Diego. On April 29, 1985, their only son, Kevin Ray Smithers II, was born.

Kevin and Susan came back to Springfield to live where Kevin worked as an electrician and an electrical contractor. After their divorce and Susan returned to San Diego, Kevin moved to the town of Nixa just south of Springfield where he met and married Brenda Crandall. She passed away unexpectedly in 2003.

Kevin continues to live in Nixa close to his son, Kevin II, and his own family.



Above, Evelyn with two of her children, Gerry and David, in 2006.



At left, David Gardenhire and his family at their home off 53rd & Broadway in Wichita. (L-R) Romano, Tessie, David, and his father, Bill, now 88 years old young.



Above, Kevin Smithers in. 2013 near Springfield



Above, five-generation picture around 1973-74. L-R: Evelyn (Brown) Elliott, Kiree (Hartley) Brown, Shawn Carter, Grandma Mintia (Gunnels) Hartley, and Gerry (Elliott) Carter Burton. Photo taken at Grandma Hartley's house in Ava, MO.



Above, Kevin Smithers II with his son, Skylar

At right, Gerry (Elliott) Burton
with Bill, Joe, Tess (Onate) and
David Gardenhire in 2008 at
Aunt Verda Hartley's grave site
in Wichita



Below, Grandma Mintia (Gunnels) Hartley,
Gerry Marie Elliott, and Grandma Kiree (Hart-
ley) Brown in Kiree's living room at Ava, MO.
around 1955.



Above, Gerry & Judy in Scot-
land visiting distant Elliott
cousins

1950s Sunflower Ordnance Works Near DeSota KS

During the 1952-56 period, Kiree (Hartley) Brown's two older daughters, first Evelyn and then Jana Lea, lived with their husbands in a temporary housing area called Sunflower KS. In the early 1950s, the Ordnance Works (operated by Hercules Powder Co.) was in full production for the the Korean War. Today, the 10,000 acre ruins of the plant have a sign out front calling the crumbling complex the "Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant."

Both Evelyn (Brown) and her husband, Boyd Elliott, worked at the Ordnance Works, and they lived in government-built duplexes that are all now gone. Only the overgrown concrete streets are left.

Kiree (Hartley) Brown and her children, Iris Ann, James and Kenneth spent a couple of summers there with either Evelyn or Jana Lea. It was a place where Iris Ann met her first boyfriend, and where James and Kenneth saw television for the first time, and enjoyed glazed donuts and dairy products that were delivered daily to the door. Here are a few photos that will bring back memories for some and spark interest for others.



Above and below, 1955—Jana Lea (Brown) Sell's daughter, Paula, outside the family's Sunflower, KS, duplex.



Above, a current aerial view of Sunflower KS. "A" marks the corner where Evelyn & Boyd Elliott's duplex stood. "B" denotes the site of Jana Lea & Paul Sell's duplex.



Above, a former Sunflower, KS, street crumbles.