

And Then There Were Four...

Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are.

John Wooden

Anyone who has ever been a parent knows that mere words are inadequate to describe the experience of parenthood. It is awe-inspiring, scary, frustrating, and rewarding. Rearing children requires both the art and science of parenting. For Sandra and me, the positives of parenting definitely outweigh the negatives. We are the parents of two wonderful daughters, Rhonda and Rebekah. Since there is no instruction manual that comes with a child, Sandra and I tried to instill in our daughters the values that we had been taught and had been useful to us in our lives. Since those values had served us well, we felt that they would also serve our daughters. In addition to modeling good morals, we always tried to be consistent in teaching values of respect, courtesy, and kindness. With pride, I can say we succeeded. Both

daughters, now grown up and married, make me a proud father.

Rhonda, the oldest daughter has given us three wonderful grandchildren, McKenzie, Shelby and Cady. McKenzie and Shelby are old enough to attend Escambia County public schools, and Cady will be starting soon. So, yes, since they represent the third generation of Thomases attending our schools, I do have a vested reason for being Superintendent. My granddaughters are students here too; so, if we are offering the best possible public education, then my granddaughters will reap the benefits.

After college, Rhonda elected to become a teacher as I had done. Perhaps, *selfishly*, I would like to think it was my influence; realistically, it was because she had always observed how much I loved my teaching and my students, and she has emulated it. She is becoming a veteran teacher and enjoying her chosen career.

My younger daughter, Rebekah, chose to pursue a career in the business world and is employed by Philips Medical Systems where she has become successful in the world of marketing. Though not a classroom teacher, she conducts training for physicians and other medical professionals. In reality,

Rebekah also teaches, albeit not in a traditional classroom.

What more could parents want than to have children who were able to pursue their dreams because they were given a good educational foundation in their public schools? We and our daughters were provided a good education in Escambia County schools. We want a good educational system for our granddaughters as well as for all students--present and future.