



Special Edition Remembering Ralph Young



**Stillman Ralph Young**  
**1924 - 2006**

**Old Kia Kima's Core Values**  
**INTEGRITY - ACHIEVEMENT - RESPONSIBILITY - COURAGE**

Few, if any, have had the positive role model influence of Stillman Ralph Young. Ralph has blazed the trail of life with virtues for countless young men. Born July 9th, 1924 in Buchannon, WV he started his Boy Scout pilgrimage, soon to become a life long pursuit, in Troop 127 at the First Baptist Church in Buchannon. From 1942 to 1946 Ralph served his country and the War effort in the Army in the 143'd AAA Medical Detachment. On August 18' 1946 Ralph made perhaps the most positive step of his entire life by marrying Martha Jane Strader. Throughout their married life she was a wonderful help mate to him and a warm ray of sweet feminine sunshine for many years in the all male world of Old Kia Kima. In 1946 Ralph and Martha Jane moved to Memphis TN so he could attend the Southern College of Optometry. He later changed to what is now the University of Memphis and graduated in 1952 with a major in Biology and Industrial arts. While in Memphis Ralph reentered Scouting in 1947 as the Scoutmaster of Troop 35 at the Highland Heights Presbyterian Church. In 1948 he earned the rank of Eagle. Early on in his Scouting career Ralph proved to be a leader. Ralph Young worked as the Boy Scout Professional from 1954 to 1976 with Kamp Kia Kima. He served as the Camp Director of Old Kamp Kia Kima from 1954 to 1963. During his tenure as Camp Director "Padre" was an able leader and positive role model to thousands of young men during

their stay, "High Above the South Forks Waters." Ralph had a very large part in laying out and setting up the new Kia Kima Scout Reservation in 1964. The Old Kia Kima Preservation Association has had very few individuals as actively involved in its restoration. At every work party, board meeting and reunion, except when hindered by poor health, Ralph has been among the very first to arrive and the last to leave. OKKPA is indeed blessed and honored to have Stillman Ralph Young as an Honorary member of the Board of Directors. In 1976 Ralph, Martha Jane and their youngest daughter Patricia moved to Hot Springs, AR for him to become the Chief Scout Executive of the Ouchita Boy Scout Council. He later retired from professional Scouting in Hot Springs in 1984. Ralph is the proud father of two Eagle Scouts Terry and Larry Young and the grandfather of Eagle Scout Joseph Gunter. It has been said that, "A boy is a bank where you may deposit your most precious treasures, the hard won wisdom and the dreams of a better world." Who in this world could possibly calculate the value of the untold numbers of such deposits that Ralph has placed in the hearts and minds of thousands of young men?

John Hurt

June 6, 2002

### **Our Core Values**

**INTEGRITY - ACHIEVEMENT - RESPONSIBILITY - COURAGE**

In this morning's Memphis Commercial Appeal there was a piece about this day in history. June 15, 1916. The US Congress chartered the Boy Scouts of America. It is a more than a curious irony that this is the day Ralph Young, who gave all his adult life to Scouting passed away.

In our collective family memory(I am now the lone custodian), few remain as central and significant as Ralph Young. I first remember him as the fledging young Scout master to my older brother Eddie in Troop 35, back around 1948 or 49. I was a cub scout in Pack 35, at the same church Highland Heights Presbyterian Church which sponsored both units. My first camp out was with troop35 to Shelby Forrest. I was still a cub scout, but Ralph let my older brother take me along. The memories of sizzling bacon, broken fried eggs and half backed canned biscuits remain vivid to this day.



On one occasion our family dropped in on Ralph and Martha as they were living in student housing at Memphis State. He was, I gather on the GI Bill completing college, no doubt preparing for his career as Scout Executive. I don't know if this is correct, but the collective memory is that Ralph served as an Army Medic in WWII. But the picture is clear in my mind of a single minded man who cared dearly about his family and who had a determined view of where he was headed and how he would serve. And along the way he touched the lives of many boys.

In what remains of our old family album there

are only two items that touch directly on Ralph, but bespeak volumes of his character and influence. One is a rough picture of Explorer Post 35 on Scout Sunday, probably 1950. Had Ralph's name not been attached to the picture, you could have hardly picked him out. But once you know he's there, that old smile shines through. Another item was a news article dealing with the Chickasaw Council's Eagle Court of Honor on December 18, 1951, at the Peabody Hotel. A record 50 Eagles were to be presented that night, an all time record for the council. Among the recipients were two from Post 35, my brother Eddie Morton and Mike Moyers(as far as I know the first from troop/post35) Also from troop 35 were Jackie Lile and Carlisle Cook. All four were mentored by Ralph Young-though there is no mention of him in the article. Also of note is that Frank Simonton as well as Harry Danciger received their Eagles that night. That was vintage Ralph Young, always in the background, never looking for recognition or reward. Just making sure his boys were getting their due.

The most significant role Ralph played in my life was in 1954 when he, as new director of Kia Kima, brought my brother Eddie and myself on the staff along with about half dozen other scouts from Post 35( among them Mike Moyers, Rex Waddell, John Hurt, David Fleming, Jim Lang , Warren Schmidt and George Perryman).That relationship on the summer staff over the next four years would be a crucial element in how I grew and what shaped me as a man and eventually as a United Methodist Minister. At the outset that first year it was traumatic for me when my older brother Eddie was dismissed from the staff for curfew violations. But Ralph and Roy

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Riddick encouraged me to stay on alone. We all learned lessons of accountability and fortunately that infraction didn't keep my brother from entering the Air Force Academy in 1956.

For two years I had struggled under a vague heart disorder that restricted any athletic activities in school. But at camp I flourished in waterfront work and in summer 1955 got my Scout Life Guard, which was a monumental rite of passage for me. But in the main it was a life changing experience for me to have been there in the foot hills of the Ozarks those four summers with guys and men whose memory I will always treasure.

Ralph Young was somehow that connecting link to those people and that movement that has affected my whole life. One of the greatest treasures in our family is the three Eagle Awards that hang on my study wall. One is my brother Eddie's (Killed in Action in Vietnam 1969) the other is mine awarded my senior year in high school 1957, and my son's Greg Morton awarded 1977 (he is a practicing attorney and Unit Commissioner in the Chickasaw Council). No values have been more precious and enduring than those represented by Ralph Young and the way of life to which he introduced us and in which he led us.

Thank God for him and all who have served like him in this movement known as Scouting.

Fred Morton  
United Methodist Minister, Retired  
3231 Woodsman Lane  
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## MEMORIES OF PADRE

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Along life's way we meet a few we will not forget. I remember Ralph Young as a man who did his duty. His character, honesty, integrity and fairness to all was exemplary. He taught me that with teamwork, and hard work, almost anything can be accomplished. I had a great deal of respect for Mr. Young. I was fortunate to have known him. He was one of my heroes. He was a true Scout.

Steve Horne Kia Kima  
Staff Member 1958 thru 1962

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I was saddened by the recent events and I take the loss of Ralph Young very hard as I know many of you do.

I was lucky to attend Kia Kima from 1951 through 1961. Ralph and Martha Jane Young were major friends and mentors to me. I enjoyed every contact that I ever had with the Young family with the possible exception of being awakened by Larry and Terry in the mornings. Ralph became the father figure and role model for me in learning leadership. He cared about others, he gave all that he had, and expected the best from all of us who worked with him. He was particularly respectful of my unusual religious and dietary beliefs. He gave me a great deal of help in developing personal relationships, management skills and promoting self confidence in me for youth leadership. I give him great credit for inspiring me to dedicate my life to serving children. I remember Martha Jane singing appalachian songs to her children and her own very private spiritual dedication. I remember her as a shining example of compassion and dedication. Our love goes out to all four Young children and my brothers who share this grief and lifelong admiration for the Youngs with me.

We miss you all.

Pug and Julie Swarner

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## **A Silent Celebration of Padre**

Personal losses of loved ones are never easy to accept or comprehend. Such was the news of late. In the physical sense, Padre is no longer with us. Yet he will always be with us. It is the exquisite irony.

Last evening, after receiving the news of our loss, I spent the next hour or so thinking about Padre. He was Ralph Young, the man; Padre the mentor. Oddly enough, it wasn't too long before I was laughing to myself. My brain was pouring out memorable stories of Padre and his encounters with my Brothers of Old Kia Kima.

It occurred to me that to mourn the passing of Padre, at least for me, would somehow be inappropriate. Far better for all of us to set our minds in the lock-step of Brothers, engaging in a special silent celebration of the 81 years of Padre's life.

Today, Padre is on the most exciting adventure anyone can imagine, soaring as an Eagle on the wings of his Maker. I shall have a hearty laugh at the thought of Gabriel trumpeting Padre's arrival and the reuniting of Padre and Martha Jane.

I can hear him now.

*“Not bad, first time play white man horn.”*

Ron Tate

Among my (12-year young) warmest memories was at our former Highland Heights Presbyterian Church upstairs Sunday school classroom when he pinned my Tenderfoot badge upside down, giving instructions to Mother that on the following day, after I had done my good deed for the day, she was to pin the badge upright. Just writing about it brings a lump in-the-throat and misty eyes. These are the memories that make us feel so good for having had such a strong and positive leadership in our lives. I'm proud of who we are TODAY because of that leadership way back then.

David Fleming

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## **My First Talk with My Camp Director - 1956**

It was Friday night June 15, 1956, The end of my first week at camp. It was my second year at Kamp Kia Kima.

I remember sitting on the porch of the Thunderbird Lodge before the Friday night campfire. I was sitting there, more homesick than I had ever been. I was just about to go next door to the office to call my parents and ask them to come and take me home on Saturday. I knew that if I did this I would not be able to face my friends and might drop out of scouting. Just then the person I admired the most at camp, Ralph Young, the camp director, came up and ask what was wrong. After some kind words of encouragement, I decided to stick out the next week.

This was a real turning point in my maturing.

It seemed everytime I needed a little push, words of encouragement, or swift kick in the rear over the years, "Padre" was there for me just as he was for so many other youths that needed someone to help show the way.

Other than my parents nobody influenced my becoming a responsible adult more than Ralph Young. I could never thank him enough.

Neal Talley

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## Run 'em Ralph

Forty years ago this summer I began my first year as a Kia Kima Scout Reservation Staff member. Guys like the Billingsley brothers, Holland, Demster, Logan, Simonton, Boro, Bottrell and others were those that I learned to fear but more importantly, learned to follow. Little did I know that the quiet man in the First Cabin was someone that I would have the distinct pleasure and honor to work for and serve with many times over the following forty years.

Ralph Young was my first real “big boss” in 1966 and in 1974 I joined the professional staff of the Chickasaw Council, Ralph was the Director of Programs, still involved with Kia Kima. The lessons that he taught to me and others were primarily from example. I thought in '66 that the First Cabin guy had it made all summer long, just showing up for meals and walking around the Kamp talking to the Scoutmasters. I found out differently when my turn came to be Kamp Director in 1977 and 1978. I called upon my memory of watching Ralph many times during the years on the Staff but none more so than the last two.

We all know how much Ralph loved to play Hearts. My first experience with playing cards with him was in 1966 at a

small table in the Triangle at KKSR waiting for the Troops to arrive on the first Sunday of the season. As I walked up to the triangle in full uniform as a new U.C., Ralph was already sitting at the table with a deck of cards in front of him. Since we had three weekend tryouts for the staff in the Spring and I had learned to play Hearts during those weekends, I thought that I was pretty proficient. Ralph asked if I knew how to play cards and when I said Hearts was a great game he replied with that little grin of his “I really don't know how to play that game, but I will give it a try”. Needless to say, I was suckered and Ralph “Ran 'Em” on me.

I don't think that I could ever bring myself to play another game of Hearts with Ralph again for fear of further humiliation.

One of my first thoughts of hearing that Ralph had passed away was that he and Martha Jane were probably sitting at a table inside the Pearly Gates and another couple walking up asking if they played cards. Ralph smiled that smile, winked at Martha Jane, suggested a game of Hearts and began to play. I suspect he ran the table on them too.

Miss you Ralph.

Rick Schmid

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## **Padre and the Wampus Cat**

**It was a steamy July night in 1964. As usual, the Slick Rock staff was hoofing it along the Slick Rock Road back to out-post camp after their night out. We had been out on the town chasing the young ladies who lived down the river. This night it was "yours truly", Charlie (Chainsaw Charlie) Holland, and David Kershaw on the rocky road. David was the youngest of the group, a one year staff member who was also distinguished as a track star at Catholic High School. For those who've never trekked the Slick Rock Road on a moonless night, it is treacherous. It is five miles of winding road with at least a million large stones protruding from the road surface. If you aren't careful you'll wind up breaking your neck. Suddenly from out of the darkness came the deep, throaty cry of a large cat. Ralph and Virgil had been talking for days about the Mountain Lion that was prowling the area. The three of us stopped dead in our tracks for about two minutes, an eternity in the dark.**

**Suddenly from even closer came the roar again. It sounded like it was on the road behind us. We all bolted down the road ignoring the danger of the rocks. Charlie and I weren't student athletes, and David left us like we were standing still. Soon Charlie and I ran out of steam. David, however, was in top shape getting ready for the Fall track season. He set a world's**

**record back to Slick Rock. It must have been at least four miles in under twenty minutes. Charlie and I stood beside the road panting.**

**Suddenly bright lights crashed in on us. That in itself nearly gave us both a heart attack. After a minute in the glare we walked back to a well known pickup truck. Virgil Allen sat in the cab with a huge grin on his face (known in those days as an SEG.) Beyond Virgil sat Padre, his face barely recognizable in the glow of his perpetual Herbert Taryton cigarette.**

**"You boys headed back to camp?" Asked Ralph in his West Virginia twang. "You want to be careful; there's a mountain lion out here somewhere." By now the dust from David Kershaw's departure had begun to settle, and Charlie and I had begun to be suspicious. After a few minutes of letting us catch our breath Ralph pulled out a #10 can with a hole in the bottom and a piece of binders twine coming out of the hole. Slowly he ran his finger over the string creating the deep voice of our cat.**

**Ralph had gotten us with a "Wampus Cat."**

**I've never forgotten Ralph, Virgil and the night on Slick Rock Road. Never did get even with those guys.**

**Steve Demster**

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