

Christmas 1999

Dear Family and Friends,

Jan and I send our warmest greetings on this last Yuletide of the nineteen hundreds. I do not say the last of the century or of the millenium, as I subscribe to the view that we do not reach that point until December 31, 2000. However, we are indisputably at an historical moment, psychologically if not otherwise, because for the first time in our lives we must preface the years with 20 instead of 19.

1999 has been filled with varied and memorable activities. Early in the year Alabama figured prominently. In January, brother Clifton and I were in Greenville to close out and sell our house, severing our last tangible link with the place where we grew up. On May 1, we gathered with our children and many relatives and friends in Cahaba, Alabama's first state capital, for a ceremony at which the Alabama Historical Commisssion unveiled historical markers at the Kirkpatrick house site, my mother's home. Our children and spouses gathered with us again in July, along with all six grandchildren, for a grand few days at High Hampton in the North Carolina mountains. Jan and I were fortunate to have two trips abroad--in July to the western part of Ireland with a University of Virginia alumni group, and in November to French Polynesia, visiting five islands on a cruise ship, including Tahiti and Bora Bora. Since my novel, Unforgotten, was published last winter, we have been to booksigning events in 22 cities, from Washington D.C. to Mobile.

Things are going well as usual here. I go to my Law School office every day. Jan keeps busy with an array of activities--playing tennis, garden club and church work, and keeping me going. She and her sisters, Marge and Nancy, got together at midsummer in Fredericksburg for their annual mini-reunion, without husbands, just fun and renewal.

We have made a big decision for 2000: we will move, probably during the summer, to a cottage on the grounds of Westminster-Canterbury of the Blue Ridge, a so-called retirement community on the edge of Charlottesville. This will thus be our last Christmas in the house we have lived in for the past thirty years.

We wish for you an enjoyable holiday season, with the hope that you will have a good new year and that we will see many of you along the way.



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