

One Bite at a Time

It's been around for a few years, but the statement that you can eat an elephant one bite at a time is as true as ever. It's also true that you can benefit humankind and change the lives of countless others a little bit at a time.

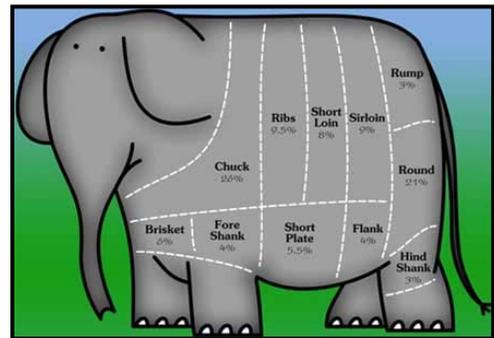


Author and motivational speaker Zig Ziglar underscores that truth in his book, *Something to Smile About: Encouragement and Inspiration for Life's Ups and Downs*. He does so with a remarkable story.

It is about Oseola McCarty from Hattiesburg, Miss. She was a 91-year-old woman who spent a lifetime washing, ironing and mending clothes. The clothes were worn at parties she never attended, weddings to which she was never invited, and graduations that she was not privileged to see.

Her needs in life were simple. She didn't mind living in a small house and economizing in every possible way – including cutting the toes out of shoes if they did not fit right. Her pay over the decades was small and mostly in dollar bills and change, but she saved consistently. She drew global attention after it was announced in July 1995 that she had established a trust through which, at her death, a portion of her life's savings would be left to the University of Southern Mississippi to provide scholarships for deserving students in need of financial assistance, preferably those of African-American descent.

When news of McCarty's plan was made public, business leaders of Hattiesburg matched the \$150,000 for an endowment of \$300,000. McCarty died on Sept. 26, 1999. McCarty never owned a car; she walked everywhere she went, pushing a shopping cart nearly a mile to get groceries. She rode with friends to attend services at the Friendship Baptist Church. In 1947, her uncle gave her the house in which she lived until her death. She wished she had been able to get a college education herself, but she said she was always "too busy." It was her hope that her "busyness" would enable others to get the education she never had.



The lesson? It's not how much you have but how well you use what you have that counts in a life of significance. In Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home, we have many opportunities to follow Oseola McCarty's example of helping others achieve success.

And in doing so, we'll feel even better about their success than they do.

– Beecher Hunter