

The Waves for Woody

On a ridge above the Columbia River, just down from heaven, CBS News reported in August 2012 that it had found “an angel on a front-end loader.”

The story was about Woody Davis of Corbett, Ore., a kind of “a jack-of-all-trades who never made much money – but definitely earned his wings,” the CBS reporter, Steve Hartman, said.



Davis had a reputation for always helping his neighbors. He frequently would take out his front-end loader and assist with large tasks. His deeds were done gratis, refusing to accept money for them.

He was known throughout the area for waving at everyone he saw, regardless of whether he knew them. It was his act of friendship, a personal connection of goodwill with another human being.

In 2011, the townspeople decided to try to repay Davis for all his kindness. They cut and stacked his firewood for winter. Two men fixed his old pickup truck. Someone even built him a beautiful wooden box and invited the whole town to sign it.

Woody’s son, Clint Davis, said he didn’t know how much the community cared for his father until then. He said all the work his dad did for people was repaid ten-fold. Their words and deeds were much appreciated.

Unfortunately, the box was made of pine, because Woody’s days were numbered. He had been diagnosed with ALS, otherwise known as Lou Gehrig’s disease. It was clear when CBS News interviewed him in January 2012 he wouldn’t see September. He was already struggling to lift and talk, but his attitude was completely unaffected.

Woody said he couldn’t believe all the outpouring of help that the local people had been giving him. “I feel blessed that I’m dying slowly,” he said, his speech a bit slurred. Clarifying his statement, he said he was glad because people had a chance to express to him how they felt.

When the funeral was held in August 2012, the service had to be moved to a different town because there wasn’t a church in Corbett big enough. About 700 people showed up to pay their respects – first in their own way, and then in Woody’s.

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After the service, folks lined the streets and waved. They gave Woody that same big, open-handed, wide-open-hearted wave he gave them every day of his adult life.

The power of acts of kindness – a wave, a smile, a tender touch, a hug, an encouraging word – is immeasurable. Its worth is beyond price.

As the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another (Colossians 3:12).

– Beecher Hunter