



Joe Edward Smith



Ned

Crash!.....1929, stock market BROKE,
Ned entered the scene,
Joe was no joke.
Born one month to the day after Dr. King,
But what was HIS
dream?
"TO BE TREATED FAIR." he declared,
often reiterated by his first-born heir.

Raised on a farm, beneath the southern sky,
one day a bus of kids rolled by.
A vision of education was planted, "I can do that, too!",
checked in his overalls for a crisp white shirt and shined shoes.

Defying paternal aspirations
Joe envisioned an alternative destination,
for himself and those he would raise... skipped two grades.
Always looking way down the road with a fixed gaze.

Graduated, football scholarship, headed to P.V.
Schizoid demons scheming behind a tree,
determined to cloud his beautiful mind,
ever present but unable to darken Joe's sunshine.

Excellence was his motto throughout his college days
Chemistry, football and class president his mainstays.
With the moving of the tassel
Ned traveled to serve Uncle Sam,
as a second lieutenant in Deutschland.

After his two-year commitment
He was back in the states
"Jim Crow" greeting him with a firm handshake.
Medical dreams not realized but raised four progenies,
with "real" doctor degrees earned by the majority.

Brother's breath snatched by thugs from a nearby town,
Oxymoronic law enforcement "ordered" to "stand down",
claimed culprits just could not be found.

Traveling through the South
promoting integration,
hotels with fake "vacancy" signs" at work and on vacation.
Employed by the government, Department of Education,
paid taxes in Beaumont, refunded, discrimination.

He and colleagues collected money to obtain justice,
Desired to play the links on ALL the days ending in "y",
Not only one designated for "just us."

The verdict granted them the right to play on
any day,
to enjoy camaraderie like other men,
just wanted to experience "fair-ways."

Granted 93 years, now peacefully resting
"Son, problems that I encountered turned out to be blessings."
Bodily functions have ceased, mental faculties escaped
Ned ran HIS race; he's broken through the tape.