

Ashley Howser

My Hero on Eighteen Wheels

My grandpa is a truck driver, a business owner, a husband, and a father. He is very special to me because he loves and cares for me and all of our family. He provides for his family, but he doesn't stop there. He has provided for many families by driving food or supplies to stores across the country or by helping communities one by one after a natural disaster. He helps so many people in so many ways. After a long day's work he turns around, comes home and is there for his grandchildren's birthdays, family barbeques, holidays, or whatever the occasion may be.

Family is very important to him. He met his wife when he was driving a commercial truck, now she is the co-owner of their trucking business. He has 3 daughters, two of which work in the family business. He has worked long and hard to start his own trucking company. His business is family owned and operated. In the office, there is a playroom just for his six grandkids.

My grandpa is a hardworking, caring, loving, and silly person. He's been a business owner since the 1970's and has been driving commercial trucks for more than 50 years and is still going strong. I don't think he'll ever retire. He's not one to quit or take a break from something even though he's earned it. I love that about him. I'm not sure if it's his hard work ethic or stubbornness, but I love it. I also love his loyalty. He stands by and supports the people in his life. "He would give someone the shirt off his back," is how people describe him.

My grandpa has traveled through most of North America hauling lumber, produce, rock, steel, household supplies, and mobile homes. In total he's been in 49 states. I'd imagine it would be pretty hard to drive to Hawaii. He has also worked in Canada. In Alaska he built camps in Prudhoe Bay. He said that the bay was so far North that you could look through binoculars, and see Russia. Later, he transported equipment from Washington to Oklahoma so it could be flown overseas to Desert Storm. He also helped in the flood of '93 by building levees in people's back yards to keep water out. Then, when Hurricane Katrina hit, he hauled off the debris and rebuilt levees. He helped clean up the debris from the Joplin tornado. He has helped in many other minor floods. During those floods he helped keep the railroads functioning. At the time the railroads were also used as levees. He also built berms to slow down the river's current in the case of a rescue mission.

My grandpa is one of the strongest people I know, besides my grandma who has dealt with him for 44 years. All jokes aside, he has overcome so much and doesn't let anything stop him. In the mid 1980's one of my grandpa's friends flipped his truck, spilling apples across the road. My grandpa and a friend went to help clean up the mess, but his friend fell asleep at the wheel and rolled the truck. My grandpa woke up in the truck; the firefighters couldn't get him out of the vehicle and ended up having to cut him out. Later he woke up in a hospital where the doctors told him he wouldn't be able to walk again, but he walked out of that hospital. For a

while he could move his legs he just couldn't feel them, so he would have to look down and watch his feet move. He eventually was able to feel both his legs.

For this essay I interviewed my grandpa. He told me how his grandpa and dad were both truck drivers and he would ride with them. His dad taught him all about trucks and how to drive. He said "First, you have to know the truck, know what does what, and know how to fix it. You need to respect the truck and everyone on the road." At the end of the interview, I asked him, if he wasn't a truck driver what would he be doing instead and he said "I've always wanted to be a truck driver, ever since I was two years old that's all I ever wanted to do" he loves his job because, he said "It's a new adventure every day."

The English definition of a hero is, "a person who is admired or idealized for courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities." Although he doesn't have superpowers, a secret identity, or doesn't get a key to the city for all the good that he does, my grandpa is a noble, strong, and courageous person that I admire. I have learned so much about him that I didn't know before. We spent three hours together talking about how he lived, all the adventures he's gone on, and how he met my grandma. I asked him if he had any good truck driving stories and he delivered. If I typed all the stories he told me in those three hours, this essay would be more than 2,000 words. He is not just a truck driver. He is a hero that I will always admire for the rest of my life. Thank you to all of the truck drivers for all that you do. Happy "Truck Driver Appreciation Week."