

Join us as we delve into the intricacies of the life of Garry White, a man whose desire to become an adoptive parent was crushed by both his choice to remain single and his brush with mental illness in his younger days that branded him inadequate to be a parent. Many other qualities are needed for good parenting and that is what this book brings into the limelight. If you know Garry to any extent (and you will after reading this book), these issues would not even be considered when deciding if allowing him to adopt children is appropriate. He is the most caring, flexible, mannerly, loving, generous man I have ever met and I am privileged to have the honor of knowing him and being able to call him my friend. Having him as a father would probably be one of the greatest experiences any young person could have.

—*Rosanne Haas*, certified public school  
teacher, San Antonio, Texas

Dr. White's book walks one through the trials and tribulation of a single man's desire to start a family and provide for children with no homes. This book discusses the struggles of a lifetime of a compassionate, gentle person who tries to adopt a family and is turned away at every corner. If they only knew him like I do, this world would be a better place for a child.

—*Joseph Haas*, Computer Services  
Support, San Antonio, Texas



MY QUEST

TO BE A  
SINGLE DAD





GARRY WHITE

# MY QUEST

— TO BE A  
SINGLE DAD

Thirty-Plus Years Trying to Adopt

REDEMPTION   
PRESS

*My Quest to Be a Single Dad*

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1. Family and Relationships
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# DEDICATION

To all homeless children and  
child victims of predators



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For privacy reasons, identifiable information has been changed. Timeline was changed for continuity needs.

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# FOREWORD

Welcome to the world of Garry White.

It's a weekday world of scholarly pursuits at a medium-sized central Texas university, full of teaching, writing, and counseling of students. On the weekends it's a world of tubing down a pristine river that flows directly through his backyard. There are also caves to explore and friends and family (he's a twin) to spend time with. He has worked with the Boy Scouts at a youth correctional facility and was a single foster parent and a member of the Kiwanis Club. He has led several groups on hikes across the Grand Canyon and is a court-appointed special advocate (CASA) for children in foster care.

But it's also a world of anger, sadness, and frustration. Garry White has been trying for the past thirty years to be a single adoptive father. It is the one life goal he has set for himself that he has not attained. That's not to say he hasn't tried. He has battled governmental bureaucracy and mindless stereotyping almost from the minute he decided to become an adoptive parent.

You'll find out that it is not enough to have a good career and be a highly motivated man who has jumped through every hoop set out for him by both governmental and private agencies yet has been consistently turned down in his quest to adopt. At the age of fifty-nine, his chances for an adoption are rap-

idly dwindling, but as he will be quick to tell you: “I will have the satisfaction of never giving up, just like a true, loving dad.”

In addition to baring his soul in the most painful of ways, Garry also provides valuable information for those who are in similar fights to become adoptive parents.

Get ready for a rough ride through the world of Garry White.

—*Kevin Kerrigan*, newspaper editor  
and visiting journalism professor for  
the University of Texas-Austin.

## PROLOGUE: GETTING TO KNOW ME

My name is Garry L. White. I was born in California in the early 1950s. My dad was very involved with my twin brother and me. We took many family vacations, and Dad was our Cub Scout pack master. Once, when we were driving to the Grand Canyon, Dad told my brother and me to prepare to see something we would remember for the rest of our lives. When I saw the Grand Canyon, I promised myself that one day I would hike to the bottom. Upon college graduation, I did just that with a college fraternity brother.



*My brother and I in the Cub Scouts*

School was a problem. In the fourth grade, I was in a special class for slow learners. Two high school teachers told my parents that my brother and I would flunk out of college our first semester. We both are dyslexic. I have the most severe form of dyslexia. Audio-visual teaching methods didn't work. By the time I reached the ninth grade, I was reading at a third-grade level. When one of the nuns at my high school noticed that I was good in algebra but poor in history, she took action. Through her, kinesthetic and tactual methods were used. One of the methods was tracing letters in the sand. I learned to read and write.

My parents hired a special education tutor to teach my brother and me how to read and write in high school. I still have the canceled checks for that tutor. Dad once told us that he too had problems with reading and writing. He told us he would be happy as long as my brother and I did our best.

Today, I am a university professor with a PhD and two master's degrees. My brother has two master's degrees in engineering. My high school teachers were wrong. Thank God for that Catholic nun who saw what my brother and I were capable of. We just needed a different method of instruction.

From college on, I have had an active social life. Right after college, I hiked the Grand Canyon twice with college buddies. I will always remember, on my first trip, meeting a Boy Scout troop hiking out. When my college buddy and I turned around to see them hike out, we saw a big backpack with two little feet bobbing up the trail.



*Second trip to the Grand Canyon; I'm in the middle*

My brother once said I have more lifelong friends than anyone else he knew. All of my college apartment roommates moved out on me because they got married. After thirty years, all of those apartment roommates are still married to their first wives. We joke that they would rather live with their wives than move back in with me. They all have children, and some are grandparents.



*My former roommates at our college fraternity twenty-fifth reunion*



*Wives of college fraternity brothers and former college roommates—no divorces yet; I'm the man left center*

I am single, not by a conscious decision, but by how life has turned out for me. As I have seen my friends with their kids, I have sensed a void in my life. I wanted to be a dad just like my dad was. One of the joys of being a dad is getting to do fun and interesting things with your kids like snow skiing, swimming, hiking, kayaking, and riding bikes. Physical activity is a must for kids. This is something I learned from the Boy Scouts: get the kids tired. In the evening, they will be too worn out to get into mischief and will sleep well. As I always say, a sleeping child is a well-behaved child—unless the child is sleeping at school or church!

MY QUEST TO BE A SINGLE DAD



*Snow skiing in California*



Rapelling into a cave at age 57

GARRY WHITE



*Exploring a cave, age 57*



*Cooling off at Bright Angel Creek, Grand Canyon, AZ*



*Teaching Cub Scouts camp food*



*Best man at my brother's wedding; note the vest*

You are invited to travel with me on my quest to be a single dad. But hold tight. It's going to be a very rough ride.



# The Quest Begins

## Grandpa

As a child, I remember my grandpa telling me about his dad, my great-granddad. When Grandpa talked about him, there was a look on his face that told me Grandpa thought greatly of him. Grandpa really missed him. Later, my mother told me why. When Grandpa was around eight years old, his mother had to put him in an orphanage. That was around 1905. My grandpa's mother then remarried. When her new husband heard she had a son in an orphanage, he went to the orphanage and told the staff, "No son of mine is going to live in an orphanage." Although the staff objected, he took Grandpa home. Imagine you are eight years old, living in an orphanage, and one day a stranger shows up and says you are his son, and you are going home this very moment. That family story has always stayed in my mind.



*My brother and I with Dad and Grandpa*

Grandpa also told me about how he worked in maintenance at an Oregon youth correctional facility. He said the kids liked him a lot. They all wanted to go with him when he had to pick up supplies in town. Grandpa always bought them ice cream for helping. Grandpa stressed that one reason the kids liked him so much was that he treated them as if they were his own. Little did I know that I would one day follow in my grandpa's footsteps.

I recall my dad telling me once how Grandpa had taken him to the youth correctional facility. There, looking through a peephole, Dad saw a fifteen-year-

old boy who was a murderer. Dad told me that really shook him up.

When I was twelve, Grandpa visited my family in Pennsylvania. We visited a youth correctional facility there where one of Grandpa's former coworkers was superintendent. The facility looked like a large campus with no fence. Mom and Dad told my brother and me to stay in the car while Grandpa and Dad went in to get Grandpa's old friend. I recall seeing a boy riding a bike, and I wondered why he was in this facility. He looked and acted like any other kid.

The superintendent suggested we have a picnic near a lake on the facility. While we were eating, a truck came by. I saw teenagers in the back of the truck wearing gray uniforms and coming back from working on the grounds. They seemed to be enjoying themselves. I had to ask my dad what happened when these kids misbehaved. My dad told me to ask the superintendent. He told me they were placed in a small room with a bed, a table, and a small window. They would have to stay in that room until they decided to behave.

## The Facts of Life

To earn my way through college, I was a hospital orderly for five summers, starting while in high school. My first summer there was when I learned the real facts of life. At age seventeen, I saw another teenager, age eighteen, die of bone cancer. When they brought him in on the floor, he was in really bad