

So much has happened in those years and so many times I have thanked God for my "colonel." There were the half-dozen roses (ones we could ill afford) that he brought me in the hospital when I lost the baby who was to have been our first child. Then there were the three dozen roses he sent me when we celebrated our 36th anniversary. In between, there were four children and the joys and heartaches that came with raising them. There were career lows for both of us that brought poverty very close to home and career highs that brought prosperity. There were illnesses – ones that strained our relationship and ones that strengthened it. There were deaths in our families and there were the marriages (and a couple of divorces) of our children. Today, there are 12 wonderful grandchildren.

We are now retired from the first season of our lives, rejoicing in this time, approaching our "senior years," and wallowing in a sea of contentment that is almost frightening. One thing remains the same, though. When he puts his arms around me as I work at the kitchen sink, I see in his eyes and know in my heart that I will always be "The Colonel's Girl." ■



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