

**Alizabeth Rachelle Wilson:
A Life with Pleasant Boundaries
By Isaiah Chen**

Alizabeth Rachelle Wilson's tall, broad frame topped off with dark hair contrasts her jocose personality. Although she is over fifty years old, she acts like she is still in her 30s, with her energy and liveliness; and along with her sarcastic and good-natured jokes, she is well-liked. Often her spirited attitude radiates and spreads to those around her. She requires that my brothers and me give her the mandatory hug, blocking our way with a hug if we try to avoid it. She often puts on an exaggerated expression with a face of mock disgust after we make silly mistakes, such as accidentally spilling water. "Nuh uh, you did not just spill water in my house. Who taught you manners?" We would all laugh as she continued her dramatized rant in her slight southern accent. "You boys and all your manners. You guys are like monkeys or something."

My mom met her through a homeschool co-op that my brothers attend, and they have become good friends. They decided to teach their own science and history class with their children except for me. (I already have a science class and history class.) Once a week, my brothers go to her house and learn science and history in a very informal environment, sitting on couches and on the floor with a coffee table to write on. The open discussion tends to lead to jokes and laughter, but they do eventually get back on track. Our families have gotten used to seeing each other often.

Alizabeth Rachelle Wilson entered the world on September 15th, 1965, fortunately twenty years after the second World War. Her family was stable and was grounded in faith. Alizabeth's father was a pastor, and her grandmother also loved the Lord very much and had a large influence on Alizabeth. This helped Alizabeth make the most important decision of her life. At age 12, she accepted Christ as her Savior at her grandparents' house. Alizabeth once read a Bible verse that stated: "For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose." This verse, Philippians 2:13, became her favorite verse, giving her comfort in times of strife.

She grew up together with her brothers on a farm in South Carolina. Here she experienced the spacious skies and vast fields that captivated her, allowing her to feel a sense of freedom. Living on the farm also protected her family from some of the effects of the Vietnam war, allowing her to grow up peacefully. Of course, there was a negative side to living on a farm. Since her family lived on what they made, she had to do her share of gardening and taking care of the animals. She expresses her opinion of these chores by saying: "I am DONE with animals! Nuh uh, no more." She also talked about how when gardening, she would become covered in dirt, kneeling in the soil, sweating, digging, and so on. All of this was said in her trademark sarcastic and yet partly serious voice, with hand gestures emphasizing every reason she disliked gardening. Between gardening and animal care, gardening was her least favorite.

Even with all the farm chores, she still had to go to school. She did well, but especially since she was living in the south, she experienced discrimination because of her skin color in schools and in her community. Many white people in her community were lovers of God, but they discriminated against African-Americans and others with different skin colors. She wondered how they could be so hypocritical. The Bible tells Christians to love everyone. In school, her teachers made racial slurs and taught partial history to leave out anything that showed that African Americans were intelligent and contributed to society. If the racism was too severe, she let her mother handle it. In eighth grade, she had the highest GPA of 8th graders in her school, but the person in charge of the national honor society would not let her be in it, although she had all of the requirements with her excellent grades and character.) Her mother contacted the people in charge of the society about this outrage, and eventually Alizabeth was accepted. In spite of racism, Alizabeth maintained excellent grades, and excelled above others.

In 1985-1986 she went to Mount Holyoke College in Holyoke, Massachusetts. While she was there in an exchange program, she had a famous professor, Shirley Chisholm, who was the first black woman to run for president in 1972. Alizabeth won an internship to go to Capitol Hill because she had the highest grade in her political science class.

Unfortunately, her grandmother was diagnosed with breast cancer and Alizabeth went home that year.

Her school had a tradition of having a few juniors to learn to drive the school bus every day, and despite the racism, Alizabeth was chosen. Her job included keeping the trouble-makers in line and logging the miles she drove. Alizabeth learned that she had to enforce the rules even if her friend asked for a favor or if kids didn't behave. She was taught by others who had done the job before, and she even learned a little tip. There was a different route with the same distance, but the route went by the trouble-making kids' house first. She told the rowdy kids on the bus that if they behaved, she would go to their house first. If they didn't, she would turn the bus around and drive all the way back to the school, until the kids behaved. When she became a senior she was officially given the job; as a junior she had learned from a senior. She, like the senior who taught her, also had to do the same for those learning the following year.

Besides all the work on the farm and at school, she did have time for fun. She enjoyed horseback riding, and she even went to a summer camp. She loved the camp. It was called Camp Bob Cooper, and it is still around now. She stayed overnight for one week in cabins, where she did many outdoor activities including canoeing and archery, and many others. Even at home, she enjoyed playing outdoors and would often be barefooted outside, causing her feet to grow tough and used to the ground. At college, she didn't have as much time for outdoor activities, so when she came back, she found her feet had grown soft. Her brothers, being brothers, teased her as she gingerly stepped over rocks and dirt. During college and graduate school, she made sure to include time for her favorite pastime: reading classics. Her favorite book is *Pride and Prejudice*, which she has read many times.

At college, she majored in international politics, writing a thesis about Israel, and also minored in French. From there, she moved to Pennsylvania to attend Westminster Seminary. Meanwhile, she worked part-time at GMAC ("General Motors something something-- I'm old now. I can't remember like I used to"), which was a place where people could buy cars. She wrote loan contracts for people who could not afford the car all at once. She needed the money so she took the job. After passing grad school,

she worked as a contract negotiator for the company she was with. She made sure that contracts were worded to express exactly what was intended and that both parties received accurate contracts.

Along with getting an official job after grad school, she married a wonderful man named Earl. She had attended Spelman College, and Earl had attended Morehouse College, which was right across the street from Spelman, but they had somehow never met. They met instead through church evangelism groups. The groups would go throughout the city and preach to a certain area they were designated and spread the Word, whether going door-to-door or just talking to a random person out on the street. Each group was assigned one male and several females. For some reason, her future husband, Earl, was put in Alizabeth's group every time. She doesn't know why, but she is very happy that the church did this. After many more evangelism outings, Earl eventually asked her out, but she barely knew anything about him apart from evangelism. Alizabeth told her male friends about Earl asking her out. "It's time for some investigating." They met with him and hung out, and they returned and told her "Oh, Earl's a nice guy. You should really go out with him." So Alizabeth did, and that was how they began to date. Alizabeth enjoyed the date, so she decided to get to know Earl better. She is very glad she decided to go out with him that first time, because Earl is now "THE best husband in the world." Earl is a stocky, dark-skinned man with a beard and a powerful, resonant voice. He is a quiet but kind person, often remaining silent, but when he does speak, he uses his deep voice and makes the person he is speaking to feel welcome and easy. He works as a doctor, helping others. When Earl enters Alizabeth's presence, suddenly Alizabeth's face lights up and she is gentle and delighted with Earl. She has been married for 26 years now, and her marriage has been great. They work well as a team. Alizabeth likes hosting people over at their house, and she plans while Earl helps to cook. They both invite people, and they all have a wonderful time.

She has retired from her job and is homeschooling her children as well as serving as an administrator for the pastor's wife. She enjoys reading, going to Broadway plays, listening to music, hanging out with her "BFF" my mom, and most of all, hanging out with her husband, preferably on "something like a speed boat." She is very happy with her current life and

she quotes this verse: “The boundary lines have fallen into pleasant places...” Psalm 16:6. God has given her a good life so far, and Alizabeth Rachelle Wilson will continue living it to the fullest.