

Dan Fleetham - teaching his father to drive – as told to Ann Wadsworth, 2012.

“My dad told me one day ‘my sister down in Verona, New Jersey, said there’s no reason I can’t get a driver’s license even though I am stone deaf.’ ‘It’s \$50 if you help.’ I said, ‘Fine; the first thing you’ve got to do is get those damned boots off and get a slipper on.’” “‘Why?’ he asked, and I said, ‘Because you can’t feel the pedal through your big shoes. You don’t really know whether you’re touching something’” “‘Don’t you remember the day that I was teaching you how to park and you drove up – instead of stepping on the brake, you stepped on the gas and you jumped up on the sidewalk and you hit a big store window full of Corn Flakes!’”

“He finally got his license. And so when I got back to the United States from the Navy after the war, I drove him and my mother all the way to California and we stayed for the winter. When we started home, he said ‘I’m going to drive.’” “‘Okay,’” I said”

So he goes – I can’t remember what town we came into but he started down a one-way street the wrong way and I pointed it out and he kept going. Finally a cop stepped out front and stopped and yelled, “‘What are you doing going down a one-way street?’” My father couldn’t hear a word he said and was going “‘Yes, yes, yes.’” “‘Finally, I broke down and said, ‘He’s really stone deaf.’” The cop said “‘You mean he can’t hear anything?’” “‘No, I said.’” ‘Well, how do you talk with him?’ I said ‘Pencil and paper.’ So I gave him a receipt and the pad we had and said ‘Write what you want to tell him.’ And the cop wrote ‘I want to you get out of that driver’s seat and don’t get back into it until you get out of my precinct.’”

“My dad never would drive after that.” “It’s too bad; he got quite a lot of pleasure out of being able to drive. “