

# Marshall County Moments & Memories

## The traveling man and his Christmas trees

Colonel Ray Henson was born in Lewisburg. During his lifetime, he has worked and traveled all over the world. In his travels, he brought back Christmas ornaments that represented the country he visited. This tells the highlights of his trips and displays his 2022 Travel Tree.



**Moscow:**  
I had planned a trip to Rome, but with news of the Pope John Paul II dying I changed my trip to a newly liberated Russia. When I arrived, I checked into the Rossiya Hotel. It was once the largest hotel in the world with 3,182 rooms, a movie theater, post office, and its own jail. Located off Red Square, I had to walk past the Saint Basil's Cathedral to go by the Kremlin.

The most important thing I learned in Russia is that government will be government, but the people are just like us. They want to work, be educated and take care of their families.



**Rome:**  
I went to Rome to vacation with my best friend, sister-in-law, and niece. We strolled the streets of Rome, visited the Colosseum and discovered the best restaurant named The Gladiator. Outside dining at night was a great highlight.

What I learned in Rome was that the drivers are the most aggressive in the world. It's as if you've enter some sort of race.



**Queensland, Australia:**  
This is one of the most beautiful and most dangerous places in the world. I was part of a French documentary series about travel around the world. I stayed near the Daintree Rainforest. I was

concerned about driving because they drive on the left side of the road and sit on the right side of the car. Hearing of my concern, three perfect strangers volunteered to take me to the rainforest. These strangers became life long friends that I stay in touch with.

While in the forest, I stepped up close to a wild beautiful bird to snap its picture. The guys started screaming get away, it was a Cassowary. These birds are the most dangerous in the world. The cassowary has been known to kill human beings with slashing blows of its feet, as the innermost of its three toes bears a long dagger like nail. So I can say that I survived the Cassowary!

While in Australia, I visited and snorkeled in the Great Barrier Reef.

What I learned in Australia, was that people in general want to help you no matter where you are in the world.



**Amsterdam, Holland:**  
I visited Holland two times. One time was during my youngest son, Tony's, graduation trip along with my nephew Joey. I didn't go there to party, but they may have. I enjoyed the windmills and the fields of beautiful tulips. Riding in a boat down the lovely canals is amazing.

The second trip was to cover the Van Gogh Museum. The art work is astonishing. I also visited the home of Anne Frank.

I learned in Holland that men and women can create a home and survive with their will power and determination, as Amsterdam is about 2 meters or (6.6 feet) below sea level.



**Mexico:**  
I visited Mexico and decided to travel out into the streets where the people live, getting away from the fake tourists atmosphere. Most of the homes were simple, the restaurants were plain, but had great food. It's easy to see the economy is nothing like in America. The people

were very nice. I learned that Americans should be very happy to live in the richest country in the world. Most countries don't offer the opportunity that is available here.



**London, England, Great Britain:**

As a young boy, I lived with my grandmother. During the Vietnam War, my uncle was sent there. His wife, of British nationality, and their two children moved in with us. This created a whole new curiosity for me.

I've been to London several times. My family ancestors are from Scotland and England. I love everything about London and it's history.

I have booked my great friend Dylan Andre from AGT to play the historic London Troubadour venue on two different occasions.

Over the years what I have learned from London is ice is a valuable commodity. Air conditioning is great to have and history of an old country is so much fun to explore.



**Maui, Hawaii:**

In all the places that I have visited, Maui is my most favorite. Unlike Honolulu, I find Maui to be quieter and so peaceful. From Lahaina to the Road to Hana, Maui's natural beauty and paradise and weather is the best.

Everyone should go to Maui!

I learned that you can visit places you don't think you can afford, if you do your research. I stay where the people live, not in the expensive hotels. I buy groceries at their Walmart, and nature is free to visit. There's plenty of that in Maui.



**Dublin, Ireland:**

I recently visited Ireland with my son that was about to get married. I can't get around as easily as I once did, but with the help of my son and my sister-in-law, we actually made a great trip at the end of Covid. The people in Ireland are amazing. Down to earth, hard working, hard playing people.

The history of the country from the oldest pub to the great churches are amazing.

What I learned in Ireland, is America needs a train system in every city.

I have recently had to retire due to a health condition. I had done some fantastic things in my life. From beginning in management at 19 at the Lewisburg Genesco, running the Long John Silver's here, to starting to open many Blockbuster Video stores around the country. I was promoted to National

Marketing Director of Blockbuster Entertainment. I have managed restaurants and country artists. I was National Director of the Inspirational Country Music Awards. I wrote a column in the National Power Source Magazine for country music that went to all the nation's radio stations and met all the members. I managed movie theaters in Hollywood and recently opened one at the Daytona 500 racetrack before retiring.

While I have traveled the states, I lived on the beaches of Southern California to the beach of Daytona. Also Kentucky, Miami, and lots of places around the world. But I always love coming back to my hometown of Lewisburg. It seems untouched by time. The best people live here - ready to help a neighbor at the drop of a hat.

Merry Christmas

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