

## A Tribute to Rollin Wilson

December 1, 1996

During World War II, Winston Churchill went up and down England trying to encourage his people to withstand the attack of the enemy. After visiting troops and factories, someone suggested he visit the coal miners. "If you could just visit one of the little coal-mining towns, Mr. Churchill," one man pleaded. "They don't get their pictures in the paper, and they never receive credit."

So Churchill visited the hardworking coal miners. The words he spoke that October day will never be forgotten. Standing before these tough miners, he said, "We will be victorious! We will preserve our freedom. And years from now when our freedom is secure and peace reigns, your children and your children's children will come and they will say to you, 'What did you do to win our freedom in that great war?'"

And one will say  
*"I marched with the Eighth Army!"*  
Some one else will proudly say,  
*"I manned a submarine."*  
and another will say,  
*"I guided the ships that moved the troops and supplies."*  
And still another will say,  
*"I doctored the wounds."*

Then Churchill paused. The miners, with their caps pushed back, sat in silence and awe waiting for him to continue. "They will come to you," he shouted, "and you will say, with equal right and equal pride.

*"I cut the coal! I cut the coal that fueled the ships that moved the supplies!  
That's what I did. I cut the coal!"*

We are here today to honor Rollin Wilson, a man of faith whose stand with Christ has countered the assault of the enemy.

Rollin Wilson stood with me and my generation in the war zone of adolescence and in the turbulent battles of the teen years. In the throes of the enemy of faith, Rollin Wilson "cut the coal" that provided the spiritual fuel that fanned the flame that God put within each of us. For those of us here today, who became Christians in our professions, Christian parents, lay leaders, and ministers, we know that Rollin tended the passion we had to serve Christ during years when our will could have surrendered.

It is a divine irony that the man who founded CFAPTHI (Can't find a Place to Have It), would have a place founded for him. It is because you, Rollin, always found a place - a spiritual space - into which to invite us.

And one day, God - the Great Searcher of Our Hearts - will ask: "And what did you do in the great battle for Christ?" And Rollin's children of faith, and their children, will answer:

*"Week after week, Sunday night after Sunday night, ski camp after Ski camp,  
Young Life trip after Young Life trip, Rollin tirelessly and humbly cut the coal  
that gave spiritual fuel to those trying to navigate the passage of adolescence.  
To set our hearts on fire for Christ, that's what Rollin did.  
He cut the coal.*

JSM