



Not Quite Seven Ages

Donald A. Furtado

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In "As You Like It", William Shakespeare said "all the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players...and one man in his time plays many parts, his acts being seven ages...." In this "partial" autobiography, Don Furtado recounts the circumstances and events that shaped and marked the early "Ages" of a "white country boy" from a typical, segregated small Southern community in the mid-1900s. Furtado outlines the starkly different backgrounds of his parents, one a Massachusetts-born son of Catholic immigrants from the Azores, and the other a Protestant North Carolina farmer's daughter whose forebears can be traced back to 1623 and Jamestown, the first permanent English colony in America. He explains the transition from boyhood in the stimulating environment of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he became student government president and a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He describes the arduous physical and mental challenges after commissioning as an officer in order to qualify as a member of the Navy's Underwater Demolition Teams (now, the SEALs) and recounts his experiences—many funny, some deadly serious—in that demanding role. After his Navy years, Furtado takes us to Yale Law School, then on a year-long round-the-world solo journey to and from law school at the University of Sydney, Australia. He explains why he revoked his initial decision to practice law in San Francisco and instead return to the evolving South and Atlanta. He describes the events he witnessed a few years later while working in the White House of President Lyndon Johnson, including the President's unexpected decision not to seek re-election and the impact of the assassination of Martin Luther King a week later. *Not Quite Seven Ages* ends with Furtado's recounting of the beginning of another career—real estate development—and a new "age" as a husband and father. A "postscript" summarizes his subsequent years as an attorney, businessman, government official and law professor. The book's preface makes it clear that his narration is intended to be read with an open mind and a sense of humor. "There will be no resulting Pulitzer Prize for history or biography--or even fiction....Still, I hope my record results in some smiles, rescues some memories from the dustbin of time, relays a bit of useful advice, or just elicits a heart-felt "I never knew that" from a reader....A few of the tales that follow may seem irreverent, risqué or more appropriate for a confessional box than a recounting for current and future progeny. So be it. Mea culpa. I will not win the Sir Lancelot award for being without fault. But human beings are human and "stuff happens" to the best of us. I am also convinced that Lancelot was often terribly boring."

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