

Heaven's Best gives rise to Heaven's Best . . .

Monday morning, February 11, 2019. Cold, icy, snowy. A good day to stay inside. Little did anyone know that this week would be the last week of Harlan Bobb's life here on earth and that Wednesday would be the last meal I'd ever make for him. Heaven's Best carpet cleaning service arrives for their 9:00 am appointment to clean Harlan's living room carpet. Harlan, Sassy (his beloved dog), and I made our way downstairs to hunker down while the work was being done. Harlan read the newspapers, Sassy lay on the couch next to him under her blanket, and I sat on the other couch pouring through cookbooks to find ideas for my entry in the Our Saviour's Top Chef contest. Harlan's last journal entry Monday night mentioned my search for a recipe to enter in the upcoming contest.

After a fashion, Harlan (who likes to be called "grandpa" by his family and me) put down the papers, and I put down my cookbooks. "Grandpa, I have four recipe ideas for my Top Chef entry. One is a chili, and the other three are soups. The first one is Chicken and Wild Rice, and another one is Bacon Chicken Chowder." Grandpa pondered for a minute and then said "they both sound good, why don't you combine them?" What a brilliant idea!



Wednesday, February 13, saw the second half of Heaven's Best carpet cleaning service, only this time, they were upstairs. That meant Harlan, Sassy and I could be in our regular places in the living room. I decided to make the Chicken and Wild Rice soup as an experiment in preparation for my entry in the Top Chef competition. What timing....it was now lunchtime, Heaven's Best was finished and packing up their equipment, and the soup was done. Grandpa came to the kitchen table and I poured a ladle of soup into his bowl. What happened next is how this humble soup won the prize of Our Saviour's 2019 Top Chef award. If it weren't for Heaven's Best carpet cleaning, Heaven's Best Chicken and Wild Rice soup may have never been made.

"How is it Grandpa?" Pause....."well.....it's good." "Grandpa, there's a special ingredient that's supposed to go in this soup. It's a shot of very dry sherry. I brought the bottle, but I didn't put any in. I didn't know how you felt about alcohol. Would you like to try some?" Eyes look up from the bowl, then to the bottle. "Sure, put some in." I add a shot, Grandpa stirs it around, takes another spoonful. "Well, that's better".....long pause and silence. Eyes turn to me once again. "What could you add to this to...to kick it up a bit?" "Well grandpa, the recipe did not call for any salt or pepper. Maybe it needs some. Let's try that." Lifting the salt shaker on the table, I added several shakes to his bowl. Oh what the heck, let's add some pepper too. Grandpa once again stirs it all around and takes another spoonful. "Oh that's better". More silence. "Grandpa, on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being WOW!!, what would you give this?" No answer (I never did get a rating from Harlan). Instead, the next comment from Harlan was...."give me another shot of sherry....." Stirring, stirring. Silence, another spoonful... "Oh, now that's good!"

That was Harlan's last meal. He passed away Sunday, February 17th. When God created Harlan Bobb, He created one of Heaven's Best people. I've named this soup Heaven's Best Chicken and Wild Rice soup and kicked it up a notch or two for entry in the Top Chef Competition. Thank you to everyone who voted for this soup. It truly is a tribute to a wonderful, wonderful man.