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MRS. BLACKBURN, SR
(personal)

January 16, 1987

Mrs. Henry W. Blackburn, Sr.
Sunny Shores Villa
125 56th Ave. S.
St. Petersburg, FL 33705

Dear Mother:

I am sorry that my recent visit was so short and unsatisfactory. I had a lot of bases to touch to arrive at sufficient information to help you with the decisions on your future. I also had a lot of scrambling to find, in a day and a half, a residence for Stacy and myself for March and April. We will make it up to you later with better quality visits.

This is to let you know too that I will very likely drop in for a very brief visit again on the last weekend of February. I'll let you know more details later.

In regard to your residence status, I think you need to face the issue quietly and clearly. No one, I'm sure including yourself, believes that you should live alone, on your own. The only possibility would be for you to have a constant companion in the Fisch Building. I don't see where either that companion, or the finances to support that companion, are to come from. However, you should keep in mind the possibility of a companion. If you find one of the aids that is particularly kind, or if you could consult with Wesley and others on someone who would be willing to come in several times a day, or to live with you at your expense, then I will reopen negotiations with the doctors and with the director. Their concern is also for your health and safety, as well as for the quality of your life.

As far as quality of life under your infirmity circumstances, this depends in part on you. I get the impression that you are withdrawing your interest in living, in others and in your surroundings. I understand that and I consider it perfectly natural. However, a person with your sense of self and lifetime devotion to others should not put yourself in this situation. You must seek out others. I am surprised to hear that you leave the planned recreational activities, or do not attend them, just because you think they are "below you" or there are people there that you are uncomfortable with. I think you have always considered that you had a responsibility to reach out to others and help them, thus helping yourself. That has been your life and your life with Father. Maybe because you are not doing this now, you are not so happy. I am surely in no position to lecture you, but only to point out that the long pattern of your life, of giving to others, is now broken. Since you are not giving, and since there are very few people around to give to you, I am sure that your life quality is unsatisfactory. It will probably require your reaching out to others!

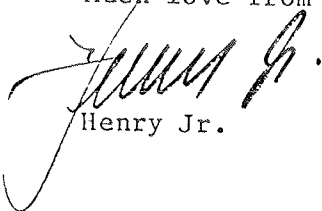
One of the best ways you can do that is to improve your hearing, because it is very difficult and even unpleasant, as you should know after years of dealing with your father, to relate to a person that doesn't hear you. You can take many more positive steps to be sure that you are constantly in contact with your environment. Otherwise, I, Charles, your colleagues there, and everybody, including your granddaughters, tend to avoid talking to you because it is so difficult and unrewarding when your hearing is so poor (unnecessarily). You have not faced this issue adequately and have not been sufficiently active in putting yourself in good communication and contact with your surrounding world. You are capable of doing this.

I hope that the little idea of your meeting with others in the collective dining areas in the Infirmary will work out. If you reject the opportunities for this socialization, then you will be bringing more isolation on yourself. I am sure that regular, once a week visits to the main dining room could be arranged, if you requested it and I will support this. On the other hand, I am informed that there are occasions when you have decided that you didn't feel like it and thus caused inconvenience for the dining room.

Well, enough sermons. May I make more one request of you, which is not a sermon? Please acknowledge Stacy. You never recognize her when you call on the telephone. You didn't mention how nice it would be to see her when you wrote how nice it would be to be at Heidi's wedding. Everyone else in the family, including Sara, acknowledges her as my devoted companion now. We are still uncertain about marriage, because of the thirty year age difference. However, we are devoted and loving companions and I would like you to treat her, think of her, consider her, speak to her, write to her as if she were my wife. I need this from you. You have already created an attitude of rejection or of ignoring her, which you will need to overcome if you are to please her and me. So may I beg of you again, consider Stacy as my wife and treat her thusly.

Please don't hesitate to call me for any way that I can facilitate your living pattern there. I want to feel I am in much closer touch with you and this requires your reaching out, as well as I. You would also find Stacy and your granddaughters very receptive if you were to improve your ability to hear and communicate with them.

Much love from your elder son,


Henry Jr.