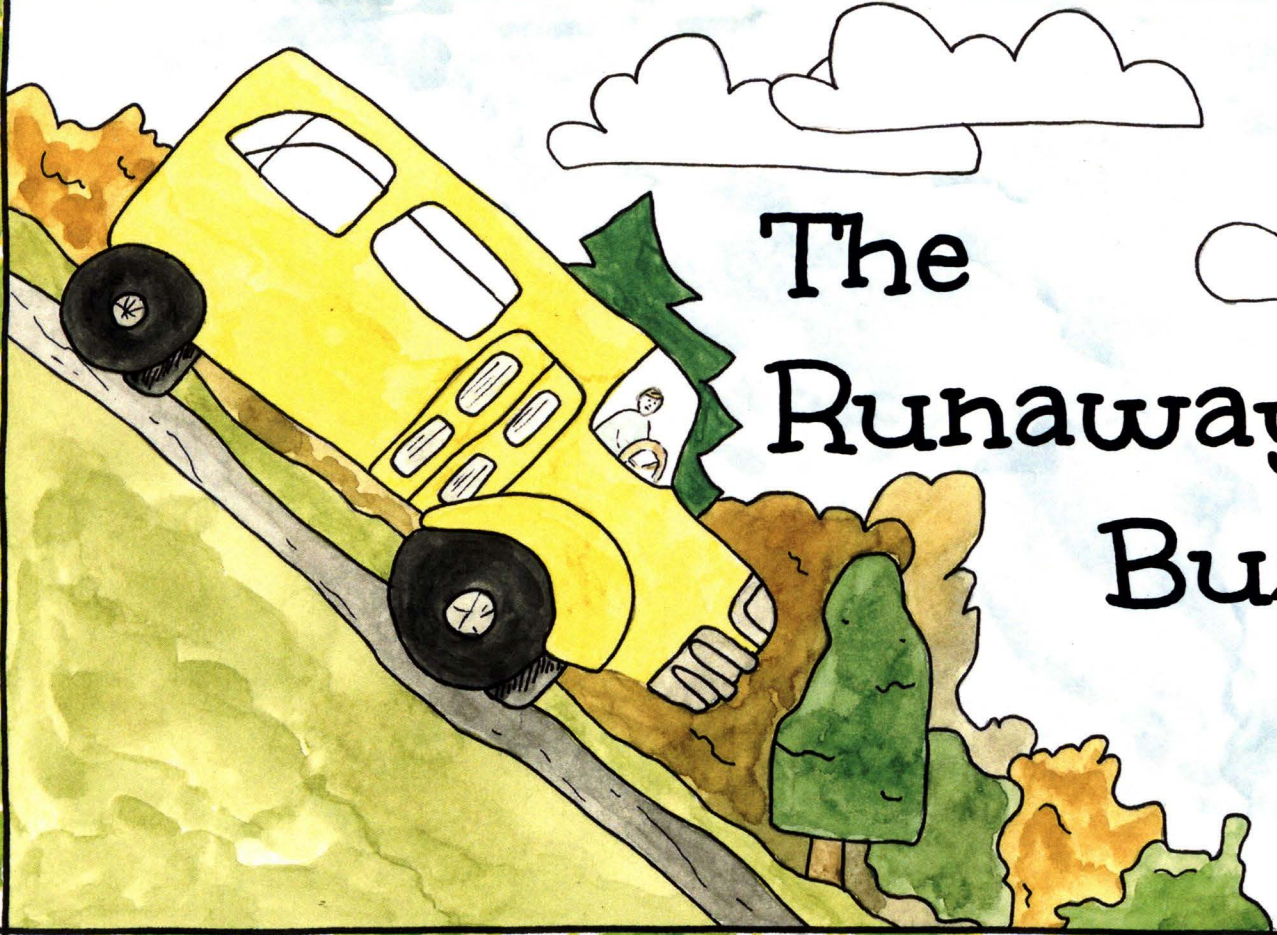


The Runaway Bus



This book is dedicated to **Charles Douglas Cox**, the
best father-in-law a man could have.

Special thanks to Violet, Grace, Caylan and Matt
Hudgens for their artistic and technical skills to make
this book possible.



In 1951, a Senior at Lincoln High School, Arkansas, drove a school bus route in rural Evansville.

At the beginning of the school year, the school superintendent hired Charles Douglas Cox to drive the Evansville bus route.

Douglas was born and raised in Evansville. He was known for his love of automobiles.

However, this young man was an inexpensive hire with school funds running low. At that time, regular bus drivers earned \$75 a month. Douglas received \$50 a month.

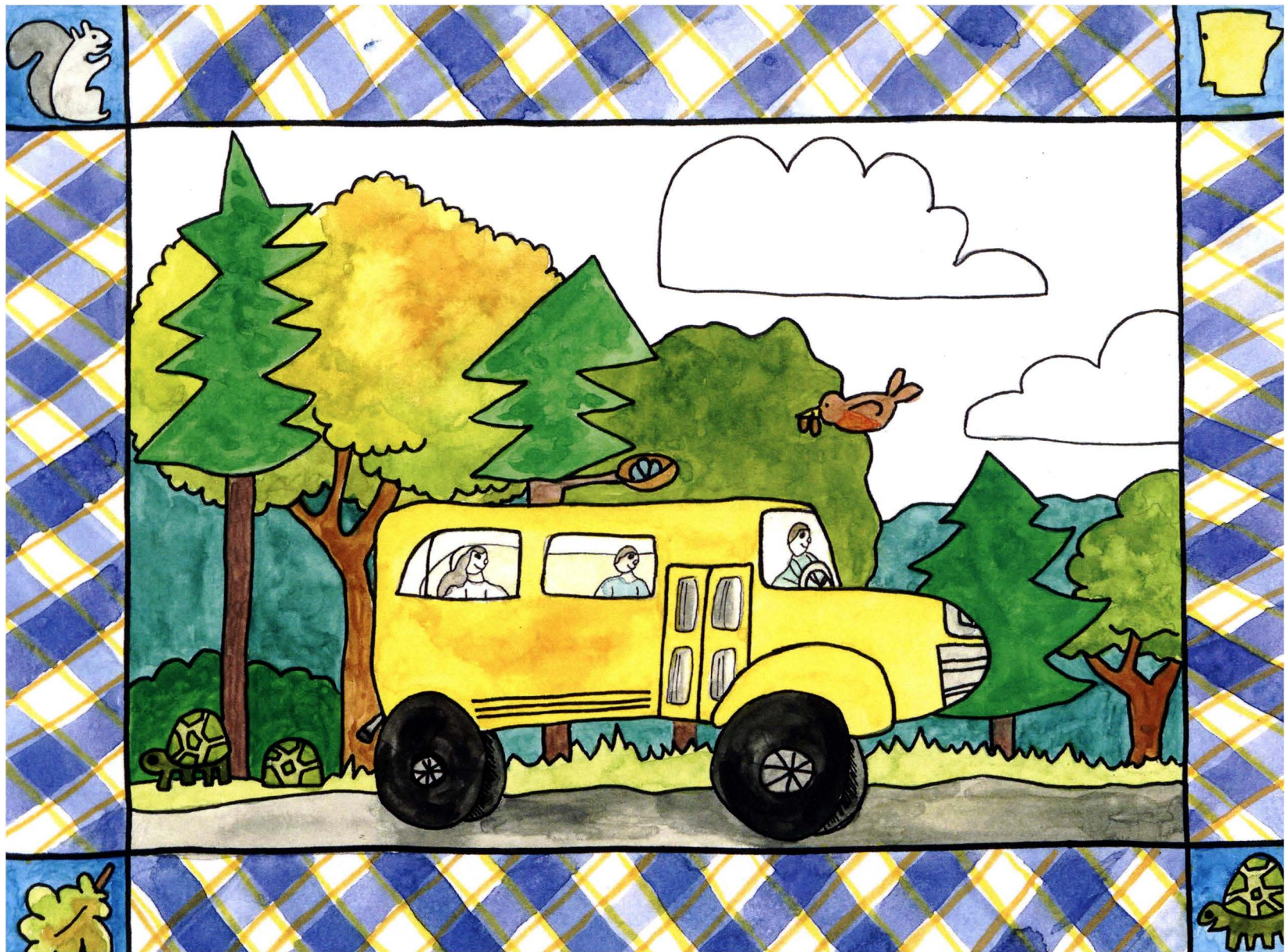


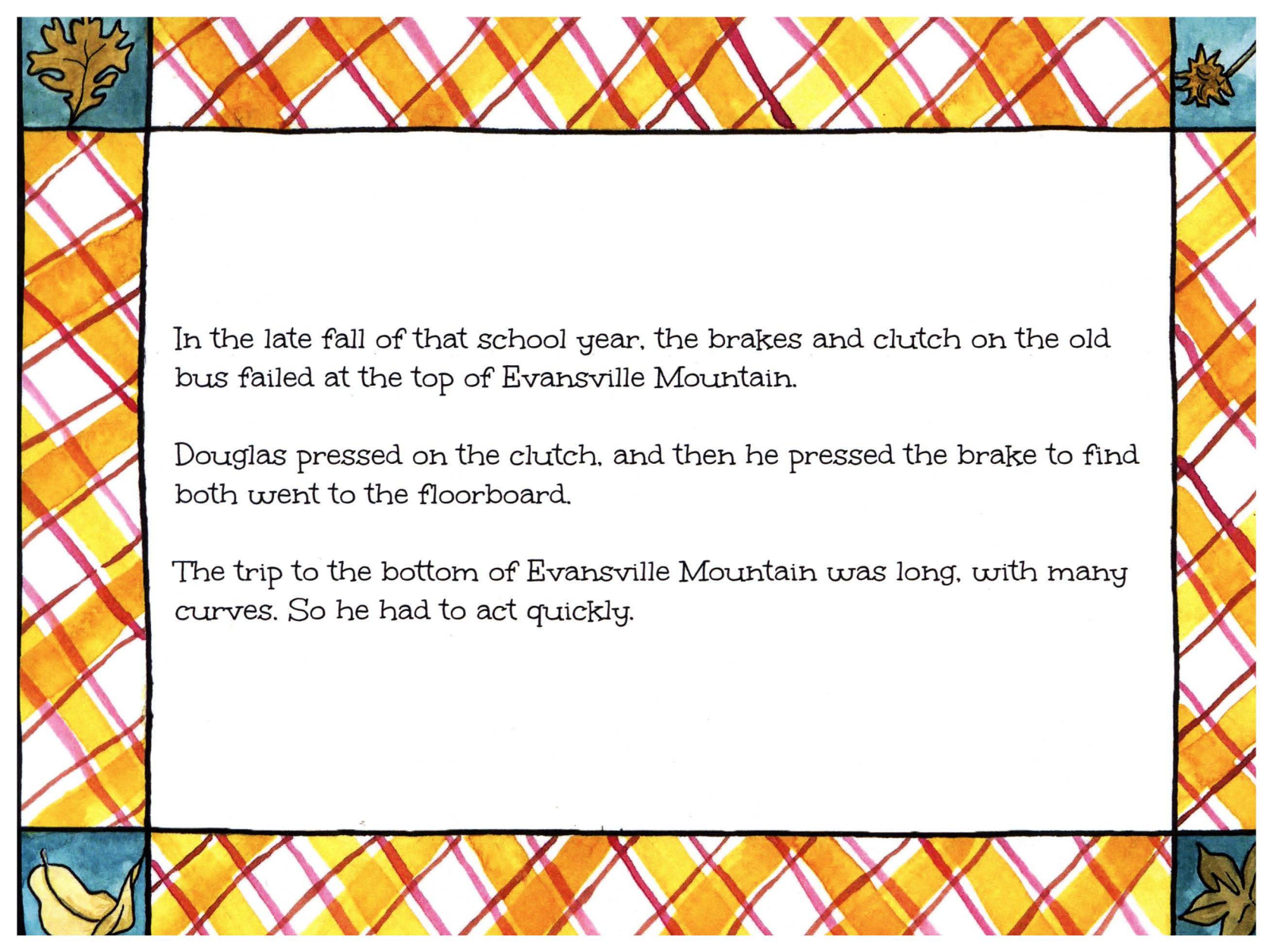


Douglas had several steep hills and long grades to go over in the Ozark Mountains while driving the Evansville bus route.

In addition, the 1946 manual transmission school bus was showing its age on the twice-daily runs on the gravel country roads.









In the late fall of that school year, the brakes and clutch on the old bus failed at the top of Evansville Mountain.

Douglas pressed on the clutch, and then he pressed the brake to find both went to the floorboard.

The trip to the bottom of Evansville Mountain was long, with many curves. So he had to act quickly.







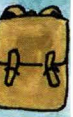
Gravity pulled the bus forward. The long grade of Evansville Mountain sped the bus down faster.

Douglas knew he had to navigate the coming curves.

The high-pitched roar of the engine being held back in first gear pronounced the frightening situation he and the students were experiencing.







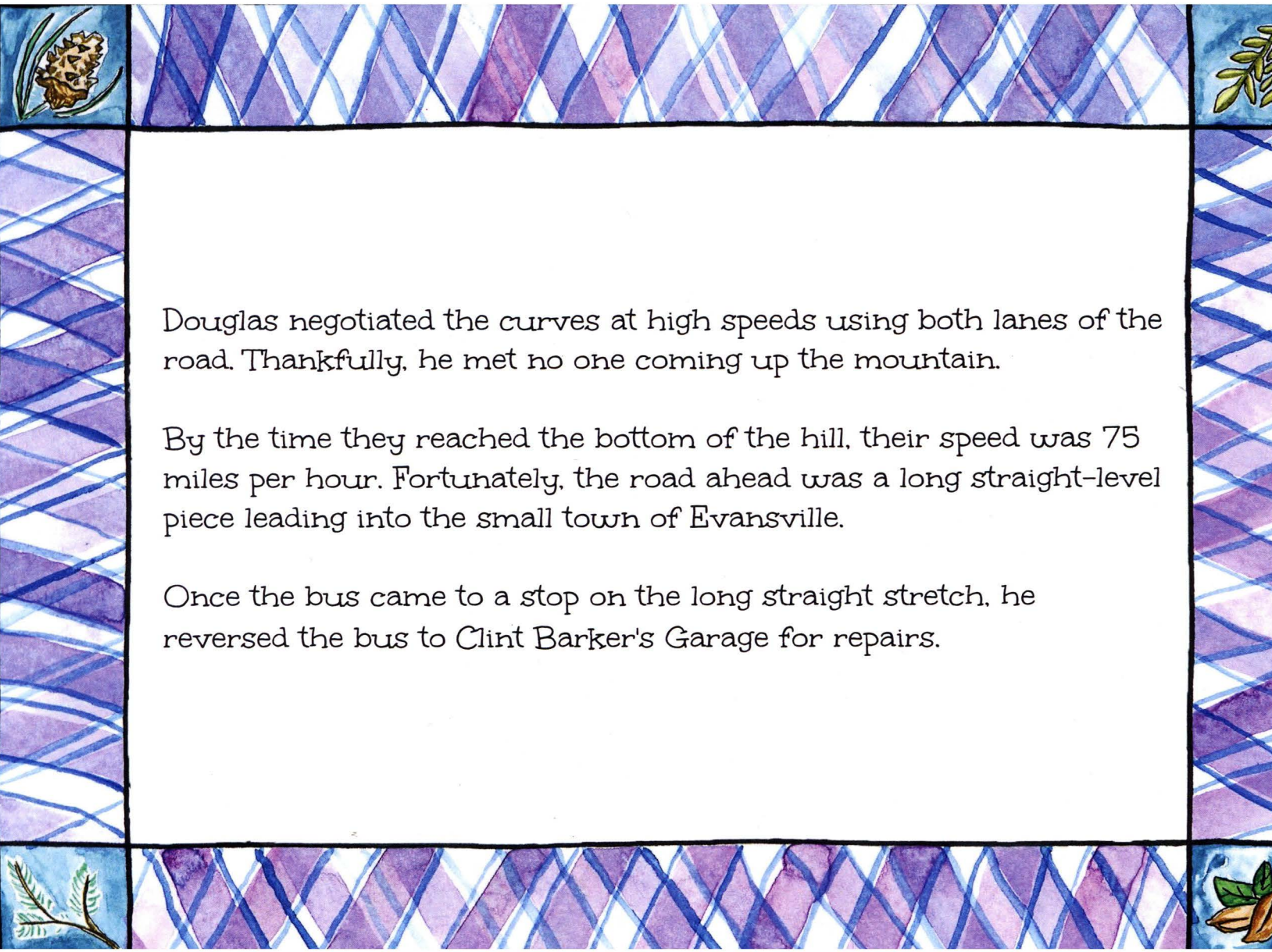
Calmly, he told the group of twenty children to 'get on the floor' of the bus.

Then, gaining speed quickly as he declined the mountain, he knew the only thing he could do was to get the gear shift into first gear.

So, he forced the transmission into first gear without the clutch. The bus jumped back, briefly.







Douglas negotiated the curves at high speeds using both lanes of the road. Thankfully, he met no one coming up the mountain.

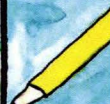
By the time they reached the bottom of the hill, their speed was 75 miles per hour. Fortunately, the road ahead was a long straight-level piece leading into the small town of Evansville.

Once the bus came to a stop on the long straight stretch, he reversed the bus to Clint Barker's Garage for repairs.





The children were safe. Douglas, on that day, prevented what could have been a tragedy.







Douglas went to graduate High School as a Class of 52' member.

He married Wilma Gayle Reed in 1958. They raised two children, Diana and Barry.

Douglas was a machinist, a chicken, turkey, cattle, and dairy farmer, a truck driver, a real estate broker, a winning stock car driver, as well as a long-time volunteer Fire Chief in Evansville.



