

A TRIBUTE

A great woman, they say, stands behind each successful man.
In the case of Ronald Bradley, the great woman's name is JAN.

For over a quarter-century she has shared the highs and lows--
Made the good times brighter, and softened all the blows.

From the early days at UGA--through high school coaching fame--
She saw each win and shared each loss, and was loyal just the same.

She raised four kids and did her work, and somehow through it all--
You'd always find her in the gym when the ref tossed up the ball.

She's always on the sidelines--marking down the score.
No matter how many games we win, she'll always want one more.

She often has her camera with which to take some slides--
And banquets--Christmas parties--she takes it all in stride.

And don't forget the birthday cakes for countless players, year after year.
And typing up statistics--and traveling far and near.

And making little badges for players all to wear--
And loving Coach, even when he hadn't any hair.

And all the things behind the scenes that one might never say.
Soothing nerves and feelings when things have gone astray.

Hearing each game played over when the refs have done us in--
Sharing in the sorrows when the right team doesn't win.

Fixing lunches on short notice and taking off for who knows where,
Seeing a million games a year--and always time to care.

Folks don't stop to realize that there's a lot of strife.
It isn't very easy to be a winning coach's wife.

But from Newton County to George Walton--from Ram blue to red and
black--
State Championships and winning streaks, this champ would never lack.

Jan finally gets a letter for all these things she's done.
But she's *always* had a number--No doubt--She's **NUMBER ONE!**

They lived a dozen lifetimes; they roamed and rambled so--
But Jan was always ready when Ron would say, "Lets go."
They "retired" to see the world, their coaching days were "done."
They'd worked so hard to be the best, it was time to have some fun.

London, Greece and Paris--Brenda's job made flight a cinch?
Behind the Iron Curtain? Jan didn't even flinch.
And though travel ws exciting, the fun began to wane,
So the team came "home" to Dublin so Ron could coach again.

She never whined a single time when Ron began to roam,
Most wives would have balked when asked to call a gym her home.
But Jan has been so loyal to every wedding vow
She persevered through everything, and made it work somehow.

Though life was often rosy, they had their share of strife
But Ron could take what e'er life gave, because Jan was his wife.
But she was more, oh so much more, than just his wedding mate,
She helped with each and every thing that life put on his plate.

When Ron Bradley talks of coaching, he never uses "I"
And those who aren't enlightened have often wondered why.
But those of us who know him understand when he says "we."
We know what he is saying is really, "Jan and me."

The kids grew up and married and soon grandchildren came
Through trials and tribulations Pop and Mimi were the same.
At Dublin they were happy, with accolades galore
But North Georgia always beckoned, to even up a score.

The pair would move to Loganville and Jan was right on board
Surrounded by familiar folks, they added to the lore.
Golden years abounded, always winning 20 games
Ronald was inducted in they Georgia Sports Hall of Fame.

They'd spend two years at Piedmont, then their act to Florida take.
By now so used to moving that this was a piece of cake.
They still found time to travel cross the country they adore
And from March until November didn't worry 'bout the score.

Then back to Newton County, to relive the Glory Years,
The last trip to the Final Four brought much more joys than tears.
Always with the scorer's book, and always with support
Without Jan the list of 1300 wins would be cut short.

Two solid years at GAC, then to Heritage with Bob
The grandkids all are growing up, much laughter with the job
Still teaching kids to always strive to be the very best
1372 became the final total for that quest.

**When God saw fit to give Ron Jan, it was a match in Heaven made,
And the world has been a better place, their mark will never fade
One plus one is sometimes two, but sometimes so much more
When those two ones are matched by God, accomplishments can soar.**

**When Ronald Bradley hits his knees, to thank his Lord above,
The thing that's he's most thankful for, is Jan Thomas Bradley's love.
All stories have an ending and a moral it would seem--
The moral of their story---Love makes a perfect team.**

**D.L.H.
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Author Darrell Huckaby fell in love with Newton County basketball when he saw his first Ram game at the age of five. He was a part of the team all four years of his high school career. He is a high school educator, a renowned author and newspaper columnist, and has written numerous books. He has been a life-time member of the "Ronald & Jan fan club", and has written many articles about their teams and players.