

# A Living Legacy

## *Guild member Jim Merriss creates a beautiful box for memories*

By REVA EZELL

### The Life Legacy Box Project

Faith Houston, who recently celebrated her second birthday, is a living legacy.

Her identical twin, Destiny, passed away, but Faith has a Life Legacy Box to help keep alive the memories of the life they will always share.

When Faith and Destiny's mother, Jessica King, was five months pregnant, she learned that she was carrying twins, not the single baby she had expected. Sadly, tests revealed that the twins had a condition called Twin-to-Twin Syndrome. This means the twins shared a membrane that transfers nutrients and consequently causes them to share the placenta.

The twins, first Destiny and then Faith, were born in September, 2011. Destiny required numerous medical procedures and constant observation. Unfortunately, in spite of everything that was done, Destiny died in May, 2012.

Destiny's sister Faith survived to be a happy, healthy comfort for parents Jessica King and Walter Houston.

Faith's aunt, Tammy Cofield, worked at Gentiva Hospice, where she met Dr. Dwana Bush. When she shared the twins' story, Dr. Bush immediately thought of the Life Legacy Box for Faith — a means by which the sister could collect memorabilia as she grew and spiritually share the memories with Destiny.

Somehow Jim Merriss, a master woodworker and a member of the Woodworkers' Guild of Georgia, heard the story of Destiny and Faith. He was especially interested, because he has two grandsons who had the Twin to Twin Syndrome. Happily, they both survived, but one has cerebral palsy. Jim said, "Let me make a special Life Legacy Box for Faith." Dr. Bush, of course, gratefully accepted his offer.

It took Jim a while to design and craft exactly the right box, but when it was ready there was no doubt he'd gotten it right.

It is made of poplar and trimmed with a beautiful deep red bloodwood. The design is two hearts, entwined.

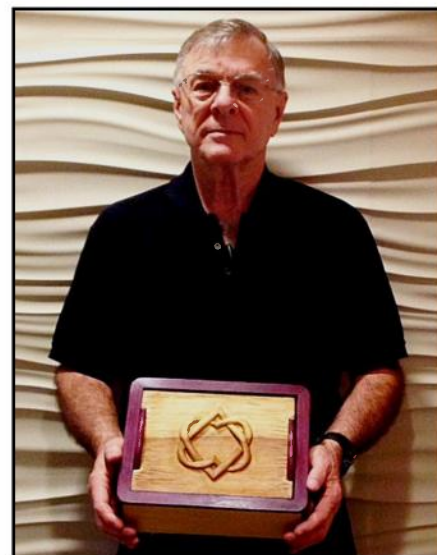


Faith Houston

This was something special. It called for a debut celebration, preferably with ice cream. Aunt Tammy and I planned to gather the family, including grandmother Geraldine Houston, plus Jim Merriss and Legacy Life Box reps Patty Young and Reva Ezell to meet for lunch.

When Tammy suggested Jason's Deli, I said, "They have free ice cream with every meal." The deal was sealed. Party + 2 year-old + ice cream = perfection. An unexpected bonus came in the form of the bubble wrap the box had been covered with. I don't suppose I have to explain what a toddler does with bubble wrap. Pop! Pop! Pop! Giggle. Pop!

Patty, Jim and I talked with Tammy, Geraldine, Jessica and Walter about how the Life Legacy Box would



Woodworker Jim Merriss

be used. Everyone had suggestions about notes, birthday cards and even secret treasures. For now, Faith can "talk" to her sister, and her parents will see that her words are transcribed and will go in the box. As she gets older, Faith can share her life and keep her sister's memory alive with her own keepsakes.

This Life Legacy Box is truly a Living Legacy Box. We are grateful to have been given the opportunity to share this experience with Faith and her family and with Jim Merriss.

To learn more about The Life Legacy Box Project and how you can make a difference, go to:

[lifelegacybox.wordpress.com](http://lifelegacybox.wordpress.com)



Faith's Life Legacy Box has entwined hearts