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'I just wanted to make my grandma happy. The only thing she wanted was to see her brothers.' — **Julia Maloney**

Sister reunites with brothers via video

Siblings hadn't been in contact since 1979

By **SAMANTHA ZILAI**
Truth Staff

Four generations of Overtons gathered in one room to witness a reunion more than two decades overdue.

Oma Overton, 94-year-old Elkhart resident, had not seen or heard the voices of her two brothers, 98-year-old Reese and 95-

year-old Earl Tidwell since 1979.

Job scarcity and a farming accident that killed one of Overton's sons prompted the family's move to Elkhart more than 50 years ago, said Overton's daughter, Norma Zimmerman.

Some of Overton's children made a trip to Alabama to visit their uncles about five years ago, said Overton's daughter, Tressie McCavitt. Overton, however, was unable to accompany them.

Anticipation hung in the air as the family settled into a confer-

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Together again: Oma Overton wipes away a tear as her granddaughter, Julia Maloney, holds her during a recent video conference that reunited Overton with her brothers, whom she hadn't seen since 1979.

Truth Photo By Samantha Zilai

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ence room recently at The Executive Suite at Jefferson Centre in South Bend.

Reese Tidwell's video conference was coordinated between his nursing center and InterCall, a conferencing company, because he can't be moved from the center.

Earl Tidwell and his family were stationed at an Alabama community college and after some initial problems, the video conference was under way.

Once he realized he was sitting there with Overton, Earl Tidwell asked if he could go see her, having not yet grasped the concept of a video conference.

The only issue during the call was that Earl Tidwell had difficulty hearing some of the things his sister said to him, but it seemed like just sitting there and seeing each other was enough.

Nearly 1½ hours passed as the siblings communicated to each other, and tried to catch up on more than 25 years of stories and memories.

"You look as young as them girls do," Earl Tidwell said, comparing Overton to her three daughters in attendance. "You look real good."

Tears of joy flowed from the eyes of family members as the siblings relished the time

they had together, waving and blowing kisses constantly.

"I'm glad they're taking good care of you," Overton said.

At the close of the meeting, both families gathered in front of their cameras and began waving and blowing kisses.

All of this was the result of Overton's granddaughter, Julia Maloney, and her neighbor, Marty Dunne, vice president of sales at InterCall. InterCall is an organization that facilitates Web, video and audio conferencing.

When Dunne heard Overton's situation, he suggested a video conference to connect Overton and Earl Tidwell and an audio conference with Reese Tidwell.

"I just wanted to make my grandma happy," Maloney said. "The only thing she wanted was to see her brothers."

Elated, Overton left the conference room thanking everyone involved in the conference effort.

She'll be able to watch a tape of the conference whenever she wants, but she has faith that one day she will see her brothers in person again and be able to give them a big hug.

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