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Review: Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge

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Fox, Mem, *Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge*. Illustrated by Julie Vivas. Kane/Miller Book Publishers, 1985. ISBN: 0916291049

Description:

Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge lives next door to a nursing home and has made friends with its residents. His favorite person is Miss Nancy Alison Delacourt Cooper, since she has four names, just as he does. When he hears that Miss Nancy has lost her memory, Wilfred Gordon goes to each of his elderly friends with his query, "What's a memory?". Each person gives the child his or her account of the abstract term and the boy seeks out his own concrete version of their descriptions. As Wilfred gives each gift to Miss Nancy, she does indeed find her unique memories. The author's delightful lines with their subtle humor like, "long ago last summer" and the child's sense of values make this volume as much of a treasure as the trove Wilfred Gordon shared with Miss Nancy. Julie Vivas' illustrations capture the aged characters with affectionate accuracy.

Critique:

The plot of this memorable picture book is driven by the sharing of life and communication across generations. Wilfred Gordon is obviously allowed the freedom by his parents to spend time with the elderly residents who are his neighbors. The occupants of the home are cheered by his presence and share their lives with him. In the age when there is much made of generation gaps, this title offers a refreshing glimpse at how lives may be changed when the gap is bridged by the innocence of a child. As with the plot of the book, this title will be enjoyed by readers from preschool to the golden years.

Awards: Public Television Storytime Book, Reading Rainbow Review Book, ALA Notable Children's Book

Related Subjects: Cross-generational relationships, Friendship, Neighbors

Character Themes: **Caring**, Generosity, Resourcefulness