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FEATURES CORRESPONDENT

When 82-year-old Ronal Ping was growing up in the Hazel-dale and Colo areas of Pulaski County, it wasn't uncommon for a kid to walk to the neighborhood store for a penny stick of candy.

But the second youngest child of Mr. and Mrs. Silas Ping's 10 children took things a bit farther.

At age 14, he decided to leave the family farm and walk/hitchhike to the Brach's candy factory in Illinois.

After working there, came a brief stop in Nebraska before venturing on to California with its promise of riches and adventure.

It wasn't long before the elementary school drop out was earning a nice income as an iron worker.

He traveled a lot, including a visit back home where he met and married pretty Jessie Roark, a native of Colo, and began a life that involved working in every state for the man who "loved that iron work."

The vagabond life ended in 1967, with their return to Pulaski County, where they would raise their son Ronnie and daughter Pamela in the Burnside area.

Since 2002, they have lived off Bend of the Lake Road on 35 acres of mostly wooded land Ronal acquired from one of his brothers.

Deer and other wildlife are frequent visitors.

Their home, built by Ronal and his son sits high atop a mountain, with a view so spectacular people come from all over America and Canada, asking if they can spend a few moments drinking in the beauty.

Standing on the back patio, Ronal points out the Highway 90 bridge out of Burnside to the left, and four-lane U.S. 27 heading into Science Hill on the right. Straight ahead are the distant hills of Wayne, Russell and Casey counties.

He estimates the distance to be up to 50 miles "on a clear day."

"We love it up here, and for some reason or another, people love coming to see this place, and a lot of them know my name when they get here. It has to be by word of mouth ... one person telling another about it."

Visitors are greeted with southern hospitality, although Ronal says he's a loner, as was the son who died in early August at age 44. Another son, Ronal Timothy, died as an infant, according to Jessie, 80.

Daughter Pamela Michelle Scott lives nearby and is an administrative assistant at the Goodwill store in Burnside.

Despite the personal heartache, the Ping family's coming home to Pulaski County resulted in several young lives being saved some 40 years ago.

There are two framed doc-



Couple can enjoy view year-round from the comfort of the sunroom.

uments on his office wall that Ronal points to as among his most prized possessions.

One is a certificate signed by former Gov. Wendell Ford declaring him a Kentucky Colonel.

The other, dated July 27, 1974, is a letter of commendation from Pulaski County Sheriff John M. Adams and County Judge Jacob V. Garner.

It details Ping's heroic actions on that date when he entered a mobile home occu-

pied by nine people that had become a fiery fireball after exploding. Two people were killed, including the father, but without the aid of neighbors Ping and Miss Sandy

Luttrell, more likely would have been killed.

He entered the flaming home three times and rescued four children, according to the commendation.



Ronal Ping and son Ronnie built the home in 2002.