

Remembering My Dad

By Linda Forstek, June 2022

June 12, 2022; my dad would have been 100 years old.

Born in 1922 in Green Bay Wisconsin he was the first born to Elenore and John Osiecki. He was three days older than his youngest cousin. A sister, Doris would follow 4 years later and finally a baby brother, Vernon 5 years after that.

His father had fought in WWI and come home injured. He worked when he could, but his health often sidelined him. His mother, the oldest of 13 children, was of strong farming stock. She was hard working and enterprising and would do whatever it took to support her family.

They lived in a huge house on Cherry Street. During the depression his mom turned it into a boarding house. She had 15 borders that slept nights and 7 that slept days. She would wash the sheets daily with a wringer washing machine. Bake bread every day and feed them breakfast and dinner, sending them off with a pack lunch to work.

My father learned from his parents the value of hard work through hard times. How to make the most of what you did have. He developed a 'can do anything you put your mind to attitude' and was a creative problem solver.



He was accepted to Saint Norbert's College following high school. The first in the family to go on to higher education. His college education was interrupted by WWII and the draft.

Stationed in New York he was swept off his feet by a blind date, my mother Gerda Reichart. She sang at the

USO. They got engaged just before he was shipped off to Europe and the war.



Gerda, a German immigrant, had come to the US at the age of three with her mother to reunite with her dad who had preceded them by two years. He was an avid photographer and even had his own darkroom. One day the US government arrived at their door and confiscated all of his camera

equipment. One of those cameras contained the only pictures my mom had of my dad on the film yet undeveloped inside.

She cried thinking that if something happened to my dad during the war, she would not even have a picture of him.

Happily, he returned from the war unscathed. Shortly after they were married on June 30, 1946. A marriage that would endure for 66 years. His mom was not happy that her sweet boy from Green Bay was marrying some New York floozy and staying in New York.



Ironically years after the war ended the cameras were returned to my grandfather. The film was still in the camera and was able to be developed with pictures that would be treasured.

He enrolled in Wagner College on Staten Island but his desire for higher education had soured. He wanted to get into the workforce and secured employment with a contractor building houses and modifying existing homes on the Glen Cove area. He came home one day and announced that he was going to build a house.



On an 80 x 100 lot in the middle of the woods in North Massapequa my dad built the home I was born in and grew up in. It was a labor of love that took five years to complete. I was born as the floors were only half completed.

I can still remember the dirt road that led to our home. One day the bulldozers arrived, and a development of ranch houses replaced the woods.

By that time my dad was working for Fairchild, one of dozens of defense contractors on Long Island. He may not have had a degree in engineering but that was the work he would do for his entire career first at Fairchild and then at Grumman.

He taught me at a young age that it was important to find solutions to problems. In fact, if I had a problem, he would not discuss it with me unless I also presented a solution. While many times my solution was not perfect it served as a starting point for discussion for



us to collaborate on coming up with the best solution.

I have so many great memories of working with my father on projects around the house. I could hammer nails, use a plumb bob, and lay down a chalk line. He taught me to plan my work and work my plan, to measure twice or even three times before cutting once, to take action and implement my ideas instead of leaving them as dreams.

He allowed me to make my own mistakes. He would ask me what I learned from my mistake or miss-step. He never said, "I told you so."

He encouraged me in everything I did. He was my biggest cheerleader. He inspired me to do more and be more than I ever thought I could be.

He passed away unexpectedly ten years ago, at the age of ninety. He was still driving, exercising daily, and working on solutions to problems while taking care of my mom.

We had dinner together the Sunday before he passed, and he was asking me all about my current business pursuit. He always was genuinely interested in what was going on my life.

The work I do as The Crisis Planner is a legacy project. It is a tribute to the man that has shaped me into the woman I am today. I have been blessed to have had him as my father.

I do miss him every day though I feel his presence all around me in how I think, what I do, and how I do it. I feel him smiling down at me and hear his encouragement to keep going.

He made a difference in my life. I willingly share the lessons he taught me with others.

This Father's Day I hope you are blessed with positive memories of your dad. If not, maybe you have become the man you wished you had in your life as the father to your own children.

Maybe you had a mentor, teacher, or coach that you learned from or admired that filled the roll of father for you.

- Take a moment to say thank you to your dad or dad figure in your life.
- Take a moment to say I love you.

- Take a moment to say I forgive you, if necessary.
- Take a moment to say all the things that you treasure about your relationship.
- Take a moment to say Happy Father's Day.

I can assure you that when they are gone you will wish you had done so often.

This month I am happily remembering the man who in my mind was one in a million.

Happy 100th Birthday in heaven Dad.



Happy Father's Day,
I love you...

Linda Fostek, The Crisis Planner, invites you to get off the Worry-go-Round. As an International Speaker, best selling Author and Radio Show Host; her optimistic and solution oriented view is evident in all she does.

Recognized as an expert in planning and preparing for both personal and natural disasters, Linda carries on her late father's legacy through her books and planning systems.

As a business and community leader, Linda has been honored by media and organizations for her important work.

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