

*The Art of*  
**MANLINESS**

**Lessons in**



**Manliness**

**A Group Writing Project by the  
Readers of Art of Manliness**

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## **Introduction**

We all have men in our lives who have taught us lessons in manliness, ordinary men who helped us understand what it really means to be a man. They're our fathers, our grandfathers, our ancestors, our teachers, and our friends. They're regular Joes that history books will probably never write about; however, their lessons and examples have more of an impact on our own lives than the famous men we often idolize.

Back in March 2010, I asked AoM readers to submit Lessons in Manliness essays about men in their lives that had had a profound impact on them. The response was fantastic. We received 46 submissions from men all over the world. While we did some rudimentary editing, we left the men to tell the stories of their mentors in their own words.

This little project has only strengthened my hope and faith that honorable manliness is still around and will be for generations to come thanks to the men you're about to read about.

If you missed out on contributing a Lessons in Manliness essay, no worries. We'll be asking for another round of submissions next year. But don't wait til then to tell the men who have helped mold your life what they mean to you.

A big thank you to all who contributed. The stories you shared were truly inspiring and have helped make the world a manlier place.

Brett McKay  
Editor-in-chief, Art of Manliness

# **Lessons in Manliness: A Mountain of a Man Named Bob Powers**

by Justin Powers



My grandfather (Robert "Bob" L Powers, 6/7/1924 – 9/11/2002) was born in the beautiful and serene Kern River Valley in the majestic Sierra Nevada mountains of California. He was the 5th generation of his family to live in the Valley. He was born the son of a rancher, and spent his young days learning about the family trade. At the age of one, his family made their yearly trip up into the mountains to set the cattle loose in the high sierra grazing grounds. My grandfather made the 50+ mile trip on the front of his father's saddle. He was later told that he kept kicking the horse in the shoulders, nearly getting them bucked off several times. He was riding a horse on his own at the age of three.

Over the course of his life, my grandfather fulfilled many roles. He was a rancher for quite some time, working on the farm and driving the cattle into the high country every year. He served in the U.S. Navy (although he didn't last long due to a sleepwalking problem). He was a ranger in the Forest Service for many years, where he was regarded by all as the one that insisted on doing things the right way, the first time. He was also a deeply virtuous man. His loving marriage to his wife of 50+ years will be long remembered as the highest standard of a loving marriage. He touched many lives during these years, although it is his later acts that make him truly remarkable.

In 1965, during my grandfather's work in the Forest Service, he was approached by a stranger that was publishing a so called "mug book," where a family would be able to purchase a page or two to write information or stories about their family, in order to preserve their heritage. It sounded like a swell idea to my grandfather, so he took this man around to various families and old timers around the valley. The stranger gathered the stories and information from these people, and collected the fees for publishing the book. Shortly after collecting all this, the stranger disappeared, taking \$175,00 with him, and

leaving the stories. This broke my grandfather's heart as all of his friends had trusted him with their money and their heritage.

He decided there was only one thing to do. He told his friends that he would gather some information and have someone write it up. It would be a publication, rather than a book. However, he just couldn't find anyone that would write it the way that he wanted it to be written. So he sat down and started writing a book about the history of the valley, compiled from the stories he had collected, along with his own knowledge, and conversations with others. It soon became apparent that all of this simply wouldn't fit in one book, so he wrote several books, each concentrating on a small but valuable piece of the valley's rich heritage and history. The books contained stories of stagecoach robbers that would lie in wait for unsuspecting travelers coming through. He told of the pioneers and ranchers, that fell in love with the area's flowing rivers and fertile soil. Then there were the 49ers that came in droves driven by the promise of gold. The cowboys, and their deep relationship with each other and the land. The Indians, with their rich culture and near-forgotten practices from before the coming of the white man, continuing to their mixed relationship with the white man, and how it occasionally turned violent. There are stories of feuding families, and lawmen chasing outlaws that would make the greatest John Wayne movies seem boring in comparison. All of this was printed alongside original photographs and journal entries of the people that made up the valley's heritage.

As he started to write more books, people began to give him more stories and pictures. After he had finished the first five books, he started on another. He told his wife that this would be his last book. He continued on to write more "last" books, up to the final total of 9 books.

Bob Powers died on the September 11th, 2002, the anniversary of the WTC attacks. Many found this to be somewhat poetic, given his strong patriotism and love for his country. Immediately following his death people from all walks of life came together to try to find a way to honor his memory. A group formed to begin work on naming a mountain in his memory. Overwhelming support was given in the form of letters of recommendation to government officials from the Forest Service, California congressmen and assemblymen, historical societies, various Indian tribes, as well as numerous teachers and representatives from the local school district, who used his books to teach history to the schoolchildren, just to name a few. Reading through the list of supporters gives a profound sense of the impact he made on other's lives.



On August 14th, 2008, the US Board on Geographic Names unanimously approved the naming of a previously unnamed peak as Powers Peak. This is the day that I first considered my grandfather to be a 'mountain man.' In a state that has borne many people that have gone on to become presidents, and yet do not get their own mountain, my grandfather, son of a rancher, and a man of little means, has had such a profound impact on so many people that an entire mountain was named in his honor. It is beyond my skills as a writer to express the profound impression this had upon me. My grandfather was never a great leader, never had a high level job, and never did any of the things that many of us think about when we ponder the meaning of success. Yet in his simple life he managed to touch so many lives, that something so eternal and unmovable as a mountain was given his name. He simply had a deep and undying love for his God, his family, his friends, his valley, and his country. He never hesitated to do what he could for those that he loved.

I will likely never have a mountain named in my honor. I also would not like to. However, I often wonder if I have the integrity and strength of spirit to become that mountain man that my grandfather was. As I write this article, I begin to search for the key attributes that make a mountain man, as demonstrated by my grandfather.

### **Unconditional Love**

My grandfather had 5 great loves in his life: His God, his wife, his family, his country, and his valley. I'm of course not talking about the romantic passionate love that is all the rage in the movies. I'm talking about a sincere, dedicated virtuous love for those things that you hold important. Aristotle referred to this as "Philia" love. In his work *Rhetoric*, Aristotle defines this type of love as:

"wanting for someone what one thinks good, for his sake and not for one's own, and being inclined, so far as one can, to do such things for him"(1380b36–1381a2)

His undying love for each of these was an integral part of what I believe made him a mountain man. That unconditional love led him to perform such selfless acts as spend 35+ years painstakingly cataloging and conserving the history of the valley. In today's world, love is often exchanged in return for something else. We will only love someone if they do things for us or treat us a certain way. In watching my grandfather's life, he loved because it was his duty, and his calling. And doing so not only touched people's lives, but it made his own life that much more fulfilling!

In today's world, love is so often given away with a hint of selfishness. We often only commit loving acts when there is something in it for us. My grandfather's multi-decade quest to preserve that which would otherwise be lost certainly didn't make him rich, and consumed a large part of his love. But this quest earned him the respect and gratitude of the entire area.

### **Integrity**

When it comes to the core traits that really make up a mountain man, integrity has to be at the top of the list. Something about standing at the base of a mountain and looking up at its permanence reminds me of the kind of unmoving integrity of character that embodies a mountain man. After all, you could have all of the compassion and good intentions in the world, but if you lack the integrity to stand firm in your convictions, what good are they?

Princeton Wordpress defines integrity as "moral soundness." However, this succinct phrase fails to

show the full picture of what I believe integrity is. To me, you can sum up my grandfather's integrity with this one statement: He did the right thing, the right way, every time.

### **Do the Right Thing**

It would have been extremely easy for my grandfather to just be the victim when that scoundrel took everyone's money. He could have dismissed it and went on with his life. Instead, my grandfather spent the vast majority of his adult life researching and writing those 9 books, as well as finding and donating hundreds of items to the local museum, from pictures, to an old ranch stove, to an entire cabin! All of this came about from one simple decision early on to do the right thing by his people, and to write those books. It always isn't the easy way to go, especially when it is at the expense of your future, and your hopes and dreams. But these are the decisions that transform us into mountain men.

### **Do It the Right Way**

While in the US Forest Service, a relatively new employee was tasked with the laborious job of creating a barbed wire fence that stretched for well over a mile. He worked hard at his task, and after several hours my grandfather came by to see his work. He took one look at the fence and told the man to start over. When asked for a reason, he said that all of the posts must be driven to a certain depth, and they must all be at a uniform height. The new employee tried in vain to convince my grandfather that the fence was structurally sound, and would likely last throughout the year (which was likely true). My grandfather then explained to him how a little more time spent now would prevent someone else having to go back later on to fix the mistakes. He also emphasized the sense of pride in completing a job well done. That new employee's entire career from that day forward was carried out following my grandfather's advice.

### **Do It Every Time**

Many of us are content to perform some great act of selflessness, and then return straight to our normal ways. After all, we did the right thing, now we deserve some time to ourselves. However, this was not the way that a mountain man sees things. My grandfather was giving of himself all the way up to his very last days, by opening his home to those in need, giving in his church, finding more history that needed to be preserved, and loving his family every chance he got. His selflessness never rested. In our journey to become mountain men, we cannot give up on the doing the right thing, even if just for a moment, for it is in that moment that we fall short.

### **How to Be a Mountain Man**

A stranger walked up to me on the day of my grandfather's funeral, and said, "Your grandfather was a good man." Yes he was, but he was so much more than that. He was a mountain man. The great question is, and one that I struggle to answer every day, is what can I do myself to be a mountain man? What have I done to impact the lives of others? Can I be a mountain man? Can you? I believe that in order to become a mountain man, you must truly embody the principles of unconditional love and integrity, and never waver. As men, we are not only able to be mountain men, but are called to it

## The Coolest Man on the Planet

by Matt Mitchell



Sammie Mitchell is the lead singer, center of the frame.

My uncle, a burly, deadly, monster of a man, my mother's brother, saw a picture of my father one day not too long ago and said to me:

"Before he was paralyzed, your dad was the coolest sumbitch on the planet."

This is not something that I could take lightly. My uncle's one of the coolest people I have ever known, so for him to say that about my dad was a statement of considerable weight. He was a man himself who'd gathered the coveted million-mile pin from Harley Davidson in 1976. His knuckles are scarred with the wounds of a thousand barroom brawls and he can regale you with a thousand stories of drugs and death and rampage. But this man who I'd never heard pay a single compliment to anyone else in my life just paid one of the biggest I'd ever heard...to my *dad*. Now me, I wouldn't know anything about my dad before he was paralyzed. The accident that took his legs happened in 1969, the year I was born.

In the years following the accident, he came very close to calling it in. My mom divorced him, he refused to see anyone, and he basically just began waiting to die. The doctors had all told him, after all, that he only had a couple years to live (at most).

But then something amazing happened. For some reason unbeknownst to me, my dad decided he

wanted to live. He asked my mother if I could start visiting him and, when I turned five, I met the man for the first time in my life. To this day I can still remember his frail little body laying there, his useless hands, his limp legs, and his smile. He was a man whose body was cursed, but who never failed to offer a joke or a smile; even when his pitiful body was wracked with pain, he could still find the will to give a joke.

"Hey dad, how's it goin'?" I would ask, and he would reply:

"Pretty good, I went jogging around the block and decided I'd better head back before I got too tired."

Hospice nurses were common at my dad's house. And they commonly left the house blushing. More than one of them told me that my dad was their favorite patient. He was a flirt, which kind of came with the territory: before he was paralyzed he was in a band. A pretty popular band. Which is an amazing fact in itself because there's not a musical note in my body, but that's beside the point. In 1965 he went Airborne, and in 1967 he was out of the Army and The Barons were winning accolades. They cut a studio album and were considered by many to be on the fast track to fame and fortune. In 1969 his life was over. Or so he thought.

He went on to educate me on a good many things. None of them practical, mind you. He was never able to play football or light a campfire or take me fishing. He was bedridden and could do none of those things. I learned those skills from other, oftentimes lesser, men. No, what my father taught me was how to hold my chin up, no matter what. He had some down years, yes, but he rebounded and became a leader in his church. I still have his Bible, hand annotated by the man himself, whom science proclaimed would never write or eat with his own hands again. He did both of those things, though it took some intense concentration on his part, and he taught himself to eat and to write. The product may have been less than attractive when it was done, but it was legible, and he was fed.

My dad's name was Sammie E. Mitchell. He was a quadriplegic who lived in Pell City, Alabama. He was a helluva talented singer, and he defied science by living for thirty-three years when the doctors gave him two or three, tops. And in spite of everything he'd endured and all the hardships he faced, he held on to his faith right up to the bitter end.

Maybe the most important lesson my dad taught me, though, was how to be prepared for the end of life. He told me himself when I was just a youngster that his time was short. And so we made the most of it that we could. And when it was time and the doctor came to me and asked if he should revive my father, who had a Do Not Resuscitate order, it was okay, because I was as ready as he was. I told the doctor that it was time to let my father go. "Let him go," I said, and yes, I was weeping, I felt the air rush out of my lungs and I didn't know if it would come back again. But I was prepared from my earliest memory for my father's death. When the time came, I knew the decision that had to be made by me, and I knew what it would be. And my father went the way he would have wanted to go: with me holding his hand and telling him I loved him. His last words in this world were to me, and he said, "I love you too, son."

It's never easy to say goodbye to those you love, and I'm not suggesting that anyone should have a talk with their child to prepare them for their deaths. Because our condition was unique, it worked for us. He did what he had to do to make sure I understood and he still put on a smile despite a lifespan that was supposed to dwindle by days instead of years.

He's been gone nearly ten years now, but his lessons still resound in my head and in my heart. A man who was a mere shadow of himself, who weighed maybe seventy or eighty pounds and was little more than a bag of bones, who I carried in my arms many, many times, just like I carry my own children now, taught me that life is best lived for now, every moment of it, and when it's gone it's best to let it go. But he left me with something even bigger than that, something I hope and pray I can pass on to my own sons, and that was this: If he could lay there on that bed for all those years, body failing in every way possible, in pain that most of us would find unimaginable, and still smile at the craziness of it all--still laugh in the face of a misery that I've never known, then how could someone like me so much as drag my feet?

Dragging my feet was something that would have come easy for me, too. I was a naturally melancholy kid, for what reason I don't know--maybe my serotonin gland was defunct. But however it came to be, my dad clearly illustrated that it didn't have to be that way. It wasn't a lesson that he taught on purpose. It was one of those lessons he taught with his manner, just by being himself, by always smiling, by loving me, and by being the coolest sumbitch on the planet, even while he was paralyzed.

## **A Man's Man: My Grandfather**

by Richard Williams



He rose at 4 am every morning—unless he slept in, then he'd get up at 5 am. He smoked a pipe and Raleigh unfiltered cigarettes for over 50 years—until he had one lung removed due to cancer, then he quit—cold turkey. No patches, no Nicorette, no “support group.” He just took one long drag when I dropped him off at the hospital that morning for his operation and said, “Well, I guess that’s my last one.” I assumed he meant he thought he’d die on the operating table. No, he meant he was quitting. Just like that—after all those years. He never touched another one.

Fred Busic was born in Independence, Virginia. His father died from a fall in a construction accident while he was still a boy. He left home at fourteen. A few years later, he somehow managed to get admitted to VPI (Virginia Tech) and played football there. He joined the United States Army during WWII and fought under British command—“for the Queen” as he used to put it. He was a sergeant and machinist and once told me he couldn’t go to heaven because he’d killed “too many blue-eyed, blonde German boys.” Though he was very patriotic and loved America, he hated war and told me that the only way he’d ever take up arms again would be if the enemy “crosses the Blue Ridge Mountains.”

After the war, he married my grandmother who’d been deserted by my real grandfather when my Dad was only two. He raised my Dad as his own son. He was the only grandfather I ever really knew. Upon returning home he went to work for DuPont in Waynesboro, Virginia where he soon became a master machinist.



He could make and fix just about anything. He fashioned the “jeep” you see pictured here during the war—somewhere in North Africa—from spare parts that had been discarded. He made belt buckles, hunting knives, and parts for his Panzer lawn mower when they wore out. That’s me in the picture on the Panzer as a 6 year old boy in 1964 Yes, he taught me to run it. He raised bird dogs, was a gunsmith, an expert duck hunter and fly fisherman. He was also one of the finest men I’ve ever known. Though unselfish to a fault, he was frugal and invested heavily in DuPont stock, GM stock, and other blue chip companies (at least they were in his day). This all paid off for him and after his retirement (over 40 years at DuPont) he

was able to live comfortably in a small apartment after my grandmother passed away.

Though not a perfect man by any means, he taught me many valuable lessons over the years. He taught me to never give up, be true to what I believe—even when he disagreed with me—work hard, be honest, and place great importance on value. He used to say, “Buy quality, not quantity.” I still have many of the tools, clothes and other items he purchased over his lifetime due to the fact he purchased the best he could afford. He’d never purchase any kind of tool unless it was American made. He wouldn’t buy a car unless it was either American made or British. He bought me an MG convertible when I graduated high school! He taught me to play checkers, chess, poker, and shoot dice—something my grandmother didn’t particularly like. Though I quit smoking years ago, my grandfather also taught me how to roll my own cigarettes with glueless OCB rolling papers—something else my grandmother frowned upon. He could roll a cigarette with one hand. I never was that good. He taught me how to canoe after he purchased a seventeen foot aluminum Grumman in 1968. I still have it and will soon be teaching my own grandsons how to canoe. He introduced me to: Old Spice Cologne, Listerine, lots of pepper on my eggs, Duke’s Mayonnaise, V8, Dr. Pepper, and horse hound lozenges—all of which I still use.

Until a knee injury, he was considered one of the best golfers in our area, and I sometimes accompanied him as his caddy. He loved children and animals and though an avid hunter and fisherman, would react with great anger at anyone who treated an animal cruelly.

At his funeral in 1991, I told those assembled that my grandfather was like a lighthouse—always there, never changing, humble yet confident, solid, and dependable when a sometimes discouraged young man needed encouraging. He was one of the few adults in my early life that believed I would ever amount to anything. Quick to listen, slow to speak, he was a man’s man and I am a better man for his example.

## Lessons in Manliness: My Uncle Steve

by Jeff Hafner



Without any flash or tales of heroism, my Uncle Steve has been one of the most influential men in my life. My mother's brother, Steve was the oldest brother in a brood of four. Born and raised in Ann Arbor, Michigan he still lives and works there. Those who know him would describe him as fun though laid-back, reliable and considerate. These are the qualities that have had such a large impact on my life.

My parents divorced when I was young, around five years old. My mom moved my sister and I to a nearby town, first to an apartment and then to a house. We didn't see our dad much, but I can remember Steve coming over what seemed like almost every weekend for years. Often he'd come over to help fix a leaky faucet or bad outlet, but he'd always stay for dinner and play with my sister and I. There was nothing fancy about it, and at the time it didn't seem all that special. Looking back I know that his dedication to his sister and her family, his "well it's gotta be fixed" attitude and dependability helped shape the man I am today.

**Dedication.** My uncle didn't have to come over every weekend, but he wanted to (or so it seemed to the 10-year old me). He found it important to spend time with his family as well as help out around the house, doing the things my mom was unable to. Though I'm sure my mom's cooking probably didn't hurt in convincing him to come over. Sometimes, though, we needed something fixed *now*, and that's when we were able to **depend** on my uncle to come over. He wasn't able to fix every house emergency, but definitely saved us from calling the plumber or electrician several times.

**Handy.** Steve could not have been so helpful in our home repairs if he wasn't so handy. While he does have some professional electrical training, the rest of his knowledge came from his father and a lifetime of *fixing things*. He knows that not only is it a great way to save money when you can make simple repairs yourself, but it is also satisfying to fix something yourself. Home repairs are also a great time

for bonding. I would often help (or sit there and watch) my uncle as he'd be working on something. This has lead to me being able to make the repairs around the house now, and has prepared me to pass on those skills when the time comes.

**Fun.** My uncle's visits weren't all hard work though. He'd kick the ball around in the backyard with us. He'd stay and watch a movie after dinner, though thinking back I doubt they were movies he particularly wanted to see. Board, card, dice, and video games were just as likely to be played too.

Any of these things by themselves probably wouldn't have added up to much. I'm pretty sure all of my family members have visited here at some point, I've probably played a game with most of them, and several have helped fix or paint something in the house. The biggest thing is the time investment my Uncle Steve made. For years he'd come and visit just to spend time with us, and that dedication was a foundation of my growing years.

## Lessons in Manliness: Cornelius Wortel

By Bob Iger



When I pause for a moment and look at where I am standing today, I could not be where I am without my granddad. You see, my granddad was not a person of many words. But his actions sure spoke for him. He really was a jack-of-all-trades. Cornelius was born on 2 October 1928, in the inter-bellum period on a farm in North-Holland (The Netherlands). Luckily he got through the war without too much discomfort, unlike some of his compatriots in the cities. After the war, he started to drive trucks for fun and became proficient in captaining small boats. He met my grandma in the early fifties and they got hitched on a sunny April morning in 1953. They had 3 kids in the 5 years after their marriage.

As my granddad grew more confident in his captaining abilities, he became a licensed mariner and got the opportunity to become the captain of a riverboat for a West German ship-owner. Back in the days, West Germany's industry lay in ruins and thanks to the signing of the European ECSC treaty, German industry could be provided with fresh shipments of steel ore and coal. For 13 years, he hauled bulk cargo like sand, gravel, coal and steel ore among other things with his riverboat. During this time, he had to put his kids in a boarding school. **This was not really something he liked to do but it was the best he could offer his kids while maintaining a steady income.**

When his youngest daughter (my mom) developed a temporary health problem in 1966, he decided to leave his life on the water behind, and he chose to go ashore. **He always tried to put his kids on the first place.** Through some of his connections, he found a job as the CEO's chauffeur for a large Volkswagen dealership. He had this job for several years until his boss' health problems cut short my granddad's career. This meant he had to find another job.

Unable to find a new job, he first began to work as a truck driver in 1971 and soon started his own logistics company. Again, **he learned quickly how to adapt to these new circumstances so he specialized himself** in hauling cargo to different European countries like the UK, Denmark, Italy, Germany, France and Spain. On his trips, he was sometimes accompanied by his wife, my grandma. They got to see some great sights, for example driving through the Alps. Alas, these good times

wouldn't last for long.

The good times would end because of a certain Mrs. Neelie Kroes. You may know her as the notorious European Union Commissioner for Competition who fined Microsoft for \$500 million. Back in 1977 she was the State Secretary for Freight Transport. She spearheaded a reform in 1979 that would root out all small logistics companies, including my granddad's. Coincidentally, she was also a board member of her father's major logistics company at that time.

For the third time he found himself jobless so **he took the first opportunity he could get hold of**: he became a bartender in the tavern my father owned. My father met my mother back in the late 70s and soon after their engagement, my father decided to rent a bar from a brewery. At first the idea of opening a tavern seemed great to my granddad but he would soon find out one of my father's vices: alcoholism. My father's alcoholism, coupled with some serious mismanagement forced the café out of business 2 years after I was born.

Of course, these problems also took a heavy toll on my parent's marriage. In 1983, my mother got divorced from my father and she found herself on the street with two kids. Again, **my granddad didn't mope around enjoying his newfound time but he rose to the occasion** and helped my mom establish a snack bar. He did that even though he lived with my grandmother 75 miles away from us.

He would commute every week to my mom's home to help her to raise us. He also assisted my mom in her snack bar to keep the customers coming. I can truly say that he was instrumental in the success of my mom's career and my personal well being when I was young. As a matter of fact, he was more of a father figure to me than my own father, who chose the path of alcoholism. **Thanks to my beloved granddad's hard work I had a relatively calm youth.**

Sadly, my granddad passed away in 2004 but he left a legacy of thoughts behind, and I will share some of these life lessons with you now:

- 1) Always respect women:** my granddad had his way with women. He always treated them respectfully and he expected the same from me. He also taught me that the prettiest girl around is not always the smartest, and that I should focus on brains instead of breasts. His advice turned out to be worth its weight in gold later on.
- 2) Be the captain of your destiny whenever the situation requires it:** whenever he faced a difficult situation, he didn't run around in circles but chose whatever option seemed the best to him.
- 3) Be resilient and try to never give up:** Throughout his life, my granddad always had plenty of resolve to finish every job he had to do. He was a very resilient man who never gave up unless he was forced to do so by an act of God.
- 4) There's no excuse for a shoddy job:** he always used to say that "sorry" is a word that you only reserve for your wife. In all other situations it showed him you were an incompetent dolt. He always advised us to be the best in one's job, however petty it may be.

## **Lessons in Manliness: Gerald L. Wiech**

by Eric Wiech



- US Navy
- 1st class aviation electronics technician.
- AT1 - E6
- Boeing
- Security Alarms Services

Gerald was born on March 14, 1951 in Monroe, MI. The middle of three brothers, his early years were spent working and playing on the nearby 200 acre farm of his grandparents. An experience that he thoroughly enjoyed. Until he was a teenager the family's household utilities included the pump handle water spicket in the kitchen sink, an outhouse, baths for the boys in a galvanized bucket in the kitchen, and a party phone line.

In 1969 he graduated from high school with 100 other classmates and moved to Fort Wayne Indiana to attend Sam's Technical Institute, where he received an Electronics Technician Certificate.

In 1971 with the Vietnam War in full swing, Gerald joined the Navy as an Aviation Electronics Tech. Following boot camp he went to the Navy's electronics school in Memphis, TN. While there, his mother was killed by a drunk driver 1 week before his graduation.

He followed through with his training and completed his final exam, received his orders, then went home on leave.

After a couple weeks on leave he headed to NAS Whidbey in Washington to report for the beginning of what would become nearly 21 years of service. He completed his first cruise of 9 months in 1973 aboard the USS Enterprise. This first cruise "wasn't too bad" he says. Twelve to fourteen hour days just rolled one into another, making the time pass.

Upon his return to Whidbey Island though, he would meet the woman he would marry at a local park, on Labor Day weekend 1972.

They would marry in 1974.

Jerry would go on a second cruise in 1974, aboard the USS Constellation. Being married only 6 months earlier made this cruise harder on him. For the next 6 months, pre-internet and satellite phones, they would only be able to converse through letters. "Time went by slow," he said.

In 1976 the first of his 3 sons was born. Another followed a year later and one more arrived in 1981.

In 1979 Jerry was discharged from the Navy, and got his start with the Boeing Company.

Then, in 1981, he Re-enlisted in the Navy. With more time in he would be eligible for retirement, and that's what he wanted. Jerry would commit himself to one weekend a month and one two week period every year for reserves.

(How many of us get angry when we have to work a Saturday? And that only happens once every 6 months or so.)

He enjoyed most his time in the Navy, even though “there were times when I didn’t want to do it anymore, but I knew I had to stick it out to get what I wanted.”

Once, during a month long trip to visit with relatives in Michigan, Jerry even took a weekend during his vacation to fulfill his Navy obligations at a local base. Following through on his commitment.

### **Choose Your Path, Commit to It, and Follow Through**

This was a simple re-occurring theme in his life.

Jerry would finally complete his commitment to the Navy and retire in 1994. It was the completion of 8 years of active service and 13 years of reserve duty. Thirteen years of never missing a weekend, or a 2 week commitment, while doing a great job for Boeing.

My parents, as of today, have been married for 36 years.

Jerry has also reached the time that he finally expects to retire from Boeing. After 31 years, he’s just waiting for the right time to call it good. He didn’t say, but I’m sure like most of us, he experienced inept bosses, belligerent co-workers, hard work, and long days. But he committed himself to his work.

This is what I realize now about my father. Unfortunately, it has taken too long for me to get. I have, like too many young men today, spent the better part of my life wandering. I’ve moved from job to job, no career, because jobs were so easy to come by. Because at different times, one seemed better than the other, because the boss changed and I didn’t like him, or because I just wanted to do something else. I’ve also often let my passion for my hobbies rule some of my decisions. I realize now, I would have been better off If I’d have **just committed** to a career path (among other things) and **followed through**. It took me a long time to get it, but I do. And I hope others will learn the lesson sooner than I did. I just hope that now, struggling for a real job during these economic hard times, I can remember the lesson next time I have a good job and things don’t go my way at work, or I wonder if the grass is greener somewhere else.

## **Lessons in Manliness: Dennis Cross**

by Abe Cross



Dennis Cross is a simple man who leads a simple life. He is a retiree from General Motors, getting out just before the turmoil of the auto industry began. He is a man of value, industry, and selflessness.

Born the youngest of four on a small farm, he learned that life was not necessarily going to be easy. None of his older siblings gave him any sympathy, so he learned early to look out for himself. His family never had much, but they made do. Born with a heart condition, he was told that sports were out of the picture. Being the stubborn little kid that he was, he decided that the doctors couldn't possibly know what they were talking about, and he proceeded to be a standout athlete. Sports were not his only extracurricular, though, as he landed the lead role his senior year in the high school play.

Shortly after high school, Dennis took a job in the factory. He married my mother, Linda, when they were 21 years of age. With a steady job and a lovely wife, he decided that it was time to start a family, so he set out to build his first house. He would work a long day in the factory, then head home to work on the house. He did not know the first thing about building houses, but he had gathered a wealth of know-how from growing up on the farm. Some time later, he finished his first house. He would go on to build three more of his own, as well as helping his friends build their own. Despite being so busy, he always found time to coach my little league baseball team.

Thirty years and two sons later, Dennis retired from the factory. He now spends his days growing a vegetable garden, growing fruit trees, hunting, and being outside all day long with his dog. He has two recliners in his barn, and he has company nearly everyday to fill his other chair. He has developed a symbiotic relationship with a neighbor, the local farmer, where he fixes farm equipment, and in turn gets beef, chicken, fresh eggs, produce, and a prime hunting location. He is loved and respected by many.

### **Dennis Cross's Lessons in Manliness**

#### **Be Yourself**

I have learned a great deal from my old man. I grew up afraid to get in trouble. He was strict in that sense, but never controlling. There were never any explicit rules in my house, but I was always expected to do the right thing. As I got older, I noticed that my parents started trusting me to make my own decisions, but I also knew that I would have to suffer the consequences of any bad decisions. From this, I learned to be my own person, which is a lesson that my dad constantly preached. In fact, it was probably the most common lesson from my father. He stressed this about relationships with friends and girlfriends alike. Be your own person. Do not let anyone else dictate who you are.

## **Family**

He was also a big family man. His family was not necessarily close. He did not want my brother and I to grow up in that kind of atmosphere. Because of this, he never let us argue or bicker or fight. He told us that we would be each others' best friend one day. Now, my brother and I enjoy a close relationship. The last time we got into a fight we were both in middle school, which is very unusual for brothers who are only one grade apart. I learned growing up that blood is thicker than water, and that my family would be there for me no matter what. I had to take an internship out of state last year, and being away from my family has been the hardest part. I know my dad was crushed when he found out. I used to visit my parents every Sunday, but I would only see them over the holidays if I took the internship. I knew that I had to be my own person, though, and I knew that my family would support me, so ultimately, I took the internship. Being gone has made me appreciate my dad even more, though. It has given me a chance to reflect on the kind of man that he is and the kind of man that I would like to be.

## **Service**

One of my high school friends stops by regularly after his midnight shift. My dad lent him money to get his CDL. He now has a comfortable job and the loan paid back in full, but he still stops by on a regular basis. He looks up to my dad as a father figure, because he never really had one. Another one of my college teammates spends the night there on Thursdays because he has class the next morning at the local college. He never leaves without first having a sausage and egg breakfast and pre-packed lunch in his hands, courtesy of my old man. During the winter, he plows the driveways of our neighbors (these are country driveways, mind you. Ours alone is literally almost a quarter-mile). In return he gets thank yous and cookies. He is selfless in his work for others, and I admire that. However, he always taught me to never let anyone take advantage of you. Serve others, but do not get taken advantage of.

## **Industry**

My old man is the hardest working person I know. Hands down, no ifs, ands or buts about it. He will go out in the morning and not come back in until dark. Once he sets out to do something, he does it, and he does not quit until the job is done. He also makes sure it is done right. I have learned to work hard, work fast, and work efficiently from him, but more importantly, I have learned to do the job right. Our neighbor decided to build a land bridge over his creek to access his property more easily, so he needed to put in a culvert. Halfway through the project, he was knocking on my dad's door. My dad drove down to his house, got on the backhoe, and finished the project. He does things right. Work hard, work fast, work right.

## **Conclusion**

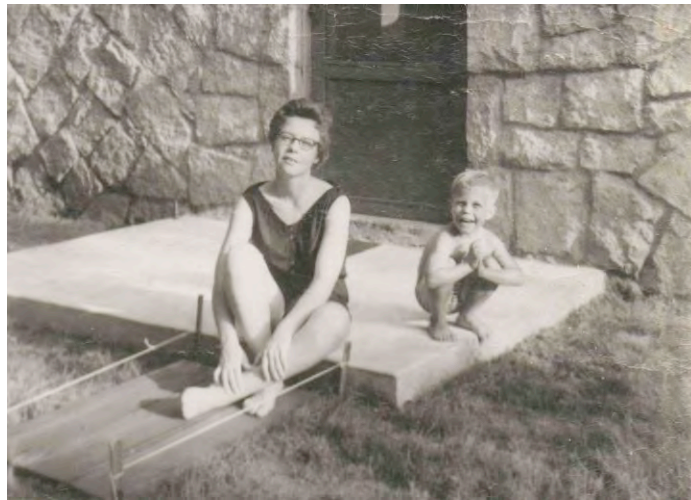
My dad has taught me more than I could possibly share. Be kind, but be strong. Stand up for your values, but do not step upon others'. Be confident, but be humble. Serve others, but do not get taken advantage of. Love your family, because they love you. Most importantly, be yourself. At the end of the day, the most flattering compliment I can get is to hear someone say that I am a chip off the old block.

## Lessons in Manliness: My Dad

by Zac Caudell



Born into a family of poor, hard-working farmers my father effectively absorbed all of their worthy virtues while managing to improve on any perceived shortcomings. He was born and raised in an area now known as a suburb of Atlanta; however, back then it was more aptly named “out in the country.” Both of his parents were born and raised during the Great Depression. They were poor sharecroppers who were accustomed to bare feet and hard work. The song *Song of the South* by the group Alabama paints a proper picture when it says, “Somebody told us Wall Street fell, but we were so poor that we couldn’t tell.” My grandfather says about his own childhood, “You knew we were poor because you could see the chickens under the house through the cracks in the floor.”



Growing up my dad lived an adventurous childhood, among which only the likes of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn may be compared. From teaching himself how to drive a straight shift while delivering eggs in his grandfather’s old truck, to trying to herd the cows in while on crutches days after a knee surgery, his childhood was not without outlandish experiences. His free time often consisted of such activities as throwing apples at hornet’s nests, tormenting cats, and swimming across the family pond despite it being an ideal habitat for water moccasins.

In his later childhood years, he developed a fascination and love for baseball that only someone who grew up during the golden era of America’s favorite pastime could appreciate. With players like Mickey Mantle, Roger Maris, Sandy Koufax, and Willie Mays how could one grow up wanting to become anything but a baseball player?

His cousin set him up on a date with the woman who would eventually become his wife. A few years later I was brought into the mix and thus I began a life of absorbing all that I could from the man who would teach me so much. Unfortunately, fathers have gained quite a bad reputation in recent years. The stereotype of the deadbeat dad has become commonplace. Fortunately for me, my dad was far from a deadbeat and not only taught me many important life lessons, but lived them out in front of me. This is a feat I am finding to be quite an arduous task now that I have a son of my own. Here are just a few of the lessons that stand out to me the most.

### **Hard Work – Anything Worth Doing Is Not Going To Be Easy**

Considering his background my father was destined to be taught the value of hard work. He has never once complained about something being difficult. He has just always accepted the task as a means to an end. Whether that end was supporting our family or a recreational pursuit, he always accepted the task with joy and gave it his all. When he had knee surgery as a teenager, he had to teach himself to rely more on his non-dominant left hand in basketball in order to lessen the strain on his weaker knee. As an adult he has enjoyed hunting and traditional archery. However, an injury caused him to be partially blind in his right eye, the one he relied upon for aiming. As a result, he had to relearn how to shoot a bow by teaching himself how to shoot left-handed. These are just a couple examples of the lengths he would go to in order to achieve something.



### **Honesty and Integrity – Do the Right Thing Despite the Consequences**

My dad always did what was right no matter the cost - no matter if it meant missing out on an opportunity or being falsely labeled a coward. On one occasion we went goose hunting on a relative's lake with a group of guys. The owner of the lake was particularly fond of a certain group of geese, but allowed us to hunt in order to remove the unwanted peskier geese. However, this information was not communicated clearly to my dad and me, and unbeknownst to us, we shot the wrong flock of geese. The other hunters seemed to know something we didn't and proceeded to cover up the evidence and played dumb when the owner asked what happened to his geese. My dad was the only one with the stones to stand up and tell him the truth. He endured a loss of trust and friendship from the owner (not to mention hunting privileges) and ridicule and disdain from the other hunters all for the sake of doing the right thing. But, he would have had it no other way.

### **Humility and Consideration for Others – Always Put Others First**

For the greater part of my life I thought that humility was thinking less of yourself, but my dad taught me through his life that it is not thinking less of yourself but rather thinking of yourself less. Humility is a bit of a catch-22. You can't have it and know that you have it at the same time. Therefore, you can't really teach it because in order to teach it you would have to know that you are humble and then be able to show others how to be humble. No one can say, "I am a humble person," and be telling the

truth. Only a person who truly puts others first with no consideration for himself can be a teacher of humility. This is my dad. His life exudes humility in such a way that it makes those around him feel like their own life is somehow more significant.

### **Don't Be a Pushover - Stand Up for What You Believe No Matter How Hard It Is**

When I was a kid I was extremely shy and often afraid to speak out against things that I knew were wrong. One day I came home from practice in a particularly distressed mood because one of my teammates had some very unpleasant things to say about my mom, and he wasn't just making yo' mama jokes. I was fuming on the inside but did nothing about it. My dad asked why I was so upset, and I told him what happened. He looked me straight in the eyes and holding back his own anger with all the strength he could muster he said, "If anyone ever talks that way about your mother again, you have my permission to beat the crap out of them." He gave me permission to get in a fight while at the same time communicating that I better have a darn good reason. I knew from that day forward that it was not only okay to stand up for yourself, but that it was required if I was ever to leave boyhood and become a man.

### **Be a Gentleman - Treat Women with Dignity and Respect**



I can't remember a time when my mom walked through a door without my dad holding it open for her. No matter how inconvenient it was to walk around the car, to drop what he was doing, or to cancel his own plans, he never missed a chance to serve my mom. And just as if there was nothing else he would rather do he would be smiling the whole time. It is a rare thing to see a man that treats women the way they ought to be treated. They are our mothers and our wives, our guardians and our best friends. They deserve all the dignity, respect, and service that we can offer. If ever there was a shining example of chivalry, it was my dad. He instilled this value in me despite my arguments against inconvenience, and I can only hope to be a fraction of the gentleman that he is.

## **Above All Things, Make God First in Your Life**

Of all the lessons that I learned from my dad, none are more important than this one. Any character trait that my dad bestows is one that God has placed in him and one that has been refined over many years. He attributes any successes that he has to God's loving grace. Not only does he show the outward marks of a man of God (discipline in studying the Bible, serving in the church, giving to those in need, etc.), but it is quite obvious that on the inside he is a fully devoted follower of Jesus. More than any other aspect of my dad's life this is the one trait that I will forever try to exemplify in my own life. If I obtain only a fraction of the godliness my dad displays, then I shall consider my own life well lived.

## **Lessons in Manliness: Coach Eddie Roberts**

by Chris Hutcheson



### **Coach Eddie Roberts**

*Joe Cope, Chris Hutcheson, Matthew Rabine, Michael Baker, Sean Murphy*



*One day a man was walking along the beach when he noticed a boy picking something up and gently throwing it into the ocean.*

*Approaching the boy, he asked, "What are you doing?"*

*The youth replied, "Throwing starfish back into the ocean. The surf is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them back, they'll die."*

*"Son," the man said, "don't you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? You can't make a difference!"*

*After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it back into the surf. Then, smiling at the man, he said...*

*"I made a difference for that one."*

*-Loren Easley*

A simple parable with a simple message. And yet, for the men of the Lee University Rugby Team, the story of the boy and the starfish carries great weight. When it was first told to us by the man we all know simply as *Coach*, it immediately rang true. So many men who came through our rugby program felt the impact of one man's actions, like so many starfish in the hands of one compassionate young boy.

Rugby is a unique kind of sport. For those that understand its intricacies, it balances a seemingly unnatural blend of unhinged violence with gentlemanly honor in a way that no other sport can. We always saw it as a war in the most literal sense. Eighty minutes of glory every Saturday was the reward for hours of practice filled with blood, sweat, broken bones, torn ligaments, burning lungs and sore muscles, and it was always worth the cost. But up to this point, this could still be any man's story. After all, we all have our glory day tales of athletic victory. But the men of Lee Rugby, who now consider each other brothers, left Lee University with so much more than a rugby education and a few cool scars. We left outfitted for life. Coach Roberts taught us the burden of great responsibility, and he equipped us to overcome any obstacle presented to us. In short, Eddie Roberts taught us to be men. The memories of Coach that the men of Lee Rugby share could fill the pages of so many books. What follows is just a glimpse of his impact, voiced by some of those who felt it the most.



“To Whom Much is Given, Much is Required”

## **Joe Cope**

I've always referred to Coach as my "dad-away-from-dad." This in no way detracts from my own father, who is, in my opinion, the best father I could ask for. A player and his coach have a special kind of relationship, though. It is similar to a father/son relationship, but different in that the player/coach relationship has distinct traits for different situations. Coach took that to a whole new level. He would never hesitate to remind us that during practice, he was our coach and expected nothing short of our *very* best, no excuses. He also made sure that we knew that outside of the rugby world, he would take a bullet for any one of his players. He has proven his commitment to his players time and again, and continues to do so to this day. A few years ago his job took him three hours away to Alabama. He still made it to at least one practice a week and every game for an entire year after that. Today, three years later, when the current coach isn't available, Coach can be counted on to drive six hours round trip to run a two hour practice, and he travels to most of the games on the weekends as well, sometimes bringing his two daughters along if his wife is working. Because of his commitment to us, we all did everything in our power to play our hearts out for him whenever we set foot on the rugby pitch. Because of the respect he commanded on the field, we still joke that he could tell any of us to this day – years after we've graduated – to "get on the line!" and no matter where we are, how we are dressed, or what we are in the middle of, we'll *find* a line and get ready to run.

However, that wasn't enough for Coach. That only mattered in the rugby setting. More than our performance on the field, he cared about us as individual men in our day-to-day lives. He coached us during the early years of the rugby program at Lee, while we were still trying to make a name for ourselves: a team of gentlemen playing a barbarian's sport for a Christian university. He wanted us to give the university a reason to keep us around. Even more than that, he wanted us to be upstanding citizens of society in every situation, because that is our duty as Christian men.

I will always remember Coach's seemingly endless list of connections. If you are looking to network your way into just about any area, and you are privileged enough to call Coach Roberts a friend, he undoubtedly knows someone there. He has been the number one reference on every job application I've submitted since I've known him (and I know I'm not alone in that). If any players ever came to Coach with a need, we could count on him to "make a few phone calls" and sometimes mere minutes later, he would have a result for us. In fact, when I needed a summer job so I could stay at school and pick up some classes, Coach quickly called in a few favors and next thing I knew I was in business. I could tell quite a few stories just like that, but to some of my other teammates, he has done much more. He has stood as a groomsman (and a best man) in his players' weddings, been the starting point of contact for several players careers, and he has been there as a rock for many of my other teammates during very tragic times, offering prayer, sage advice, or just a friend to talk to.

I know I speak for any and all Lee Rugby alumni when I say that Coach Eddie Roberts is one of my best friends, and as a fiery, driven, Christian man, he is a definite role model.

## **Matthew Rabine**

Eddie Roberts has been a great influence in my life, especially within the last six years. From coaching rugby, to mentoring, to walking with me through tough times, "Coach" (as we like to call him) has been there every step of the way.

In July of 2007, both my young wife and unborn son died due to pregnancy complications. At that

point in my life, it was the worst event I had ever had to endure. When one goes through such an event, one discovers things about the people in one's family and circle of friends. One of these things is who truly cares and who does not. As effortless and as easy as a call seems to be, I can tell from experience that a simple phone call, e-mail, letter, or any other form of communication can be very significant to the person for whom it is intended. Unfortunately, many people do not understand this notion, and fail completely at this. When news broke out about my little family's demise, Coach did not fail to give me a call many times to check up on me, or to simply get my mind to think about other things, even though he has a family and a life of his own to tend to. These actions, to me, were priceless.

Coach Eddie Roberts has proven time and again in many situations to be the man that many strive to be, but fail miserably. If I ever marry again, it will be my honor to include him in my wedding, as it will be an extremely special day for many reasons.

### **Michael Baker**

Coach is an amazing man to such an extent that it is impossible to explain in a single story or event. Less than two months after I began playing rugby for Coach my mother was diagnosed with cancer. He immediately put a hand on my shoulder and led the team in a prayer. He and his connections have provided me with two jobs. He took me on my first hunting trip with a few of the other guys. He has always made himself available and has never asked for anything in return. He is the most loyal and dedicated of friends. He was the only person I considered to stand by me as my best man on the most important day of my life. And now that I have children of my own he has done even more for me. He has set a standard of what it means to be a man. Without him I wouldn't be the man, husband, father and soldier that I am today.

### **Sean Murphy**

Eddie Roberts is a man who has more than earned the title of "Coach." To those who played for him, he will forever be known as simply as Coach. Coach means a lot to me. He is a man who has wiped up my blood, set broken bones into place, taken me hunting, been a witness for my wedding, and has shown me what manliness is. When I was with Coach, and I know other guys will agree, it seemed like whatever happened, it would be okay. Those who played for him were treated as sons. I know there were many times that we played when we were playing not for a win or for fun, but rather we were playing for Coach. Coach was an inspiration and when I found myself playing to make him proud, I discovered that those were my best performances.

However, the story about Coach that I want to share does not take place on the rugby pitch. Recently, Coach offered some words of encouragement that will stay with me forever. I was getting ready to board a plane and fly into a nightmarish situation concerning my family. Just before getting on the plane, I received a call from Coach. He had heard what had happened and wanted to let me know that he was thinking of me and my family. Then, Coach said in a sentence what others could not have said in a book. Coach said, "Go put your hero hat on." In that instant, I knew what I had to do. I did not necessarily know how to do it, but I knew I had to be a man and do what I had to. Those simple words brought peace into my mind while going into a situation without any peace.

Coach is a man who never asked for recognition for his impact in our lives or his immeasurable contributions to our team; but he deserves more recognition and thanks than we can give. His legacy will live on through each one of the lives that he has impacted. His greatness is seen through the lives

of those were privileged to call him Coach.

## **Chris Hutcheson**

Many of us have often discussed our long term plans for repaying Coach for his immense sacrifices. Talk of custom engraved double barreled shotguns, globetrotting duck hunts, and bronzed rugby game balls always ensues. Unfortunately, I haven't hit the big time quite yet, so my personal plans for a double-life sized statue carved from a single block of solid granite placed inconspicuously in the middle of Lee University's campus have yet to materialize. I'll start with a quick written tribute. Baby steps.

For me personally, it was not being on the receiving end of Coach Robert's natural tendency to give of himself that had the greatest impact on my life. The greatest lessons I have learned from Coach come not from hearing the many choice bits of wisdom he spoke, but from witnessing firsthand the impact a man's character can have on those around him. Find a Lee Rugby alum, and without doubt you will see in his life the influence of Eddie Roberts. When the Lee Rugby organization was at a breaking point, about to collapse, Eddie Roberts became the glue that held it together. When a rugby alum was looking to start a career, Eddie Roberts became their agent. When a teammate fell on hard times financially, Eddie Roberts became their stimulus package. When a rugby brother lost a loved one, Eddie Roberts became much needed counsel in dark times. In short, Coach Eddie Roberts was what we needed when we needed it, every time. For me, he has and continues to be a coach, mentor, confidante, and friend of the highest rate, and I know I will never be able to repay him. There is not a player who has come through the Lee Rugby program during his tenure who does not owe Eddie Roberts a debt of gratitude, not only for his dedication and sacrifice as a coach, but for the legacy of greatness that he inspired in the men of Lee Rugby which will continue to grow for years to come.



## **Lessons in Manliness: Bob Stroup**

by Nate Stroup



My father, Bob Stroup, has taught me a lot about manliness. He has always worked the job that was necessary to help provide for his family, which consisted of my Mom, my younger brother, and me. Sometimes that meant working the night shift at a printing company and only being able to see my mom for a short period of time during the day.

Later, he tried to better his situation by starting his own business, a drive through convenience store (or Pony Keg, as they call it in the Cincinnati area). He had this business for over 15 years, and I believe the stress of it took a few years off of his life. It was often hard to have good employees in that type of business. There were days when he would be at the job from before it opened at 9:00 AM until after it closed at 1:00AM because employees were not always reliable in showing up at that kind of business.

He would often have to go in for at least part of the day on holidays and weekends. I remember a large portion of my childhood where he just looked tired. Dad never used that as an excuse to not play with us, help us with homework, sit and talk with us, or show up for many of my high school wrestling matches. I believe that this has molded the way I approach being a father, now that I have two small kids of my own.

We often ate dinner a bit later in the evening, but we did it together. Being an avid do-it-yourselfer, Dad also did many of the repairs on our house, like plumbing, electric, and painting, as well as maintenance on the cars to keep them running well. He did things like this primarily to save money, so he could send my brother and I to a good high school, and me to a good college.

He never asked for anything for holidays or birthdays, often joking "I just want two good kids." He showed me that you just didn't waste things, using everything up to and past its usefulness. Dad is never shy with showing my Mom affection, not being afraid to give her a kiss or hold hands in public. This has been a good model for my marriage.

After Dad sold his business, he has been able to pursue a couple of manly hobbies, namely cycling and carpentry. He could probably beat me in a bicycle race now and can build things out of wood that I wouldn't even be able to figure out how to do. We even go out paintballing every now and then. He is back to working in printing now. He gets to work very early so that he can be back early enough to see his grandkids that my Mom watches a few days of the week.

From a physical standpoint, he has shown me strength in how he handled a heart attack about three years ago, having been able to get himself back up to full strength in a period of time that was impressive to friends, family, and doctors. I would say that Dad has taught me many important aspects of manliness through all of this: perseverance, determination, caring, strength, a sense of humor, being humble, keeping your priorities straight, honesty, and that hard work will get you where you want to be.

## Lessons in Manliness: Halldor Bjornsson

by Kári Gautason



My grandfather, Halldór Björnsson, was born on the 5th of April 1930. He was born in a turf house, the eldest of six siblings. He was born to Björn Metúsalemsson and Ólafía Einarsdóttir who were well to do sheep farmers. Their homestead, Svinabakkar had been in the family for three generations at the time when my grandfather entered this world. Their turf cottage was only few dozen square feet. Once when I asked him how it was to live there he told me it was good, although his duvet froze to the wall during the winter.

Grandfather was raised during the recession and had to learn from an early age to take responsibility and step up. A good example of that when he was 14 years of age his father went blind. From that point on he was the man of the house, he took care of the sheep, his smaller siblings and his blind father. My grandfather never told me this, I heard this from my dad after grandfather had passed away. It was then that I realized what being a man is all about. **It's about taking care of your own and not bragging about it. Just do what you have to do.**

He left for farmer college in the fall of 1948 and graduated two years later; he then bought a part of his

family land from his mother. He had found a wife and together with the help of his brothers they built the family homestead. He started out small, a few cows and a flock of sheep. Every year he did a little bit better; he made small improvements. Small steps on the way to his goal. Today the farm is one of the most productive in the whole country.

In the coming decades of his life his farm was expanded and when he passed away in the winter of 2003 the unplowed swathes of land that he had bought when he was in his early twenties were bountiful paddocks. He had raised five children, sent them to college and they had had grandchildren. He had outlived his wife who had passed away four years earlier.

He taught me a lesson about hard work. When I think I am having a hard time, I think to my grandfather. Who had raised two girls with brittle bones syndrome (his wife also had brittle bones). Who had toiled through the difficult years when he was building his farm. His big, thick hands bore marks of being well used.

He taught me the most valuable lesson of all, **to persevere when the future looks bleak**. As he did the spring of '79 when pack ice made the short growing season in Iceland even shorter.

He passed away in the most graceful manner, he went home from the stable, one night, because he was feeling tired. At that venerable age, seventy three, he still worked on the farm. He took a nap which he did not wake up from. He had a heart attack in his sleep.

My grandfather is an inspiration to me to this day.

*The picture above is of me and my grandfather in the summer of 2003. His last summer, he worked throughout the summer on the farm.*



*My grandfather's house and outhouse. The first houses built on this plot of land back in 1956. They were mostly built by my grandfather and my grandmother.*

## **A True Goal: To Become a Man Like This**

By Dan



"If you could be anything, what would you be?"

I'm always proud of my answer to this question. Many people would, without hesitation, answer with such responses as "movie star," "millionaire," "quarterback for the Patriots," etc. However, my answer to this question trumps all of those. If I could be anything, it would be a husband and father who people feel the same way about as people feel about MY father. Simple, right?

I mean, he is loved by so many. He is admired and respected by his friends, colleagues, and even casual acquaintances. But what did he do to garner this type of respect and admiration? He didn't fight in a war. He wasn't the CEO of a Fortune 500 company. He didn't give millions to charity. He never passed legislation (not directly anyway, although he had a hand in it).

No, what my father did was something that I can't really explain with any other word other than altruism. Although some would argue that altruism doesn't exist, because all actions are taken in one way or another for selfish reasons, he is the closest you could come to an altruistic man. The work he did for others and the dedication to being serviceable to his fellow man, all while being a loving and devoted father and husband is why I use him as the model for everything I still hope to be.

He is the oldest of 10 children, and was the only one to head off to college after high school, where he began in accounting and then achieved a degree in teaching. He spent his entire life devoted to education in his home state of Maine, first by educating children, and soon moving into what would be an almost 30 year career of educating adults. Upon his retirement (which came all too early due to blindness and other health issues), he received many letters from those he had helped over the years to make something better of their lives. The tales in the letters are of how those who wrote would probably not be where they were today were it not for my father giving them second and third chances to not only get the education they needed, but also giving them the guidance in their personal lives that they sorely missed from those who should have given it.

In addition to his dedication to adult education, he also served in other roles to help those less fortunate. He helped the poor obtain proper housing, kept books for local businesses without requesting payment, gave personal guidance and assistance in housing upgrades for the impoverished, always tithed a portion of his salary to the church, never turned away anyone in need, and always offered the most solid advice....all of this while being the best, most available, loving and supportive father and husband a man could be.

At home, he could build it, fix it, mend it...what have you. He taught me how to frame a structure, how to build a deck, how to plant a garden, chop and cord wood, restore the interior of a Corvette, and cook

some of the best meals you'll ever taste. We never felt like we had to compete for his time. He was always there for us, at our sports practices, helping coach, even being an umpire (on and off the field). He stuck by us through rough teenage years, and was a source of constant support and strength through college and into our adult lives.

Even today, without the help of his eyesight, he continues to dedicate his free time to educational programs for those who need it. He spends time with local poor families to help them make repairs to their homes. He gives people guidance with their finances. He is always rolling up his sleeves to lend a hand, all while being a loving husband, father, and grandfather. He has received many awards for his work, including those presented by the US President's First Lady, he's been recognized in local television and newsprint stories, and has collected a pile of accolades, almost none of which are on display at all. It wasn't about that for him. He's done right by others and by his family, and has done good for countless strangers. To this day, I can find no man more inspirational in his treatment of others, and while this brief writing cannot fully do justice to the things this man has done, it is a beginning.

## **This Amazing Guy**

by Darin Jackson



My father is the greatest man I know. Books were never his forte, but he has the common sense and street smarts that every man needs that no book can ever teach you. He has come from a place where hearing gunshots was not unusual; to a place where you can leave your front door wide open without a second thought.

He grew up playing basketball and was revered as one of the best players in the city at that time, and taught me everything I know. As he got into his 30's he took up racquetball, and became one of the best in the area, being sponsored at one time by Head. But after he shattered his patella tendon going after a ball during a game, he had no choice (after a 2 year hiatus) but to take up bowling, pool, and finally, golf. He is awesome at pool and was once a great bowler. (Still working on the golf thing, though).

He started his life coming up in a rough neighborhood, with 5 other brothers (3 of which are still living), a loving mother, and an abusive, alcoholic father. He has taken what he's learned from his past, and used it to be a better father than he has ever known. He does not drink, and has never lifted a hand to my mother or myself. I wonder how he can grow up the way he did, and turn out as great as he has. He has never been anything but supportive toward the things I've been into. Back in August he retired from Wachovia after 36 years at the age of 60. He turned down numerous promotions over those 36 years. He told me, "The higher up you go, the more stressed out you get, and the more work you are responsible for, and its just not worth it." That decision is one that I think is so valuable, because you can't put a price on your happiness, and he found a place that made him happy, and he stuck with it.

I look up to him more than he will ever know. He is my hero, and I hope that I am as great a dad as he has been to me. Everyone that I know through him has nothing but the best things to say about his character and what an amazing person he is, and what a competitive athlete he was. He takes care of my myself and my mom, and he always says, "What's mine, is yours." He is never in a bad mood, and wakes up every morning with a smile on his face because he knows where he has been, and doesn't take the things he has now, for granted.

I couldn't possibly say enough great things about him and how much he has been there for me, my mom, and his family and friends. The way he goes about his everyday life speaks volumes for his character and I am extremely proud to have him as my father.

## **Lessons in Manliness: David Alexander Cox**

by Colby Cox



David Alexander Cox

Born July 1946

A stand-out athlete in football, basketball, and track and field

Graduated from Caesar Rodney High School 1964

Attended Frederick College in Virginia for a year and a half and later obtained an accounting degree from Del-Tech College in his home state of Delaware.

Army Reservist

Career as a Delaware State Trooper for twenty-five years.

Father of two sons, husband for forty-one years (and counting).

Avid Golfer (carries a five handicap at age 63 and still hammers the drive)

## **Lesson in Manliness from David Cox**

### **Every person deserves respect**

My father was a career Delaware State Trooper and interacted with all types of people, including criminals and those down on their luck. It would have been easy to treat these individuals as lesser or sub-par, but Dad treated everyone the same - with respect.

I recall a story he told me of his early days on the road, when he responded to an accident scene with a car on fire. The local firemen were already there, but they could not get near the blaze because the very belligerent and extremely drunk driver was keeping them at bay with threats of violence. My father called out to the man, who froze in his tracks and replied, "Trooper Cox - Is that you?" When Dad assured the man it was him and that he had some cigarettes to share, the man simply walked over to my father to have handcuffs placed on him. Dad had always treated this man fairly and with respect in past encounters, and it helped in diffusing the situation at hand.

My mother told me she and Dad recently were leaving a restaurant when my father was approached by a very disheveled looking guy. The man was happy to see my father and they struck up a conversation and talked as if they were old friends. When my mother later asked dad how he knew the person, my father said, "I locked that guy up so many times that I lost count." She was somewhat surprised to hear that because my father treated him like a long lost pal.

### **Doing the good thing is the right thing to do.....**

My brother and I were fortunate to have the best little league coach growing up - our father. He always made time for us to have a catch or to throw some batting practice, even after long hours at work. Thanks to little league rules, we automatically ended up on his team, but we were always confused by some of Dad's choices in players. A lot of the boys we played with had little or no baseball skills whatsoever. It was not until later in life that my mom explained this to me: Dad always picked the kids for his teams that no other coaches wanted to deal with. Looking back now, I recall having to leave for practice an hour early so my father could pick up two or three teammates. He did this because if he had not, their parents would not have gotten them there.

My father has always been part of local crews that deliver turkeys and toys for kids during the holidays. He is an active member of the Lions Club, and I have often been over at his house when he has fielded calls from people requesting eyeglasses and eye exams.

I asked Dad once what was his favorite case during his career as a Trooper. I figured I would get a juicy story about one of his homicide investigations or the time he shot a man wanted for murder. Instead, he told me that the best event was when he took a box of presents and food to a large, poor family during Christmas. He said that the reaction he received from the kids that day was the best moment of his job.

### **.....And doing the right thing can be tough**

Mom has often told me that the most emotional time she ever witnessed my dad go through was the night he came home from work with a picture of a four year old boy in his hand. He handed the picture of this badly battered child to her and was visibly shaken. Dad was interviewing the child when the

boy's father - the man who had abused him - entered the room. The boy jumped up in Dad's lap and hugged him, seeking protection from his own flesh and blood. This had a dramatic impact on my father's life, but that is Dad's way - even when it is tough to do so, the good action is the only action taken.

When anyone needs help, Dad never hesitates to do what he can. He does his best to set aside his own emotions and needs in order to make someone else's load a little lighter.

### **Actions Speak Louder than Words**

Stories about David Cox's deeds rarely come from him. If you can get more than ten words out of his mouth then you are achieving something special. I was fortunate enough to grow up around him and learn from him that talk is cheap. It is your actions that tell others what you are about.

There have been more times than I can count when I have been approached by people and told about the time Dad visited them in the hospital, dropped something off to their house, or just called them to say hello and wish them well. If they had not said anything, I would never have known.

My brother Chester and I are very proud to be the sons of David Cox. We were fortunate to have him as our personal guide into manhood. The lessons we learned from him, that everyone should be respected, doing good is tough but rewarding, and actions speak louder than words have been remembered and instilled in our lives. Hopefully these teachings will be passed down to our two sons and be incorporated into their lives as well, courtesy of their Poppy, Dave Cox.



## **Lessons in Manliness: Loushion "Luke" Smith**

by David Wyant



Grandpa Luke in uniform, 1947

My grandfather, Luke Smith, was born in 1923 in Hardy, KY. He was the ninth born to a family of 13 children, and when the Depression came, my grandfather did his part to help. At the age of just 14 (1937), he went down into the mines to harvest the coal that ran America at the time. He worked in the mines until 1941 when the Japanese stormed Pearl Harbor. He went straight to the recruiting office and enlisted, even going as far as to lie about his age (the Army still thinks he was born in '22). He fought all the way through the WWII, entirely in the Pacific Theater. He fought all the way through Korea, by that time achieving a modestly high rank. He pulled through the first parts of the Vietnam War before retiring in the early sixties. Some of his medals (he had quite a few, these are just a few) include the bronze star for bravery, WWII victory medal, two purple hearts (wounded, Okinawa, JP), various medals for active duty, and quite a few marksman awards. After retirement, my grandfather volunteered much of his spare time to a printing factory that made braille bibles for the blind. He never had any children of his own with his first wife, who passed away in the late 1980's. He married my grandmother in 1992 (she was previously widowed herself) just a few months after I was born, so he was the only grandfather I knew on that side of my family. I would go to visit him as much as my mother would facilitate just to be around him and my grandmother. He was one of those men who would love to answer questions and tell these cool stories all the time, and when he wasn't doing that, he would do yard work or enjoy a western or two. Grandpa Luke Smith passed away in 2006 from

complications of pneumonia and Alzheimer's; he was 83 years old.

I'm not that wonderful of a writer, so here are some of the many lessons I got from him. They'll be short as there are quite a few, but I hope you enjoy.

### **Be content with what you have**

Growing up in the depression, my grandfather believed this to be true. Any time he would see me pester my mom for a toy or something when I was younger he would give this grin and then tell us to show pride in what we have, not dismay over our shortcomings. He himself took such good care of his personal items that when he passed away in 2006, he was still wearing clothes and using personal items he had since he was in his twenties.

### **Be Thrifty**

If you don't have something, don't get bent out of shape about it. That was one of his lessons I didn't understand at the time, but now at the age of seventeen I do. He had a little tool bench in the garage, and whenever he or my grandmother needed something, rather than go to the store he would fashion many small things. He was an avid recycler and could find ways to reuse many things, whether it was to make a birdfeeder from the top half of an empty two liter bottle or use coffee cans to store small things.

### **Organization is key**

Everything had its place for Grandpa Luke, he knew where everything was all the time, even after being diagnosed with Alzheimer's he could still find it all. His closet was the most organized thing I had ever seen, nothing was out of place, his clean pressed suits were hanging loosely in the back, shirts, pants all hung neatly, and his suspenders and ties were all on wooden racks he had. His desk was spotless, not a dull pencil or stray piece of paper anywhere. This is another lesson he tried to teach me that clicked later on, as I can sometimes be a shy bit disorganized and flustered.

### **Take care of your things, they take care of you**

Classic military man teaching, but coming from him it meant a lot. He always made sure his clothes were maintained and in order or his pickup had its annual oil change. He also took very good care of the house and lawn, all the way until he was about 79, then he got to where he had to hire help. All of his tools were always well oiled or properly stored to keep them away from water and the elements. His tool bench never had so much as an extra screw left out on it and everything was on its rack.

### **Take care of yourself and keep clean**

Grandpa Luke was sick most of the time when I was young, mostly with pneumonia. When we would visit him in the hospital he would tell my brothers and I to stay healthy, fit, and clean. He was always a dapper man, his morning routine was admirable. He always had nice, clean, pressed clothing even when he was relaxing. He still had most of his own teeth by age 83, something I am striving to do myself. He would steam his suits once in awhile just to make sure they stayed free of dust and

wrinkles, something I myself do at home.

### **General life lessons, family matters**

Grandpa Luke always showed up at every family event, rain or shine. Coming from that massive family, he had heavy family values, and he always made sure to reflect them on all of us. When his Alzheimer's struck, he would spend the majority of his day making memory books, filling them with photographs and writing pages and pages of stories from his childhood, all the way up until the week before he passed on. He took great care to make sure he told everyone that he loved them very much, and he meant it, he had a hug that would genuinely tell you so.



Grandpa Luke and all the grandkids, 2005.

As I sit here writing this, listening to the Ink Spots (a group he liked), my memories of him keep coming back. I miss him very much, but I am glad I had the memories I did with him, and learned many things I'll take with me for the rest of my life. He was a wonderful, good-hearted man who experienced so much in his life. He was from the world's greatest generation, and it showed greatly. I try to reflect his standards and that of his generation in general in my life, and I try to show others my age that it's not all about living in the moment. I am honored to have known Grandpa Luke, and I hope you enjoyed this brief article about him. Thank you.

## **My Veteran's Day Hero**

By Dave



My hero is my father, David L. Carson, Sr. He excelled as a student and a musician and went to college on a music scholarship. His dream was to be a music teacher. When the Korean War happened, he switched majors so he could finish school early. As he put it, "I couldn't play trombone in a dance band while my friends were off fighting."

He didn't make it to the war, but did do a tour of duty in Korea a few years later. He became an Army aviator and met my mother during flight school. Both my brother and I were born there at Fort Rucker and grew up to the sounds of helicopters. He went to Vietnam the first time in 1965 with the First Cavalry Division. That was the division in "We Were Soldiers." I remember him mentioning in a letter the fighting in the Ia Drang Valley, although I'm not sure how much his aerial rocket artillery battery was involved in the battles at LZ X-Ray and LZ Albany.

His greatest achievement as a commander was getting his men home safely. One story I heard later was how a higher-ranking officer demanded the use of a helicopter and crew to "hunt VC." My Dad said he would be glad to take the man out himself, but would not risk his men so stupidly. He was relieved of his command by the man, but later reinstated when the facts came out. His nickname was "Mad-Dog Dave."

Dad stayed in the Army because he loved to fly. He did another tour in Vietnam, and we were also stationed in Turkey, where he was the senior adviser to the Turkish Army aviation program. While not a talented linguist, Dad worked hard to learn Turkish and practiced it with everyone he met, including his driver Mustafa. We enjoyed being there and experiencing Turkish hospitality, culture, and history.

In his later Army years and after military retirement in 1976, Dad worked on a lot of projects that continue to bear fruit to this day, such as establishing CENTCOM and the National Testing Center. He died in 1993 fighting lung cancer and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. I miss him.

I believe this is one of the planes Dad flew while stationed at Redstone Arsenal in 1968 and remember him mentioning flying Wernher Von Braun around occasionally. He also flew one of these from the factory in Kansas to Turkey:



What I learned from Dad was the reward of a life of duty. He put aside what he loved to do what was

needed by the nation and his friends and found a greater love. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

## **Lessons in Manliness: Richard Cook**

by Brandon Cook



My grandfather, Richard Cook is a real man. He was adopted at a young age although he wasn't told about it until recently. He's been taking it pretty well aside from the fact that he refuses to celebrate his new REAL birthday. Don't ask me how that even happened.

He's a Patriot and a fighter. He snuck into the military to serve his country even after they told him he was too small to be any use to his country. Determined to be of service to his country, that night he sat down and ate his weight in bananas. The next day he weighed in just barely making the weight requirement to enlist. To this day he will not even look at a banana.

He didn't just fight for his country, he also fought for what's right. While in the war, three of his team were pinned down in a rice field, at the bottom of a valley, surrounded by the enemy. His commanding officer ordered him to leave them there because they were as good as dead anyway. My grandfather promptly told his commanding officer where he could go and went in after them. He crawled on his hands and knees and one by one, got all three of those men out of there. Two survived, the third was already dead and buried later.

Lastly, he's a survivor. For years he has been fighting his own heart to stay alive. Every other time I go to see him he's in the hospital with some doctor telling him he's not going to make it or that he'll be in bed for the rest of his life. But every time he pulls through and keeps on going.

My grandfather has taught me that a real man fights for what he believes in. A real man fights for what's right. A real man Never gives up and Never gives in.

## **Lessons in Manliness: John B. Syphrit II**

by John F. Syphrit



Throughout my 60 years I have had many men that I consider leaders that have helped me through the many short crises that I've had. All of them except for one have been much older than me. Most of the time the help and guidance that I received were nothing more than a walk and a talk. I then knew what I had to do to solve my "crisis."

The one man that stands out that influenced me and showed me the art of manliness more than any man was that one man that was much younger than me. He provided more than a walk and a talk. This man fits the bill in the art of manliness. Let me explain.

Two years ago I was down and depressed. I had a job. But the person who I worked for was always threatening to fire me for one reason or the other on a daily basis. I can't begin to tell you how that eats at you. Day in and day out I was always receiving the daily threat. I of course was experienced and dealt with it by taking it and keeping it in because I needed the job. Having to do this eats at you consistently and finally breaks you down. I tried for a year and a half to find another job. But the economy and probably my age was the extending factor that made me, in my thoughts, feel like a failure. I was hurting and no one knew except for this one man.

I had known this man for many years. I watched this man grow up. We only talked every week or so. The communication was short and to the point on whatever the subject was. But, as I would find out later this was a man that was growing and had the foundation that would instill balance in his life for years to come. His father was there and provided everything that he would need. Guidance on communication with other persons, balance in family and in work, and how to help others in need.

One day I was talking to this man about his travels and how his life was unfolding. He was very accomplished; he had graduated from high school, graduated from under-grad school, got a job at a foreign embassy in Washington, DC, went into the military as an officer, did a tour in the Middle East and was stationed in two other foreign countries, got married, came back and got his MBA, got out of the military with the rank of Captain, and finally got a prestigious position with the US Government. He had really built a life for himself and his family. I sat there in admiration as he told me of his experiences.

He then asked me how my life was. I responded with an ok. He pressed. I said, "It's nothing that I can't handle and it's just temporary and I'm ok." I really didn't believe that he could help me anyway. He then said, "No, I've been watching you for awhile and things are not right with you. What's wrong?" I kept pushing to leave it alone and he kept pushing for me to talk. Finally I told him of the troubles I was having with my job, how I couldn't find another job, how that was eating at me every day and I really thought that sooner or later this guy is going to fire me and I'm going to lose my house and and... He stopped me. He began by explaining to me that, "You've been working for this guy for many years. If this guy was going to fire you he would have already done so. Also, as far as finding another job...that will come in time and that I will be there to help you with the job search. You're letting this guy take your manhood and self esteem away. Don't let that happen. I am here, and besides I would never let anything happen to my Dad." At that moment the pride that I felt was unlimited. Pride that my

son was successful and happy. He had made himself into a man. As proud as any Father could ever be. My Son had become a man and in doing so help me keep my manhood.

## **Lessons in Manliness: Roy Mitchel**

by John Mitchel



Factory worker

Minister

Family Man

Numerous people have carried a more impressive billing than my father, Roy Mitchel. While my dad never fought in war, never took the helm of a Fortune 500 Company, and never served in public office, but my dad taught his sons valuable lessons.

Born in Bremen, Indiana in July of 1957 to Raymond and Viola Mitchel and humble beginnings, my father rose above the circumstances. His mother abandoned the family when he was 7 years old leaving my father Roy and his 4 year old brother. Raymond, a truck driver, was frequently gone leaving his sons to fend for themselves. As soon as he was able, my dad started working in a local grocery store in order to buy food and clothing.

Despite these hardships, my father graduated high school with honors in 1970. Over the next several years my father would occupy numerous jobs. After beginning to attend a local church, he eventually found his calling as a minister. He began to travel to various locations and eventually found himself in Fairbanks, Alaska preaching for the Church of Christ.

In Alaska, he met my mother, Susan Fry on August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1983 and married her 41 days later. After the better part of twenty-seven years, they are still happily married.

My father has two children, my older brother Roy II and myself. The two of us couldn't have asked for a better role model and father.





In 1997, my mother was in a car accident which fractured her spine. For years and many surgeries and procedures, my father dutifully stayed with his wife taking care of her and assisting her in whatever way possible.

### **Stand Up For What you Believe In**

**“When you tell them you’re going to do the right thing and it makes them mad at least you’ll hear them mumbling ‘He stands up for what he believes in,’ when you walk away.”-Roy Mitchel**

When my brother Ted played Little League Baseball, dad never let him miss church to play in a game. He always made him leave early. He would pick him up even if it was his turn to bat. Many coaches argued about “throwing Ted off the team” and all kinds of other threats, but my dad never gave into their bluffs. Like a true man, everybody else knew what was important to him and he wasn’t about to compromise.

**“If you ever get ganged up on, make sure you hit the guy with the biggest mouth first.”-Roy Mitchel**

When I was around 10 years old, dad walked to the corner store to pick up some milk. My dad walks with a cane and was even at this point, gray-haired. Outside the store was a local gang of teenagers playing tough guy. One of them said to my dad, “Hey! We never said you could go in!” As the six of them circled around, my dad flipped over his cane and said “You do this, kid and at least one of you (and probably more) are going to have to go to school and tell all your friends how a gray-haired, hobbling, fat old man kicked your butt!” Needless to say, the kids thought better of messing with him and took off.

### **Give Back to Your Community**



“If I could be given any amount of money to have never been your Cub Scout Leader, no matter how much I wouldn’t take it. I wouldn’t trade the time with you kids for anything they could give.”-Roy Mitchel to me

My dad worked around 50 hours a week when I was a kid. Despite the rigors of working full time in an automobile manufacturing plant, dad always worked to give back to the community. In the winter he shoveled the widow next door’s driveway and walks to make sure she could get in and out and refused to ever accept any compensation. Eventually he purchased a snow-blower so he could canvass the whole neighborhood and take care of the sidewalks and drives of all the elderly on our block.

Dad has always had an interest in others. During a particularly bad winter on a particularly bad day (with wind chill it was around -15 degrees), an old man from church named Glen called my dad because his car wouldn’t start. Glen had a doctor’s appointment and really wanted to drive himself. Without a second thought, my dad grabbed his tools, bundled up and drove over to fix Glen’s car. I never heard him groan or complain no matter how much another person asked him to do.

Most memorable for me was the years my dad spent as my Cub Scout leader. My dad spent countless hours (and a lot of his paycheck) preparing activities and meetings for the local scout troop. He always encouraged all of us to grow into the best men we could be. By example he taught us about mentoring younger men (many of them “troubled”) and helping to shape them into valuable and strong men.

### **Never Lose Your Sense of Humor**

Me: “What kind of life lessons should I include in my article for Art of Manliness?”

Dad: “Always pull your britches up before flushing, in case the thing overflows.”

After my mom had her car accident she was always (and is always) in pain. It took a ton of adapting in our family. It was strange not having Mom to make us lunches and do the laundry. For the next several weeks everyone in the house was stressed out beyond belief, which lead to frequent bickering. My dad was the only one who could relieve the tension by making us laugh.

The nights I would go for a glass of water, I would hear my mother screaming and crying in pain from my parents room. Usually, these outbursts were followed by intense laughter because no matter how bad her back and neck hurt, my dad could pop off the perfect joke and get her to forget how bad

everything in life truly was. There is nothing manlier than sticking by your spouse through thick and thin and giving her the strength to get through every obstacle. That, my friends is the true measure of a man.

## **Strength Through Patience: Lesson in Manliness**

From Brian Cromeens



My Father's name is Michael Cromeens. He was born in Dallas Texas in October of 1947. The oldest of four he quickly developed the keen sense of responsibility and respect that would carry him throughout his life. His father was an entrepreneur that designed and manufactured lumber processing equipment. This forced him to be on the road a great deal of the time, leaving his responsibilities to his oldest son. After college Michael went to work for his Father's business which by this time had grown to include cattle ranches, mineral interests, and various other agricultural enterprises. Also, he was now a married man, while at Tyler Junior College he had met his future wife Gail Hayes. Eventually, they would settle in a little Texas town and raise two salty young boys.

My father was not a rich or powerful man, his strength and integrity sprung forth from a quiet dignity, a patient and unyielding dignity that impressed those around him and forged his two sons into strong young men. Like most other men, I would not attempt to cheapen his example by trying to convey all of the lessons my Father taught me. But, I will attempt to relay the foundations of manhood as taught to me by my hero, Michael Cromeens.

### **Stay Alert, Stay in Control**

As far back as I could remember, it always struck me that my Dad had very few bad things to say about anyone, as a matter of fact, he had few things to say at all. It was not until I was older that I learned the truth. The saying goes that still waters run deep, and in my father's case, this was especially true. Though he was always quiet, I came to find out this was because he was always listening. He was always alert. Listening carefully, for that critical piece of information, information on a local business deal, information about local politics, and most importantly information about the people around him, information was key to every aspect of his life.

Michael Cromeens was never one to step up first. He would wait, watch and be aware of all of his surroundings before he took any action. Though this may seem like timidity of character, that was not the case, he was far from timid. He understood that a Man must always remain in as much control of his surroundings as possible, but most importantly he must remain in complete control of himself. Very few times did he yell at me or my brother; he would not lose his cool, he would simply get our attention and proceed to explain his frustration in a manner that we, even as young boys understood both his disappointment and the fact that he had confidence in us to do the right thing.

### **Take Your Time, Do It Once, Do It Right....**

Growing up in a ranching family is an experiment in both boredom and excitement. Every task seems so tedious and so unimportant. Many times growing up I would slack off on my chores. I always thought that no one would ever notice. These were such small chores; there was no way that they really mattered. On one such occasion, I was playing with some friends near some pens we had set up for staging animals we planned to ship out for transport or sale. My Dad had always told me I could play anywhere I wanted, as long as I followed the most important rule of ranch work. LEAVE IT LIKE YOU FOUND IT. This especially meant closing all those damned ole heavy gates. But like any boy, fast and in a hurry, I knowingly neglected this relatively simple task in the interest of keeping up with a

spirited game of capture the flag. The next day, my Dad was preparing to ship over fifty head of yearlings to the sale. He rounded them up, and corralled them in the pens only to find out that the gate to the elevated loading chute had been carelessly left open. One by one, the cattle ran up the stairs of the chute and off into nothing as the truck had not backed up yet. Luckily, none of the cattle, and none of the cowboys were hurt. It did not take Dad a long time to figure exactly what had happened, and even less time to find me cowered behind his truck. As angry as he was, he walked over to me, took a deep breath and said "Well, you won't do that again." He gestured towards the truck and I got in and we went along and re-did a morning's worth of work.

Later that day he sat me down and gave me some advice he swore his Dad had given him. He told me to "Take my time, do it once, and do it right." If we all took this simple advice and applied it to our daily lives, how much better off would we be?

The twenty first century seems to be one big rush. We rush out of bed, rush off to work, and half of the time we cannot even see the goals that we are working towards. If all men would take the time to look around and appreciate every action they take and the effects of that action we would be able to see mistakes, see errors before they happen. We could end the daily cycle of the same ole same ole. If we took our time with everything we did, did it once, and did it right we could all move on to the bigger and the better goals we have set for ourselves.

### **Strength Through Patience**

My Dad has always joked that if our family had ever been affluent enough to have a fancy family motto on a fancy family crest, that motto would be "Strength and Patience."

I have always been impatient. Impatient professionally, recreationally, and of course romantically; I never took the time to see how every step I took led in some direction. I always wanted immediate results, and throughout my adolescence there was my Father, always telling me to slow down, that good things would come my way. As young as I was, I never could see that impatience is in fact a grave weakness in a man. This is not to say that you should simply sit by and await life's treasures and blessings to find you, but that every action you take is simply a small part of the whole.

As we go through life, we often find ourselves faced with the roadblocks of existence. Age, maturity, education, all seem to be obstacles in our way. This is where I and many others begin to get impatient. My Father taught me that I have to take a step back and try to see the whole picture before I get bogged down in the tedium that is our daily life. I never understood why strength and patience were values that were so respected by the man I respected most, until I took a moment to reflect and to see that we are only as strong as our patience and resilience allows us to be.

Michael Cromeens is a sixty two year old semi retired rancher. He enjoys carpentry, bird hunting, and the occasional cooking show. To the outside world he is just a regular guy of regular means. But in his life he has managed to show me what a husband, father and a son ought to be. When all is said and done and the sun sets for the last time on my Father's face he will have left me two priceless things: a stunning example and an untarnished name. For that I will be ever grateful...

## **Lessons in Manliness: "Old Fart"**

by Sasha Bunger



What defines the legacy of a man? Is it infinite material wealth? Securing a moment in the pages of history? Or, is it simply the story of his life and the lessons that will be passed to future generations? My father, Sam Bunger was born in CA in 1940, the youngest of eight and the only boy. He lost his own father at the age of six and his grandfather just a few short years later.

It is during our young years that we are dependent upon our role models to help us identify and shape who we are to become as adults. Three of Sam's role models were women. A Grandmother, Mother and Aunt who survived the Oklahoma dust bowls and the Depression of the 1930's. The resilience and strength these women imparted upon him helped to prepare him for challenges he would face later in life.

During a time when it was still uncommon for women to work outside of the home, his mother found herself a young widow with small children and no income. Life insurance was not common in those days and for the survival of her family, she had to work outside of the home, but things were still very hard to come by.

One winter, Sam was in need of a coat, but there was not enough money for such a luxury. Tired from long hours at her job, then tending to her children once she was home, his mother stayed up late; working with a coat that had been hand me downs to his older sisters and tailored it as best she could to "man it up." The pain of not being able to afford a proper "boy coat" for him she carried her entire 84 years.

When Sam was a young teen his Aunt married Uncle Marvin. Uncle Marvin was a veteran of WWII. Marvin was not an educated man; his life was filled with hardship and at the tender age of 10, he was removed from school to work the cotton fields. Despite difficulties reading and writing beyond the 4<sup>th</sup> grade level, Marvin's mathematical skills were impeccable. He was also good with his hands. He taught Sam how to construct buildings and rebuild vehicles, the same skills Sam would pass down to his daughters and grandson many years later.

Uncle Marvin also taught Sam how to hunt. During one deer hunt in the Kaibab, Marvin and Sam got a flat. As Marvin jacked up the jeep, the crowbar slipped, the sharp end severing his ear. The pain must have been excruciating as it was bitter cold, but Marvin was not going to let that cause them to miss their hunt. He took the ear, stuck it back onto his head, packed it, taped it and finished the hunt. No gangrene and it actually healed. NOW THAT IS MANLY.

At 17, Sam joined the Navy where he received the training to become an Electrical Engineer. During his post military career he worked mostly in the semi-conductor industry. Some of the components he

designed and helped build were used during the Apollo missions. He often joked that his “finger prints are on the moon.”

In 1972 during the first oil crisis, Sam bought an AMC Gremlin, an “economy” car. During one of many Gremlin misadventures Sam took his wife and daughters on a sight seeing picnic in Southwest New Mexico. On what started off as a beautiful spring day, he drove along a dirt road; the smell of pine was in the air. In what he described as “the sea of mud,” he soon found himself buried up to the door jams and going nowhere fast.

The blue skies turned grey and as the sun disappeared the snow fall became heavy. By morning, the car battery dead, he and his wife Diane dug out of the car into the snow covered forest. The only hope for survival was for Sam to walk in search of help. In a t-shirt, jeans, wing tip dress shoes and a letterman sweater, with a carton of cigarettes under his arm, he told his family he would return with help and set off down a slippery road.

Six and one half hours, twenty-one miles later, Sam found a Forest Ranger. The Forest Service truck was only a single cab. After his wife and daughters were loaded up safe and warm inside the truck, tired, damn near frozen, Sam climbed into the bed of the truck for the drive to shelter, as the last blizzard of the season continued its deluge.

In 1979, while living in the town of Wichita Falls, TX, Sam experienced his first tornado. After securing his family and an elderly neighbor safely, he watched out the sliding glass window as the 2.5 square mile category F4 funnel went over the house then decimated the town. When he was certain it was safe to come out, he instructed everyone to grab buckets, pots and pans to catch the rain water. They survived on that water for days as it was nearly a week before potable water was available.

In 1986, Sam relocated the family to AZ, and after more than 40 years as an Electrical Engineer, his focus was on “the golden years.” He designed his dream home using AutoCAD, with his own two hands, the help of family and friends, he constructed that home. Nestled in the Northern AZ pines off of the Mogollon Rim, “Old Fart” as I affectionately call him is enjoying what time he has left. He walks a little slower and it is harder for him to breathe as the years of smoking caught up to him. He passes the time making his own bullets and target practicing, or going on a sunset drive to watch as the herd of deer and elk run.

He may not possess the riches of material wealth, nor have his name imprinted among historical figures in books; the legacy and many stories of his life adventures he will leave to my sisters, nieces, nephew and I. The life lessons, the lessons of manliness that my father imparted on each of us, is that any man can come from humble beginnings, endure tragedy and hardship, face challenges of life head on, yet gain the wealth that so few men fail to achieve.

It is not the wealth of material possessions, notoriety or fame. It is not being known by the masses adorned on the pages of history books. It is the love of family, values withstood, a legend passed from one generation to the next. It is an honor to live up to and model ones behavior after. It is having

learned the lessons of manliness the hard way and having shared those life lessons with students of a younger generation, so they may have the fortitude to aspire and better themselves.

## Lessons in Manliness: Dr. Sylvan Golder: Grandfather

by Adam Golder



Just about everyone who meets my grandfather Sylvan Golder agrees that there's something special about the man, though unlike many of the men featured in this column it is not because he is larger than life. He worked as a doctor in his own practice for much of his life, and now quietly enjoys his retirement with his wife of more than 65 years, Faith. Though his travels would take him far from home on occasion, he always returned and has spent the bulk of his life less than thirty minutes from the place where he was born. Rather than aspiring to be a larger than life figure, I have always felt that my grandfather's greatness, and the root of so many of the lessons I have learned from him, is his ability to appreciate the small miracles of kindness and courage in his everyday life.



Sylvan's father Oscar came to America from a small village in Russia when he was only a teenager. He earned his citizenship by enlisting during WWI, though the war was over by the time he finished boot camp. He married my great grandmother Becky, and they had their first and only child, Sylvan Albert Golder, in 1921.

Sylvan had dreams of becoming a doctor from a very young age, and often carried around a toy doctor's bag full of supplies. He earned his ticket to med school right around the moment America entered properly into WWII. The military had taken over all the medical schools so in order to attend you had to enlist. In return for 2 years of service after graduation, the government would

help pay your tuition.

His father was very proud of him for becoming a doctor, especially given that my great grandfather had

very little education and had to attend night school to learn to read and write English. While studying Sylvan also married my grandmother Faith, on New Years Eve of 1943, at the ripe old age of 22.

Kids those days.



By the time he graduated, the war was almost over. He served his 2 years as a Captain in the army in a VA hospital in Dayton, Ohio. He helped to take care of 2500 veterans from the area over his two years, and considers his time working with the doctors of the VA hospital some of the most educational of his life.

After his discharge he continued to work with veterans for a number of months, then took a position running a private practice in Kentucky while the doctor in charge recovered from surgery. A few years later he would take the experience he got working in this small practice to start his own.

As head of his own private practice, Sylvan often got paid in trade as his patients were very poor. One patient paid him in homemade cakes for holidays and birthdays, another in homemade relish, and he was never short on homegrown tomatoes and peppers from a wealth of other patients. One patient even paid him with a handcrafted wooden rocking chair.

In between raising their two sons, helping look out for their four grandkids, and running a private practice, my grandparents managed to travel to France over 25 times throughout their life, as well as Austria, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Russia, Hong Kong, England, Italy, Belgium, Germany, and the Caribbean.

He has been a constant source of inspiration in my life. Hopefully some of the lessons I have learned from him can help to inspire all of you as well.

Lessons in Manliness from Dr. Sylvan Golder

**Give Generously**



If I had to define my grandfather in one word, it would be generous. Never a man to hoard his money or time when he could be using it to improve the lives of the people around him. Whether it was picking up the tab, leaving a big tip for a busy waitress, lending a hand and a mower to keep his son's garden in order or helping his grandsons go to college, if someone needed a hand and he could help out, he'd be offering them assistance without a second thought. I believe that the great love he has of giving and helping those around him is one of the things which has always set him apart from others. As I go forward into my own life his example always helps me to remember that merely having a lot cannot bring you satisfaction if you use what you have selfishly.

### **Receive Graciously**

I remember back when I was in middle school, high school maybe, he would always give me 20 dollars or so pretty much every single time we'd do anything together. Since my crowning achievements at that age mostly revolved around video game high scores, I felt like I didn't deserve the money and would get embarrassed and try to give the money back. Then one time after I told him to keep the money, I remember him taking me aside and telling me, "Adam, if someone wants to give you a gift, you take it." Particularly now that I live in Japan, the land of endless favors, knowing how to graciously receive is one of the most valuable things I ever learned from him.

### **Enjoy Simple Pleasures**

For all the hard work he did throughout his life, he never let it jade him. I do not think I have ever seen a man who was so satisfied by the simple pleasures around him. Going shopping with him and grandma and seeing the satisfaction he got out of something as simple as finding a really good tomato, or going out to eat and enjoying a meal with his family and friends, or sitting in the backyard talking and enjoying the breeze. Even though he worked hard and has a lot to show for it, he has never seemed to need extravagant things in order to be happy. Learn to see the magic in the everyday and common place.

## Travel

About 7 months ago I moved to Japan. I do not think I would be here in Japan today if not for the example he and my grandmother set throughout their life with their travels in France and the rest of Europe. It can be scary to step outside of the country where you are comfortable, where you belong, but because of their example I never saw it that way. His example taught me to relax, go with the flow, and explore what was different. When I came to Japan for the first time in college as an exchange student, a lot of my classmates spent most of their time hiding from Japan and complaining, mostly about how it was definitely not America. I explored, and it changed my life. Thank you.

## Be a Member of the Community

Wherever we'd go around town, to the tailor, the dry cleaner, the restaurants, the museums, he always seemed to know the owner, and chances were good he'd run into someone else he knew while we were there from the practice or the old neighborhood. He taught me that it's worthwhile to get to know the people and businesses around you. People you know will go out of their way to take care of you, and having that kind of relationship can be a godsend. Now that I live on this tiny island of 8000 people, I think this more than anything else has allowed me to thrive and prosper.

## Don't Just Watch, Dance!

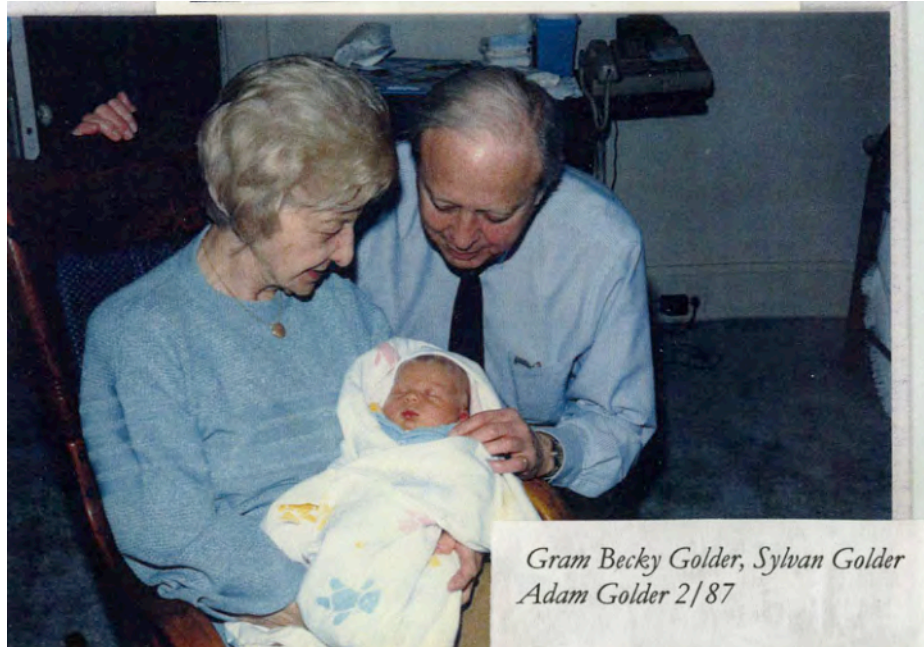
In Japan there is a saying "You're a fool whether you dance or not, so why not dance?" At some point in their long history together my grandmother conned my grandfather into going to a Tango studio and taking lessons. I believe that she told him they had won 5 free lessons or something. He went right



along with it, and it became one of the hobbies he enjoyed throughout his life. I have always admired the fact that he dove right in, and I think it goes well beyond dancing. It's the "Well, why not?" attitude that goes along with it. He certainly knows what he likes, but he never seems afraid to try new things when they're put before him. Now that I'm older, it's a way of seeing the world I have come to appreciate.

## Patience, Patience, Patience

In 20 some odd recallable years of knowing the man, I don't think I have ever seen him actually get angry. I'm trying to remember a time where he even raised his voice, and I can't think of any. He never seemed to let frustrating things (or people, such as yours truly) get the better of him. Since I'm a teacher now and spend a lot of time around small children, I have really come to see the virtue of cultivating patience, and he is one of the people I have as a role-model.



It was my grandfather's 89th birthday last week. I couldn't be there to wish him a happy birthday in person, but I got the opportunity to send him this article and tell him about all the things I have learned from watching him these 23 years. Never one to brag, he said I saw more in him than he ever had.

For other people writing a "Lessons in Manliness" article, if you're lucky enough to be writing about someone who is still with us, consider taking a few moments to tell them about the impact they have had on your life.

## **Lessons in Manliness: Jime**

by thegoods



I would have to say that my role model, like many, has been my father.

Society would claim that he has accomplished almost nothing in his life. Except for all the things that seem to be lacking in the news these days: an ethic towards working. All of my father's greatest accomplishments are not his own. Having never been able to give us a clear answer to whether or not he finished high school, he managed to see all three of his children graduate from college, and this spring, he will see all of them complete graduate school. Both my parents never went to college, but we all did. Paid for it all ourselves, too. My father helped as much as he could, but he was never able to even start scratching the surface of the monster that student loans have become in the last ten years.

He worked, and still does, so that his family can pursue their dreams. Modest dreams, but completely American in principle: two kids that are teachers, one a speech pathologist. All about to be married. My father has been HAPPILY MARRIED for over 25 years to my mother. The importance of this relationship in his life has been the greatest inspiration for my own. My father is man enough to be an equal in a life-long endeavor, showing me how important it is to care for another without thinking about oneself.

On top of it all, we always ate dinner together. Seconds were always an option; even if the electric bill didn't get paid, he never wanted us to go without the everyday needs he never had growing up.

Keep on keeping on, Jim.

## **Lessons in Manliness: Ed Campos**

by Aaron J. Kimmins



Most of you that may be reading this will have no idea who this is. He was my wood shop teacher in high school.

Having only known him through high school I do not know a lot about him other than the four years I took the classes. He was also our football coach though I was not a player. As far as I know he played football in high school. He got a scholarship to play for a junior college. Then went to Northern Arizona University where he got a teaching degree as well as degrees in wood working and as a contractor I believe. When I knew him in high school he was a general contractor building houses on the off time from school.

The lessons I got from him were mostly responsibility. He, like all the other teachers, laid out the rules at the beginning of the year. Unlike the others, maybe it was because of the inherent dangers in the shop, he was the one that stuck by them. He also made sure you knew it was your fault, not in a mean way, that you would not be doing anything. If you went to class stoned, you failed the day and sat in the classroom. Not his fault, it was your choice. If you did not submit designs for a project, you sat there, your choice to not get them in. If you cut the board wrong you better get out some cash to buy some more, your fault for not measuring twice. He had this way of manipulating peer pressure in his favor also. If you slipped up in the shop we all knew it. He wouldn't make fun of you, but he would ask maybe a little loudly, he was across the shop, if there was a problem. As your face would turn a nice shade of crimson and reply, "Nope, I've got it under control" you were very aware of all the others in there watching.

So in those classes I learned a lot of personal responsibility. I also gained a lot of self-respect. Self-reliance.

## **Lessons in Manliness: My Dad**

by Mike Maniscalco



First a definition: a father is any male that has properly functioning physiology and can do his part in the procreation process. A Dad is a man that gives selflessly to those he calls family.

Now my story...My Dad is a man's man. He shaves with a straight razor, he enjoys fishing, hunting, and cigars. He was a high school football star and can fix any problem you may have with any car. All these things my Dad loves, but they come second to his family. How do I know? Because he has showed me time and time again. I'll try to keep it short and to the point but I could go on...At times my Dad has worked 3 jobs to make sure my Mom could stay home and take care of 3 kids so we could have clothes, food and a home. My Dad has given up fishing and hunting trips he has saved for and looked forward to, for his family's needs. If my Dad knows you are walking around with a "light wallet" in your back pocket, he reaches into his and gives you his last dollar so you have a few bucks. If he takes you fishing and you happen to throw a less than perfect cast out there and the line snaps resulting in my Dad's \$5.00 fishing lure floating 30 yards out in the cold surf, he swims out and retrieves it then reties it to your line for you so you can catch more fish on his favorite lure. My Dad has always given me an honest answer, not always the answer I wanted to hear, but the truth. My Dad has never, ever turned me away or refused to help; even when you don't ask for it, he knows you need it and will be there without fail. He is always willing to share his wisdom and opinion, but only if you ask for it. He never passes up an opportunity to tell me he loves me. He treats anyone he calls family or friend like this.

4 months ago my Dad was diagnosed with a very aggressive cancer. This devastated our family. We cried, we planned, we all did our part to help each other out, especially my Mom and Dad...no matter what it took. Any time I went to visit my Dad in the hospital he asked me about my day, and my problems and made sure I had money in my pocket...he laid there, dying, and he worried about me...I am 43 years old and my Dad is still that concerned about me as he lays dying. At this time, my Dad is recovering from a very major surgery and has a long road for recovery and further cancer treatment ahead, but we will do it as a family...because that is what he taught us and how we were brought up...we do this happily and lovingly, we laugh together, we cry together and we'll get through it together...I need my Dad, I need to keep learning from him, I need to keep laughing with him. He is so strong, even though his illness has robbed him of physical strength, his will to beat it with all of his manly inner strength.

This is what it means to be a man to me...to give, to love, to care, to live and laugh, to dream, to succeed and to fail, to teach and to learn and to always fight and never give up...to be My Dad.

## **Lessons in Manliness: My Dad**

by Sean



My father. Born in Hamilton in 1922, died in Mississauga in 1996. In the almost three quarters of a century that he lived, he saw the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression, the Second World War, the Post War Boom, the Cold War, and the end of the Cold War. At the beginning of his life, cars were a luxury, and carts pulled by horses still rumbled regularly through the streets of Hamilton. The sound of an aeroplane flying overhead was enough to make people run out of their houses and look up. He went to movie palaces, listened to music and sat in rapt attention in front of a radio shaped like a cathedral, and saw the invasion of television into the average home. He learned to do math in his head, and expressed disgust at people who used a calculator. He'd heard about the internet, but had no idea what it was, beyond the fact that it involved computers, somehow.

In his time he owned at least five Chevy's, one of which, his '57, later became a classic, although he had sold it by that time. He fathered four children, lived to see one grandchild celebrate her first birthday. He met and married a woman he loved and feared all of the thirty-seven years they were together

As a child, I all but worshipped my father. No one could hit a golf ball as far, bowl as well, or caught bigger fish. His stories of work at the oil refinery seemed filled with wonder at the magic of making gasoline out of sludge. He could talk with authority on a wide range of topics, and he had an opinion on almost everything. As a teenager, I grew bigger and stronger than he. I could hit the ball farther, and bowl as well as he. I haven't caught bigger fish than the ones he caught, but I have time to work on that. I began to differ in opinion from him, and suffered the disappointment of knowing he could be wrong. In my twenties, we both learned to accept our differences, and I began to understand a little. When I married and became a father myself, I sorely needed his advice, but he was gone before I could really ask.

Often he was quiet, just wanted to be left in peace for a while. He could be cantankerous, and sometimes had a hot temper. But sometimes, when the mood struck him, he would regale us with tales from his younger days, and tell us stories of a young, hard headed, hard drinking, hell bent for leather man, who could find trouble if there was any trouble to be found, and who was more than capable of making trouble of his own if there was none to be found. He told tales of a soldier, thief, wanderer, prankster whom I never met, except that he sat beside me at the dinner table. It was always hard, even now, to understand the difference between that young man and my father.

Understanding my father is not an easy task, or even a possible one. Not for myself, anyway. Between us there was a gulf, we grew up in times that the other found incomprehensible. He was a member of what some historians have referred to as the greatest generation that ever lived. I belong to Generation X, the generation that was nothing special, had no definition, and was set to mind the store until the next big thing showed up. Our paths show this. When I was nineteen, I went to university, and picked up some pointless degrees. When he was nineteen, Dad went to war. He never had any doubts about going off to the war. To him it was the right, perhaps even the natural thing to do, go like his father before him.

## **Lessons in Manliness: My Tribute to My "Papaw," Mason "Junior" French**

From David O. Donovan



For the past few months I have had a lot of fun and have really enjoyed reading the articles here at [The Art of Manliness](#), a blog I enjoy because it is dedicated to "recovering the lost art of being a man." I like that it is authored by a husband and wife team, so that this is not men being left to themselves to digress into regaling tales of machismo. Rather, this site is about helping men grow up and become more responsible, to be "better husbands, better fathers, better men."

Brett McKay notes that he got tired of reading Men's Health magazine because all they seemed to write about was sex and how to get six-pack abs. He also noted that there seemed to be a feminization to men, as well. Therefore, he saw a need for men to talk and learn about *honorable* manliness, to rediscover the "confidence, focus, skills, and virtues that men of the past had embodied and were a little lost." I particularly appreciate the wide variety of topics covered in the articles, such as "Dress & Grooming," "Manly Skills," "Money & Career," "Relationships & Family," and of course "Health & Sports."

I have enjoyed [The Art of Manliness](#) so much, that I joined their group on Facebook. My wife Christy's response was, "I don't like the sound of this." So I am writing not only to promote a good site, but more importantly, to allay my wife's fears and explain why I have enjoyed it so much. And the answer is quite simple: it reminds me a lot of my grandfather who died when I was in the seventh grade. As I have grown up without him, I have always looked back at him as a paradigm of honorable manliness, and when I read the articles, it is as if they are able to take me back to him and bring my memories into clearer focus of a man I long to emulate. And I am not just talking about something obvious like when I read the post on [How to Shave Like Your Grandpa](#).

No, I'm talking about the less obvious ones that remind me of the man himself--who he was, what he liked, what he did, how he dressed, how he smelled.

As I read the article on the [15 Manliest Smells in the World](#), I could smell his Old Spice, Brylcream, and his recliner that you could only sit in if he wasn't home. As I read the article on the importance of a [Good Boot](#), I was reminded of his dress boots that zipped up the side, which he wore to church every Sunday and that I thought were so cool and swore I would own some day--dress shoes you could wear to church that were boots! When I read about how [Every Man Should Carry a Pocket Knife](#), I was reminded of how his brown jugged bone case knife would emerge in a moment's notice to expedite some assignment and then disappear just as quickly back into his pocket. And in the other pocket? From there, a white handkerchief would often materialize for sundry tasks, which I learned was also something [A Man Should Always Carry](#).

(\*Update: I originally wrote this post on the morning of my birthday, November 4, including the detailed description of the knife. By that evening at dinner I was talking with my Dad and I didn't know it, but he had a knife that Papaw gave him. We found it and it is the one that I remembered as a child, which you see in the picture to the left. When we looked it up by the blade number and markings, we discovered that it is not a brown jugged bone case knife, but a brown *imitation* jugged bone medium, or

junior, stockman case knife and was manufactured between 1965-69.)

**\*\*Update #2:** After my Mom and Dad read this post, they filled me in on the history of this knife. When I was about 9, Papaw and Dad were working on something in the kitchen and they needed to cut something. Dad told Papaw that he didn't have a knife, so Papaw took this one above out of his pocket and took care of the cut. But after making the cut, he started to put the knife back in his pocket but stopped, looked at Dad and said, "Here, you keep it; *every man ought to have a pocket knife*." This transfer of the pocket knife affected my mother deeply, for she knew that a pocket knife was something personal and intimate, especially to her father. She knew that for Papaw to give that knife to my father was his way of embracing my father as a son.

Well, as of my birthday, November 4, this knife began a new stage in its history. Dad gave the knife to me! In the article [Every Man Should Carry a Pocket Knife](#), the McKay's say:

The best pocket knives to have are the ones with a sense of history. I carry around a pocket knife that my father gave to me. . . . It's something tangible that reminds me of my father. One day I hope to pass it down to my son. So ask your dad if he has an old pocket knife that he can give to you. I'm sure he'll be happy to pass it along.

They go on to mention the honor of getting a knife from not only your Dad but even your Grandpa. Tonight, I am doubly honored. How exciting it is to have received my Papaw's knife that I remember as a child, that he gave to my Dad because "every man ought to have a knife," that my Dad has now passed on to me.

When I watched the videos on [7 Basic Knots Every Man Should Know](#) and when I read about the [12 Tools Every Man Should Have in His Toolbox](#), I was reminded of all the hours I spent with him watching him work, especially the countless hours in his garage watching him wield his tools like a medieval knight; I would observe him, mesmerized by his ability to fix anything and everything. There was nothing he couldn't do, it seemed.

When I read about [How To Buy Your First Motorcycle](#), I was reminded of his love for "cycles" (pronounced as "sickles"). He always owned at least one and often several. I would sneak out into the garage and look at them, and touch them and then eventually climb on and imagine myself winning some great race or pretend that I was a motorcycle cop like on the television show "ChiPs." Then came that glorious day, I was around 10 years old, when he came in and found me on his dirt bike. When he saw what I was doing he just smiled and asked me if I wanted to ride it for real. My "papaw" taught me how to ride a motorcycle that day.

I recently read about how to [Make the Perfect Cup of Coffee](#), which reminded me of how he always seemed to be fragranced with the aroma of coffee--probably because he always seemed to have his thermos of coffee with him. Just a couple of years ago, my grandmother shared with me that I reminded her of my grandfather with my coffee habits. She said that I hold my coffee like he did, and that he preferred it black like I do. She shared a story about how they were on a trip one time and stopped at a diner to get some coffee. My grandfather told the waitress that he wanted a black cup of coffee, to which the waitress informed him that all of their mugs were white. Then my grandmother shared a most interesting bit of trivia. When she was pouring me a cup, I asked her to only fill it half way. This request caused her to pause for a moment, at which time my mother and aunt Gloria also stopped what they were doing and stared at me. After a brief moment of silence, I was asked why. I told them that I

prefer to drink my coffee half a mug at a time so that its always hot. My grandmother became extremely tickled at this while my mom and aunt Gloria looked at me almost stunned. Not understanding their reactions, I asked what was going on. My grandmother looked at me and told me that my Papaw preferred his the exact same way and for the same reason. My mother later shared with me that while growing up, it was just a given that you never brought Papaw a full cup of coffee and that she had never known anyone else who liked their coffee that way.

There is so much more that I could say. For example about how when I read about [Becoming a Man](#) and read about selflessness, consistency and humility, I was reminded of how when we would visit them, he would come home everyday from his construction job and give me his Star Crunch snack that he would save for me. And how when I was a boy and asked him why he had to go to work instead of playing with me, he said, "Papaw has to go to work so I can buy you some Ho Ho's."

And you know, there is also value to the obvious articles like the one I mentioned earlier on [How to Shave Like Your Grandpa](#). Reading this article did remind me of one of the most significant days of my life with him. For many, they say that the first shave begins a boy's right of passage into manhood. Now, my Papaw did not help me to learn to shave, but he did play a major role in my initiation to shaving manhood. You see, the first time I shaved was the day of his funeral--I was a pallbearer and I wanted to look my best for him. The irony for me at the time was that on the day I was becoming a man, I cried a great deal. And I still cry at times when I think about him and how I miss him very much; in fact, I have cried several times as I have written this post. But as I've since learned, this apparently is a time

[When Its Okay for a Man to Cry](#).

The point is, there is a lot of good material, which does more than just provide helpful tips on how to "man up," it helps to bring into focus a lot of good memories. My grandfather was a godly man of courage and conviction, he was hard working and loyal, he was self-sacrificing and resilient, he was a patriot who served his country in war, and yet, he was also a loving and devoted husband, father and grandfather. Mason "Junior" French was the paragon of the [Art of Manliness](#). Maybe, just maybe, if I continue to read, I will continue to remember him, and I will mature in the lost art of manliness.

## **Lessons In Manliness: William “Doug” Douglass Larson**

by Bradley Douglass Larson



*From Left: Don Larson, Brad Larson (author), and Doug Larson in Carrizo Springs, Texas*

Growing up, a young man tends to absorb lessons from his father like a sponge. He looks to his father and learns behaviors that will eventually forge his character as a man, and this can either instill virtue or foster the growth of negative character traits (or a combination of both).

Some of the questions a boy learns answers to include:

*What is faith all about? How does a man dress? How does a man treat his wife? How hard does a man work? What are manly hobbies? How does a man run a business? What does a man do when he is faced with adversity?*

We would all be blessed to have a great man as our father to answer these questions not only with words, but with actions as well.

My father, William “Doug” Douglass Larson, was born on June 12, 1954 in Houston, Texas to Bill and Marie Larson. Tall, lean, and handsome, Bill and Marie looked as if they belonged on the silver screen. Doug grew up the middle child, with his younger brother Donald and his older sister Janice at both ends of the age spectrum.

From an early age, Doug exhibited an interest in business and a strong work ethic. As a youngster, he worked in the warehouse of his grandfather’s (called “Grampa” by his grandchildren) business, and learned the lessons of hard work under the stern guidance of his grandfather. When Grampa’s Scandinavian face would become red and his jaw would set, Doug knew that stern guidance was surely to follow. Ever the strong spirit, Doug initially argued with Grampa (which did not serve Doug well), but began to relent as he learned of Grampa’s wisdom and benevolence.

From tending to a warehouse in the Texas heat, Doug went on to work in his father’s refrigeration equipment business in a sales and operations function. Eventually, Doug and Don started a commercial construction company, which Doug now owns and has been successfully operated for over 25 years.

Growing up watching and learning from my Dad, the lessons in manliness abound. Some of these lessons in manliness that I learned from my father include:

**"Anything worth doing is worth doing well."** My father did not believe in weak effort or incomplete projects. If he set out to do something, he completed it. Anything a man sets out to do he should do it with all his might.

**"The bitterness of poor quality remains long after the sweetness of low price is forgotten."** This truism came from a clothes tag that was displayed (actually it is taped to his desk) in my Dad's office. My father has never been a spender, but when it comes to his attire, he would rather spend more money for one shirt, which he would keep for ten years, than on two shirts, which he would keep for ten months. My father also applies this lesson when selling his firm's construction services when a bid comes out slightly higher than the bottom feeder "low bidders." You get what you pay for.

**"Remember the golden rule."** So far as I can tell, my father has always "done unto others as he would have them do unto himself." This quality fosters respect and builds long term relationships with friends and business associates alike. Treat others as you would be treated.

**"Chewing tobacco, chewing tobacco, spit on the wall, ain't got on no pants a'tall!"** I haven't any idea where this little ditty came from originally, but my father and Uncle Don have laughingly said this every year while in the field in south Texas on our annual dove hunt at Casa Monte Lodge. This typically coincided partaking of some Red Man or Levi Garrett. Don't take yourself too seriously - enjoy life.

**"God is good."** My father has always had a strong Christian faith and has always strived to live biblically. My sister and I were blessed to grow up learning from his faith and benefiting from his spiritual leadership. Faith is the most important aspect of a man's life.

Truly it is an impossible task to summarize all of the Lessons in Manliness bestowed upon me by my great father, Doug Larson, but these are some of the many lessons that stand out as strongly forged in my memory. We would all be blessed to have such a man as our father, teaching and instructing in masculine character and virtue.

Here's to you, Dad.

## **Lessons In Manliness: Kurt**

by D Daniel



I wanted to toss out a little story of manliness I thought you guys might like. My husband and I have been scout leaders for the past eleven years and during that time we've run into some interesting manly men. Several years ago we had the good fortune to meet Kurt. He was fresh out of perfusionist school; they are a select group of trained health care professionals who run heart-lung machines during heart transplant surgeries.

At the time we met Kurt, he was a Webelos Leader, teaching boys the transitory path from Cub Scouts to Boy Scouts. He would spin great campfire stories for the boys. His scouts idealized him with his natural charisma and his funny stories. Other adult leaders enjoyed his company as well, as he was always willing to pitch in a hand with a great big smile, true scout style.

### Kurt's Lesson - Humility

The day before Kurt's insurance would be discontinued he had a serious heart illness, ironic considering his profession. He was in intensive care for weeks. Luckily, the insurance paid thanks to that precious 24 hours of coverage.

Back on his feet, he started working again this time without the benefit of insurance from his company. Needing to make sure his family would not be in a bind if he had another cardiac issue, Kurt got private insurance. He was already maxed out on shifts at work, heart surgeries are generally scheduled, so picking up extra shifts or overtime is not usually possible. So without hesitation he picked up another job to pay for his insurance. Two nights a week, usually Friday and Saturday, Kurt sacks groceries at our local market.

That's right, a forty-seven year old man with a professional medical degree sacks groceries on the weekend to pay for his medical insurance. He does this with thankfulness and a good humored attitude. We have seen him multiple times, each time he greets us with a smile and big hug for my husband, who Kurt adores.

His humility is a lesson to us all. I wish more people could be as gracious.

## **Lessons in Manliness: James B. Harris**

by Gregor Curry



There is some truth in the old adage “when the student is ready the instructor will appear.” At least, that was the way I found my mentor. My wife and I had just finished a summer long road trip and needed to find a place to settle our boys before they started school. So we ended up in a Lubbock, Texas neighborhood next to a truly unique and fascinating man, James Booth Harris.

He grew up in rural Louisiana, the oldest son of large family. He spent his days helping raise his siblings, a point of contention with his parents to this day, and helping out in the family owned hardware store. It was an old style hardware store with cramped isles of wooden bins filled with every manner of fastener, dimly lit corners housing every manner of axe, and a pressed tin ceiling.

The bookkeeper’s apprentice, a shy girl from across town, soon caught his eye, and he could be seen making pilgrimages up to the office to change the trash more regularly and without having to be reminded or prodded. James was soon escorting Patricia home in the evenings after work and eventually (to her an eternity) he asked her out on a Friday night date. His courtship of the assistant bookkeeper would last their entire life, and he still asks her out every Friday and Saturday night on a date, although I think he

now has to be reminded to take out the trash bin in the office.

In college, James studied the burgeoning field of landscape architecture. After graduation, he moved to Arlington Texas with a young wife; this move left the hardware store in deficit of one assistant bookkeeper. Here he would work for various companies, one of which was Levi Strauss. There he was tasked with the remediation of their runoff sludge, a blue waste product consisting mainly of cotton fiber, blue denim dye, and water. James developed a unique horizontal Archimedean screw that fed the sludge and a manure mixture in the feeder end and expelled vibrant compost out the tail end four or five days later. Through his ingenuity, an environmental issue was solved with an environmental solution; this was in the late 60’s/70’s, well ahead of the green movement in north central Texas.

As time passed, James spent more time contemplating sharing his knowledge with others. So in the mid 80s he moved to Lubbock and took a teaching position at Texas Tech University. Frustrated with unmotivated students and the constant backbiting and bickering of academics, he transitioned back to the private sector before retiring in the mid 90s.

Retired but never idle, James spends his days recycling thrown out items, restoring his first car (yes, first car he ever owned), and volunteering in the community. Sharing his vast knowledge of skills, he teaches at multiple guild societies including but not limited to the local wood turners guild and lapidary society.

Through the years I have known James, he has taught me many lessons and actual skills. I have been truly fortunate to know him and Pat. He is not one to pass on his training in open lesson format, preferring an observational learning scenario. Here are a few of the lessons he has passed onto me.

There is the right tool for each job:

This lesson of course goes beyond the age-old problem of someone in the house using a knife as a screwdriver. Growing up in a hardware store-owning family, James became familiar with just about every tool ever made. So he knew the value of using a screwdriver to drive screws or a baseboard saw for trimming the bottom 1/8<sup>th</sup> inch off the bottom of baseboards to give enough room for tiles.

On multiple occasions he has told me that there is a tool just for the particular job I was doing around house. Using the right tool will cut your time in the project, and if you do all the work yourself, your time is worth it. Otherwise, you could/would pay someone else to do the work.

## **Recycle**

James Harris recycles everything. Even things that on the surface seem non-recycleable, he can find a use for. Environmental causes are good and just; however, the motivation behind James' recycling is the tremendous amount of waste that our society generates. We live in west Texas, big open sky country, and not many around here think about where something goes when it hits file 13. In fact, many people around here think file 13 is to the left of their open truck window.

James is constantly pulling items out of the dumpster headed for the landfill. He has a couple of different routines he follows. Items that are perfectly good or need little repair get pulled out and sent to those in need. Clothing, small appliances with kid's toys stuck in them, to vacuum cleaners with a lint jam. In the 13 years I have known him, he has salvaged thousands of dollars worth of small appliances and shop tools.

Other items he recycles are items that can no longer be used, as they were intended but can easily be converted to a useful item. Must have been a habit from parents who lived through the Great Depression. James can see a use for most junked items. I have seen chairs converted to wheel extension cord spools and old bar-b-q grills made into garden planter carts. Instructables website could take inspiration from his ingenuity.

There are always items that can't be easily used or modified. So at that point, James will break them down to their component parts and recycle those. He has picked up the nickname "the Professor" by some in the neighborhood for some of his slightly wacky and definitely non-traditional recycling methods.

## **Garden**

There is a great sense of accomplishment and satisfaction gained from growing your own food. I would have never known this pleasure if James had not been my landlord. The back part of the yard had been converted into a garden and in typical James fashion he planted the seed in my head by telling me one year, "I'm not going to be able to use the garden this year, you are welcome to use if you want...". Of course, my wife and I knew nothing about growing anything, in fact far from it. We both had bounties on our head from the American Horticulture Society for excessive use of our brown thumb on plant species.

James watched our horticultural experiments, throwing in advice, nonchalantly here and there. Guiding us without telling us, over a period of 4 years he turned my wife and I into gardeners. In fact he inspired us to both become master gardeners.

But, I digress. James grows vegetables to eat. It's easy, it's inexpensive, and it's good for you. If it

wasn't, he wouldn't make the investment in time doing it.

### **Final thoughts**

There are so many things James has mentored me (and my wife) on. So many areas I think it would fill an entire book, like volunteering in your community, the joys and responsibilities of owning an old car, and learning a hobby to name a few. Perhaps some day, I can do him that honor and write a book dedicated to him, although to do him justice it would have to contain multiple life lessons, none of them overt; they would all have to be subtle pearls of wisdom.

## **Lessons in Manliness: Professor Avraham Biran**

by O.B.



My grandfather, Professor Avraham Biran, was born in Ottoman ruled Palestine in 1909. He moved early on in his life to Egypt with his parents, sister and brother, where his father died. After his father died, the family returned to Palestine where his mother died a short while later. The children were raised to a certain degree by his grandmother, until they were sent to school in the Reali boarding school in Haifa (which is considered until today the best school in Haifa).

The first lesson – keep your familial obligations and take care of those who are dependent on you:

At the Reali School, tuition was high and neither Prof. Biran, nor his brother and sister, as orphans, could afford it, so it came to be that Prof. Biran washed the floors of the school and thus covered the tuition for himself, his sister and his brother.

After “making his mark” on the school, he decided to study and become a teacher himself. Subsequently he returned to the Reali and taught there in the years 1928-1930. Later on, he discovered an opportunity to further his education and obtain a masters degree in his field of interest. So in 1930, at the age of 21 he began his studies at the University of Pennsylvania. In 1931 he enrolled into Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, where he studied under the renowned Professor Albright. He received his Phd. in 1935.

Second Lesson – Learn as many traits as you can, you never know when they'll serve you

As a student of near eastern studies (and later on, as an archeologist himself) Prof. Biran had to attend archaeological excavations. I recall a story he told me once, that he wanted to join a dig (as a volunteer), but all the volunteer slots were taken. The expedition was in need of a photographer (this was the 1930's). Recalling that he worked with his uncle one summer as a photographer, and had learned the trade, he applied for the job and not only gained his coveted excavation experience, but also received pay as a photographer.

In 1937, following a recommendation given by the man who was his principal at the Reali school and an appeal by the British government (who was then in control of Palestine), he became the district officer to Afula and the Jezreel valley, his disposition and character caused the inhabitants of the valley (both Jewish and Arab alike) to bestow on him the title of "governor of the valley."



(Prof. Biran and wife, Mrs. Ruth Biran, with local delegates, in the valley)

The third lesson – Don't toot your own horn.

In 1946, while district officer to the valley, Prof. Biran took a jeep with some compatriots and a British officer, and together they planned to visit a kibbutz. On the way to the kibbutz their jeep was ambushed by Arabs, it ran over a landmine and the shots fired afterwards killed all but Prof. Biran and the British officer accompanying him. After the British auxiliary force arrived and the ambush was thwarted, Prof. Biran reached the phone and called his wife, the first thing he told her was to go to his deceased compatriots' wives and be with them.

Now my father, my brother and I first learned of this when I was about 14 (my dad was 54), when my brother was on a class trip to the kibbutz in question and he saw a picture of what appeared to be my grandfather next to the exploded jeep. He asked my grandfather if he had any connections to the kibbutz, and we all heard the story.

Prof. Biran continued on and became the district officer of Jerusalem on behalf of the British government. After the State of Israel was "born," he was appointed as an assistant cabinet secretary and also served as the assistant military governor of Jerusalem.

Fourth Lesson – do not betray confidence and do not acquire or use friends for their assets.

In 1955 Prof. Biran was appointed consul-general of Israel to all of the western states of the U.S. and resided in Los Angeles, California. During his term as consul he worked tirelessly to raise funds for the fledgling country and to create relationships between prominent Jewish American businessmen and the state of Israel. He was party to many a secret and befriended many important industry captains. He

never spoke an ill word about his acquaintances and friends. Indeed, we (his family) don't know of all his friends even today. We do know that he never asked any of them for favors and that all his friends we know about cherished their friendship with him.

After this, he returned to Israel and to archeology, and was appointed the head of the department of antiquities and museums. A post in which he strived to collect, maintain and display knowledge so that all could benefit.



(on site during the building of the Israel Museum)

#### Fifth lesson – never shy away from hard work

At the age of 65 he retired as the head of the department of antiquities. At that age, he turned to head the Nelson Gluek School of Biblical Archaeology at the Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem. As the head of this school he headed more than one archaeological excavation, but the most famous of his excavations was the one at Tel Dan in the north of Israel; it was there he made his most important discoveries (indeed that discovery reached the *New York Times* front page, twice) and he physically, actively, dug there until he was ninety.

He retired at the age of ninety two, but kept on working part time (and for no pay). I remember when he retired; we figured out that he was entitled to two years of paid vacation according to law, which he accumulated over his 27 years of working at the Hebrew Union College, since he hadn't ever taken a

day off (needless to say, he never pushed that point).



(excavating at Tel Dan)

#### Sixth Lesson - Know how to receive an honor

He was awarded many an honor in his day (including the prestigious “Israel Prize”) and he always knew how to receive them gallantly. He was always soft spoken and always had a kind word to those bestowing the honor upon him.



(photo taken from the Israel prize winners website)

#### Seventh lesson – humility

In almost every aspect of his life he was humble, never one to embellish or bring attention to himself. I know that if he read these lines. I would probably receive a slight “fatherly” scolding, and he would dismiss them with a wave of his hands as unimportant, actions spoke louder than words. Such was his way.



He died on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2008, at the age of 98, and is missed to this day.

## **Lessons In Manliness: Dennis Desmond**

by Nate Desmond



My dear father, Dennis Desmond, was born at Cape Canaveral, Florida (during a family vacation).

Growing up, he excelled in school while participating in many extracurricular activities as well. During high school, my father was active in his local FFA club and raised a wide variety of animals such as rabbits, sheep, and bulls.

After graduating from high school, he earned a degree in Electrical Engineering and entered the workforce. After a few years as a systems administrator, he became a born-again Christian and began studying the Bible with amazing dedication – trying to make up for lost time.

During this part of his life, he married my wonderful mother and began working as a high school math teacher at a Christian school. He greatly enjoyed this job, but the low salary forced him to leave when my birth increased the costs of his small family.

Eventually, the job market drew him to Oregon where he ultimately found a position at Intel. For the last fourteen or so years he has continued working in different capacities at that company.

### **Dedicated Christian**

First and foremost, my father is a dedicated Christian.

For as long as I can remember, he has never failed to read the Bible steadily (reading through it completely each year), and it has a large effect on his life.

Although he is always pressed for time, my father is always ready to stop and help others. This is so much his habit that once, when a father/son organization we are members of sent an email saying that they needed a speaker for the next meeting, my mother told us children not to tell my father... because she knew he would try to help them even though he did not have the time.

My father is truly a Christian hero.

### **Loving Father**

Without a doubt, my father is the best father anyone could possibly have.

Both by example and by teaching, he works hard to train all eight of us (ranging in age from my toddler sister to me – a high school senior) to be true Christians, patriotic citizens, and dutiful workers.

Recognizing the importance of reading the Bible, he not only encourages each of use to read God's Word daily ourselves, but he also reads a chapter of Proverbs to us most mornings and gives us a Bible study nearly every evening.

My father has been and, by the grace of God, will continue to be my greatest mentor and guide. Thank the Lord for the gift of a great father.

## **Lessons in Manliness: Robert D. Gates**

By Travis E. Gates



Profession:

United States Air Force, Sergeant (Vietnam War, Honorable Discharge)

Police Detective Sergeant, US Marshall (retired)

Man (active)

Robert D. Gates is the father of two boys. One of those boys happens to be me. Come to think of it, he'd laugh at the term "boy" as he always stated that he raised men. He said that before I was even old enough to know what that meant. He's also a son himself. His father, Bob, didn't necessarily realize (or at least appreciate) the man he raised. But he raised one just the same.

The Gates men, if nothing else, have an extremely strong sense of respect for our country. **Patriotism.** I don't mean this in the sense of the term that seems to heed political affiliation. Rather, I mean this to say that we have an extremely strong appreciation for the great freedoms we're allowed as citizens of our country.

That freedom is often symbolized in our flag. 50 stars. 13 stripes. The United State of America. And part of our time-honored tradition as Americans is the singing of the national anthem. It doesn't matter that we weren't raised as singers, because we damn sure weren't (not for lack of trying, rather for lack of talent). The singing isn't the point. The point is the attention and honor paid during which the song is sung. The rules my father taught us are quite simple.

### **Rule #1**

This flag and this anthem, they mean something. Men and women died for our right to stand here and pay respect. So pay up.

### **Rule #2**

Your eyes stay fixed on the flag during the entire duration of the anthem. No exceptions.

### **Rule #3**

Stand up straight. Swaying or shifting of weight is not to be tolerated. Imagine you are "at attention."

### **Rule #4**

Take off your fucking hat.

### **Rule #5**

Your hands can be respectfully clasped (one over the other) in front of you or behind you. Option two is your right hand over your heart.

### **Rule #6**

No talking, laughing or playing grabass during the anthem. Ever.

**Rule #7**

Singing is optional. It is only to be done respectfully if done at all.

**Rule #8**

Absolutely no chewing of gum (or anything else) permitted.

Sadly, even the simplest of these rules are often neglected by the hundreds (if not thousands) in the crowd who insist on playing grabass with their fellow assholes. This is not sad just for the fact that they are being disrespectful. This is actually more saddening due to the fact that it has become the norm.

I've often wanted to conduct an experiment; I want to know if people would show the same lack of disrespect if that flag they were supposed to be honoring was draped over a casket of a fallen soldier. A hero. Would they finally understand the impact then?

One way to tell the mark of a true man? His respect.

As a patriot.

As an American.

As a man.

## **Lessons in Manliness: Roger Hagen**

by Chris Hagen



Roger "Pudgy" Hagen. Born 1933, died in the summer of 2007 to lung cancer. Pudgy grew up in Minnesota with eleven brothers and sisters; he was near the top in birth order, his only older brother being Ser.

When he was around the age of thirteen he began smoking, a habit that would eventually kill him. He smoked unfiltered cigarettes all his life and near the end he would remark if anyone asked why, "Why quit now?"

When he was sixteen he joined the Navy by lying about his age. He was a gunners mate on a destroyer in the Korean War. He was married at eighteen to my grandmother who is still alive today, they had six children my dad being the oldest and were married for fifty-three years. After the Navy my grandpa got a job with the railroad and worked there until retirement when he was in his sixties. Throughout the time in the railroad he worked for several companies even Amtrak for awhile and said his favorite job was the caboose-man before they were obsolete. Their job was to watch the train on the turns to spot a derail early.

Our family is a family of drinkers. Only my grandpa never had a sip and when the inevitable grandchild would ask why he never had a beer he would always reply, "Because I don't want to get soused." No more, no less.

After grandpa died my grandmother and father told us the dark stories of his past that no one talked about. He used to drink, a lot. He used to drink fifths of scotch and fight with strangers walking by the front of his house. He beat my grandmother and cheated on her several times. After this he had an ultimatum to stop or lose her. From that day forth almost fifty-five years ago he never touched another drop of alcohol in any form.

Speaking as someone who struggles with an alcohol problem at times and comes from a family of alcoholics, I cannot imagine the temptation that he had to overcome every day being around us. That he was able to put that aside and do the right thing is impressive in my book.

## **Lessons in Manliness: Old Man Fred**

by Mitchell



I wanted to share a little bit of the life of my best friend Fred.

I met Fred at work and for a time thought of him only as a funny older gentleman that was always quick with a joke and a hardy laugh. He's about 35 years my senior and has seen a lot more of life than I can ever imagine. In his early years after high school Fred enlisted in the Army as a demolitions expert and was having a blast in Germany. One day he was told to pack his gear and that he wouldn't be needing his demolition truck for this trip. He and many of his buddies got on a plane and some hours later they landed in Vietnam.

Fred never used to talk much about his experience in Vietnam... many veterans don't.

One day when we were shooting the breeze I asked Fred if he served in Vietnam and all he replied was "yep."

A few weeks went by and he told me that when he got home he dumped all of his Army gear on the driveway, poured gas on it and burned it. I always wondered what must have happened over there in that land so far away. A conflict that raged for a decade just before I was born.

Soon I heard bits and pieces of Fred's stories...

*"it was so hot the clothes started rotting off of our bodies"*

*"when our boots rotted we tied pieces of old tires to the bottom"*

*"those gooks knew how to cook a chicken for a whole platoon and have leftovers"*

*"It was good to be short back then... helps to hide in the grass"*

He always gave a good laugh after telling me stories like that.



One day he asked me if I knew why Uncle Sam gave you two dog tags?

He said they used to put one on a chain around your neck and one on your bootlaces. *"in case of a mortar you'd probably find one half or the other."*

Like so many veterans of Vietnam, most of Fred's friends never made it back home. I can't imagine being stuck so far from home in harms way every day, and then come home to a country that was just as foreign as the one you just left.

After Fred served his country he landed various computer jobs in the new computer industry fields and eventually became a long-term contractor for IBM.

I don't know why Fred took an interest in me, but I became a project of his. As I went through my divorce and getting fired from our place of employment, Fred always had a kind word for me.

*"I never pick a loser... I know you'll make it somehow,"* he would often tell me.

*"If you ever need anything just let me know."*

*"I've been shot at and missed once and shit on and hit a hundred times and I've lived to tell about it and you will too."*

It seems that he always had some saying that fit the moment for me.

**I remember the day that Fred told me that he prays for me often.** Sometimes when nothing else will do, just knowing someone else cares enough to pray for you is wonderful.

Now I'm working again and about to be married again. Life isn't always easy, but I still talk to Fred often and we still work on various projects together. As a matter of fact, when I needed a best man for my wedding I couldn't think of anyone else who stood close to me when I needed a true friend.



Through the life that Fred lives I have learned about true friendship. The saying that **a friend in need is a friend indeed** comes to mind because of the genuine concern and care that was displayed.

When I wanted to give up on life I was constantly encouraged by Fred, and I've seen him time and time again try to put life in perspective for me and others.

I can only imagine that the trials of the battlefield and the trials of the corporate world have given him **reserves of strength that most in my generation will never know**.

If I can learn to emulate one characteristic from my dearest friend it would be how to laugh in the face of adversity.

Fred, on behalf of myself and many others whose lives you continue to touch I continually thank you.

## **Lessons in Manliness: Henry Halcomb**

by James Halcomb



My Dad, Henry Halcomb of Hindman, Kentucky, and I had nothing in common. There are no tales of great bonding moments, only moments of acceptance and relief. Neither of us were who the other thought we were. Accomplishments were few for either of us. He was born in Whitesburg, Kentucky, somehow (story is still unclear) dodged the draft during Vietnam, and never got a high school diploma. No major legacy or words of wisdom left behind. His life and desires lacked nuance, complexity, or ambition. He had left all that behind. He was the greatest man I have ever known.

My Dad worked as a supervisor for a coal company for most of his life. Was respected, actually worshipped, by the men who worked for and with him. At his funeral, my wife and I saw men of much greater wealth and esteem relate stories of how they wouldn't be where they are if it wasn't for "Good Ol' Henry." Others were men of the working class who he had counseled in their youth, gave them a job and saw him as a father figure, even more of one than he was to me. Then there were the women.

I would not consider my Dad a great man of fidelity; he had a wondering eye. Now how much this translated into indiscretions during his thirty plus years of marriage to my mother, I don't know and it doesn't really matter now. I can tell you he loved her. He gave his whole life to keep her centered and safe. She fell apart after his passing, only living six months later.

He tried to be more of a part of my life after I moved away. He saw that I was becoming a man just as he had, just a different path. He saw me find a good woman, who I married. He saw me work and play just as hard as he did, but I used my mind not my hands. He saw the struggles that we had early in our marriage. Our financial woes, our desire to have a child, and our struggles just to better our home and ourselves.

He never got to hold his namesake and grandson; Quinn showed up almost two years later. My wife jokes and says when Quinn smiles that it's his Grandpa, giving him ideas on how to drive us crazy. I like that thought. I hope when Quinn gets older that when we travel to Eastern Kentucky, he will get to hear all the good, the bad, and the crazy antics of his Grandpa. I hope for every truth there are ten lies; Dad wouldn't want it any other way. His example to me was to simply MAKE LIFE FULL. Every day he worked his ass off to provide for us, to put me through college, to keep his head above water, but I have never seen a man outside of a politician more admired. His life was FULL: friends, his work, co-workers, family, and love. He may have not left much in the bank account, or left a legacy of words of wisdom, but the Fullness of his life touched so many. He is a man to admire, just because of that: he was a man. Also, a cup of coffee and a newspaper on your front porch on a quiet Sunday morning is a simple pleasure that you should never let anyone take away....



## **Lessons In Manliness: Richard**

From Charles Smith



My posting is about a man named Richard; he is my step grandfather. I have to say that this man has always been able to give me good advice when I have needed it. When I was in high school, I sometimes did not do so well in my classes. When my mom and grand mother tried to shame me into getting better grades, Richard told me what I needed to help my grades improve. Because of the cost of insurance I had to wait until I was 20 to get my full fledged driver's license. Richard had the patience to go and sit with me the first time I took the test {I failed} and then again the second time {I passed}. He actually for awhile seemed to be the only one on my side when it came to me getting a regular license.

He also has gotten up numerous time at the crack of midnight to come and get me from football {me playing in the stands with the band} and also from numerous band competitions. He has done so much for me I do not think that I could ever pay him back for all that he has done, but I hope that posting this I hope some other men can benefit from it.

## **Lessons in Manliness: Mr. Boyd**

From Joey Tulino



When I first thought about writing a contribution for "Lessons in Manliness" there were several names I thought about. But there was only one name that when it struck me it made me get out of bed at midnight and turn on my PowerBook to get down the thoughts that were flooding my mind: Tom Boyd.

I didn't meet Mr. Boyd until my sophomore year of high school. I never knew him outside of school and I don't know much about his life. But I know that he left an impression on the man that I am today.

I took three years of auto shop in high school, and Mr. Boyd was my teacher the whole time. Looking back on it I should probably know more about fixing cars than I do for as much time as I spent in that shop. I mean I know enough to change out my alternator or do the brakes on my wife's car, but I have come to realize that working with my hands is not one of my strengths.

The first time I stepped into the shop I could barely find the gas cap on a car. Pistons, compression, valves, transmissions...it may as well have been gibberish. We were paired off and given a lawnmower motor. Our job was to disassemble it, learn the parts, and put it back together. The catch was that we were supposed to make it run. I think only one or two teams actually got theirs to work, but we learned how it should have gone.

In the years since, I have realized that Mr. Boyd was much more interested in making us into men than making us into mechanics. Instead of just teaching us about camshafts and rear differentials he taught us to respect our tools and to respect each other. He taught us the value of a job well done and the value of our fellow men. He taught us to respect the work and to take the proper steps to make sure we were safe.

The shop opened onto a narrow parking area followed immediately by a steep drop into a ditch. The following year we were packing the bearings on my friend's truck. There were three of us working on it, the last class of the day. We were watching the clock instead of paying attention and neglected to tighten the brake calipers back onto the rotors. The bell rang, my friend jumped in his truck and started to back out, probably a little faster than he should have. It didn't take long for one of us to realize what we had done. As soon as Mr. Boyd saw us struggling to slow the pickup before it tumbled backwards into the ditch, he sprinted over, threw open the door, and pulled the emergency brake. And we learned why it is called that. We learned that day, and for the next several classes, to make sure that the job was done and done right.

I must admit, I was kind of a loser in high school. I can't honestly say that much has changed, but I guess I just look at it differently now. For lunch, while most of the kids would go off campus in droves, I generally ended up grabbing a sandwich from the snack bar and sitting with Mr. Boyd in the shop classroom. One week we watched a baseball movie called Talent for the Game. One week we tried to track down a manual for an old car that he was trying to restore (this was before the internet provided more information than you could possibly want at just the click of a mouse). Most times we would just sit and talk. I can't say I remember clearly what we talked about, but I remember that it always seemed like he talked to me like I was someone important rather than some annoying kid interrupting his free time.

At the end of my junior year I was filling out my schedule and found that I was short a class. I was of course already signed up for auto shop and I couldn't find anything that remotely interested me to fill

the slot I had open. Mr. Boyd suggested that I should come be an aide for him that period. He filled out the papers, turned them into the office, and my schedule was complete. I came back the next fall to learn that he hadn't told me that the class I was aide for was the vocational/learning disability/behavior disorder class. Not that I wouldn't have signed up, but it was a bit of a shock. All of a sudden I was helping quite a few of the kids that I had seen made fun of for the past three years. The kids that for some reason the popular kids decided it was funny to torture. And of course these kids would do anything for the popular kids. It always made me uncomfortable, and I don't believe that I ever participated. But I never did anything about it. Mr. Boyd taught me how to see past what everyone else could see to the person beneath. After just a few classes helping I realized just how great all of them were. I came to look forward to that class every day more than any of the others. Writing this I had to stop and pull out my yearbook and look up where I had the whole class sign it. I can't help but smile.

One of the highlights for the auto shop seniors every year was the Troubleshoot Challenge. Students from all the schools in town would gather in the mall parking lot. The shop teachers would take a car for each school and screw them up. Then each teacher would select a couple of seniors to represent the school and compete to see who could remedy all of the problems correctly the fastest. All the other seniors would go along as spectators. It was really an honor to be selected. After three years of shop, all of the extra time I had spent in the class, and being his aide that year I was fairly certain I would be picked. I was not. It was quite a blow. I don't remember anything about the competition other than just sitting there steaming. I could not understand what happened. It took a few weeks but I finally got the nerve to ask him after class one day. It kind of seemed like he had been expecting it. He asked me how I really thought I was at troubleshooting cars. It made me think. If I know what the problem is I can generally fix it, but figuring out the problem is a struggle for me (something that has carried over to this day). He said that he needed to pick the people who were best at troubleshooting for the TROUBLESHOOT Challenge. He told me that you have to learn to play to your strengths. It finally made sense.

I had seen students who had graduated in previous years come back and work on their cars and visit with Mr. Boyd and I had assumed that I would be able to do the same. A few weeks after graduation I ran into him. He told me that he had taken a job in Wyoming and would be leaving in a week or so. He was from Wyoming originally and had wanted to go back for a long time. The job he described sounded ideal for him. But the thought that I wouldn't get to spend anymore time with him was like a blow to the gut. I am not ashamed to admit the welling of a manly tear in my eye even as I think about it now, 14 years later. He gave me a hug and told me that he saw great things for me. I wish that I could say that I have lived up to his expectations.

Mr. Boyd was a great teacher. Even though I don't remember much about cars, and I don't have any sound byte-like quotes from him, I know that I am who I am today because of lessons that I learned from him. And I hope that my son can find life teachers like I found in Mr. Boyd. And I hope that I can be one of them.

## **Lessons in Manliness: My Grandfather**

by Jacob Stokes



One of the men I admire the most is a man I hardly know. He taught me things that I should and have incorporated in my life and he also taught me things that I should avoid in my life. He did this all without really saying anything.

A little back story. My grandfather lives in the northeast and I live about 12 hours away down south. Before I was born he and my grandfather divorced and he moved away with his girlfriend, now wife. He visits about twice a year but usually for only one day at a time and if I do see him more than that it means someone has passed. I have been to his home only three times in my life and only once without my mother. Although I have limited interactions with him I have learned more from him and stories of him then he will ever know and than anyone else will ever teach me.

Here are some things I have learned:

- You can learn more from listening than talking. He does not speak unless spoken to.
- Read things that are real. He ONLY reads non-fiction. While I do not only read non-fiction I do share his passion for it, and we now share books back and forth through the mail.
- Work your ass off. He is 78 years old and when my mother called him on Friday he was feeding horses in 3 feet of snow.
- No matter what happens take care of your family. He has been divorced from my grandmother for over 40 years, and he still sends her an alimony check every month. He has never been late.
- Protect your daughters. I have heard countless stories of him doing some extraordinary things for my mother and her sister. My mother fell out of a third story window when she was two and my grandfather walked out the front door and caught her.
- If you are going to bet on horses do it quietly. He raises race horses as well as running a large electrical business. The last time I went up there he took me to the track and he would help me by showing me what to look for in a horse, but he never let me see him bet or told me who to bet on; he just handed me a wad of cash as we were walking out and never said another word about it.
- Money means nothing. He is well off. but it is because of hard work. He sends my mother money every month because her and my father are both disabled; she has lupus. I recently was laid off, and I called him because I thought about moving to the north and working for him, and he told me I was more than welcome to but I would start at min. wage until I could out work the people who are already there. I almost went, but I got a job here.
- Do not overstay your welcome.
- Finally. Be a man. Since I was little, my granddad would send me 200 bucks for my birthday and Christmas every year just like my sisters. The day I turned 18 it stopped, and I got a letter in the mail saying that I was now old enough to earn it on my own and my money would be split among my sisters, which it was. Then one of my sisters got married and after the wedding she received a gift with a note inside saying this was the last gift she was going to receive since she now had a husband that should take care of her, and all gifts are now forwarded to my other sister, which they are. This is a lesson in reality and manliness, but we all know that he is there for us if we we ever need him even though we really do not know him.
- My grandfather was a man, sometimes not the greatest father or grandfather because he was or

is never here, but I know he would be if I needed him. I hope to lean more about him, but he is very tight lipped and lives far away. He hates the phone and loves letters, but you cannot read his handwriting. One day.

## **Lessons In Manliness: My Grandfather**

by Rick Howard



I don't know everything about my grandfather- he isn't a very reminiscent man. But what I little I do know, he shows through example and character. He's Spanish, and lived in the north of Spain throughout his youth. His father had servants and a Rolls-Royce as well as a Bentley. And now although he has a large home in the middle of the city, the wealth having been spread among several heirs, he drives an Audi from the mid 90's.

I now live in North Carolina, but see him every summer for 2 months and am still fluent in Spanish. He speaks Spanish, French, Latin, and very little English. He has a small silvery mustache that is always well trimmed as well as thin slicked back short hair always with a freshly ironed dress shirt and pair of slacks. He owns several small shops throughout the city of Seville which my uncle rents out to businesses, and now spends his time with family or at church. A true example of a manly patriarchy is shown through his, and those of my family that still reside in Spain.

When I am with the family as well as the family of my uncle, my grandfather will frequently sit with the children and banter, or let the women speak of trivialities. He may throw in some clean humor, and will never let an argument occur. Spending about 150 euros on a dinner [~\$200] sometimes every night of the week- he pays without question, and if money is ever spoken of, it is always ended with his final word of "It's only money!"

Although it may be too old-fashioned or even backwards as considered by some, my grandfather held traditions true for men of class. My grandmother will toil and clean all day, proclaiming that she cannot sit down for things needed to be cleaned or ironed. He may incessantly cry "Please, sit down, eat!" she will sometimes clean dishes, prepare more food, or bring out desserts during dinner.

His conviction in Catholicism is ironclad to the point where he refused to go to the wedding of the first gay member of our family- one of his cousins. I told him once that my father had scolded me for wearing a cross on a necklace, saying it was gay. He told me that in many ways my father was right- but in this, he was wrong. I remember that we went to a wedding during the midst of summer and he was in utter shock at the behavior of other attending men when they removed their suit jackets. I think he would've sat in a pool of his own sweat before removing his suit jacket.

Although my grandfather may have never served or saved anyone's life, I believe that true manliness is shown through his great health although he's well into his 80's, his style and grace, kindness, and light spirits. I have never to this day seen a happier old man.

## **A Lesson of Manliness for a Young Girl**

by Consuelo Martin Rubio



I should probably begin this entry with an explanation, one that is pretty obvious given the title of my post. I am not, as would be guessed from writing on "The Art of Manliness," a man. I am a 22 year old girl living in Toronto, Canada. Yet I knew someone who provided me with an innate sense of what it is to be 'a man'. He was someone who, from a very young age, unconsciously influenced me to better myself, without my realizing it and without any sort of patronizing.

I first met Ernesto when I was ... I don't know how old I was; he just always seemed to be there. I'll quote from the biography that was given at his funeral:

"Ernesto Feu was born in Portugal on October 16th, 1938 to a Spanish father, Jose Antonio Feu Marchena, and a Portuguese mother, Maria da Gloria Judice Magathaes Barros. He graduated in law from the University of Lisbon in 1962 and joined the Portuguese diplomatic service in 1963. He was posted as secretary to the embassy in London in 1966, became First Secretary to the Embassy in Pretoria in 1970 and became Portuguese Consul General in Toronto in 1974. He left the Portuguese Diplomatic Service in 1977 and worked as Director of the Portuguese Free Interpreter Services at Kensington Community School. In 1980 he joined the Ontario government and was responsible for international relations within the Ministry of intergovernmental Affairs until 1990. From 1991 to 2000 he was Executive director of International Relations and Chef of Protocol."

What this illustrious, yet dry, biography fails to make mention of is what a smart, charming, kind and entertaining man he was. Growing up, I knew nothing of his career or past; he was just Ernesto, the partner to Bill Brokenshire, my family friend Jim's brother. I saw him often at neighbourhood events or family dinners with the Brokenshires. He was always there, always wonderfully dressed and well behaved. At every party he was always the person who arrived on time, helped with food and was so charming he could relax and disarm any uncomfortableness or awkwardness that can sometimes occur at gatherings. Unfailingly polite to everyone, whether they were the host or some neighbourhood kid, his dry humour managed to be hilarious without being cutting. When he was around, everybody wanted to sit with him, to talk with him, or, even better, to hear some of his stories. He spoke five languages fluently and when my grandmother visited from Spain, he was able to keep her easily amused, which is a very hard task, let me tell you.

I never really realized how much of an influence he had over the way I behaved or the decisions I made until I was around 12 and had entered junior high. Ernesto and I never really spoke that much; our meetings were always rushed greeting at parties or sitting and listening to him tell exciting stories of his travels to an enthralled audience. Yet over the years of my knowing him, he instilled in me a deep sense of honour and manners; he was always so well behaved, you couldn't help but want to behave like him. When I took up singing, he encouraged me and always asked me to sing for him to hear how I was getting along. It was from him that I learned to love opera and ballet, two passions of mine. While I was in Junior High, a horrible place where they annex people at their worst age, I really began to realize what an amazing part of my life he was. When I started to pick up a really lazy manner of speaking, always dropping my g's and saying 'like' and 'anyways', it was he who corrected me, nicely, and taught me the importance of expressing yourself well. When I was bullied, he taught me to stand up for myself without violence, and how I should learn to take the high road and not degrade myself by resorting to racist or homophobic slurs, as most of my classmates did when in a fight. Ernesto really

taught me what it was to be a gentleman, and that in turn taught me how to look for those same qualities in others.

When Ernesto died in 2006, I was heartbroken. I was finishing my first year of university and was going through a very hard time in my life. His death completely unsettled me, and I felt his loss so acutely I thought I too would die. All of this pain for a man whom I really did not know that well. I realized how little I actually knew him when at his funeral. On the way to it, I ran into two famous Canadian Politicians, also on their way to his funeral. It was when I received the pamphlet for his funeral, which contained the above biography, that it really hit me what an amazing man he was. Under the biography, which was impressive in itself, there was a paragraph of his decorations: Lieutenant of the Victorian Order; Commander of the Order of the Infante (Portugal); Commander of the Order of the Merito Civil (Spain); Commander of the Order of Saint Sylvester (Vatican); Knight of the Order of Isabel la Catolica (Spain); Knight of Cruzeiro do Sul (Brazil); Cross of the Order of Merit (Germany). All of these decorations and titles, and I had never known. This was a man who, though with an incredibly illustrious career as a diplomat and highly decorated, had never boasted about it. He never flaunted his titles or wealth and so I took some pride in the fact that I had known him for so long, and he had been so humble. At the end of the ceremony, they played a video of photos of him throughout his life time; young and dashing, old and charming. Over the photos they played "At Last," and I couldn't help but laugh. When I was about 16, he had asked me to sing for him, and I sang that song. When I finished he complimented me, but said, "That song is incredibly over played, especially at weddings. If you play it at yours, I'm not going." Truer words were never spoken.

Ernesto, in the course of my acquaintance with him, taught me so many lessons on how to behave. Not just superficially, but to your core. He taught me that manners were one thing, but to be a true gentleman, you had to believe that everything you did, everything you said, could influence and change the lives of those around you. He taught me to respect others, and myself; that confidence is key and that being well dressed and well spoken are two incredibly important skills to have.

Sometime after he died, I realized that the grief I felt was not only for the loss of a friend, but for the deep emptiness of losing a mentor. He had been so important to me, and was gone forever. Yet I know that if I take his life as a model for my own, I cannot help but succeed, just as he did. I still think of him, and I can hear his voice when I have behaved less than well; never chiding me, just being his own gentlemanly self. Though he may be gone, he is still a large influence in my life, and I still consider him my mentor.

Those are the lessons in manliness that that man taught this little girl.

## **Lessons in Manliness: My Dad**

From Guy Miller



I'm more of a storyteller than writer but will try my best to convey this lesson via blog post. My dad was born in 1929, the year of the stock market crash, there were a total of 9 kids in the family and the majority of the boys learned the carpenter trade from my grandfather and his father who were carpenters. My dad was one who started the trade at 14 years old. He quit school in the ninth grade, soon after joined the army and helped to rebuild Japan. After his hitch was up he worked with my grandfather and a couple uncles building houses in Pittsburgh and remodeling existing homes.

I am very proud of my father's work ethic; he was more concerned about his reputation than making a lot of money, he loved his job and always gave people more than they purchased. As a carpenter with great skill he was never want for work but had jobs lined up as people only wanted him to work on/in their house.

One particular job stands out to me that I happened to be helping him on. I was about 11 years old and my dad was subcontracted to remodel a living room. He was given an address and told the materials were on the job. We arrived at an old "shack" that a nearly blind lady lived in. The house was infested with cockroaches and cats were everywhere. The stench was unbelievable. My father hesitated for just a moment on what he got himself (and me) into, but he knew the lady must've put her life savings into having the living room re-modeled, and he had given his word already to accept the job. He looked at me and just said "Well, we got to get the job done." For two days we would hold our breath as long as we could while we worked inside, then we would run out for a breath of fresh air. We'd take off our clothes and throw them in the back of the truck at the end of the day and immediately wash them in hot water when we returned home. I remember neighbors walking by asking us how we could even go into the house let alone work in there.

We finished the job at the end of the second day, My dad remodeled her living room as perfect as he would have in any other house though I doubt the lady could even see the difference. As disgusting as the job was his word was given, and he just sucked it up and did the job as he was paid to do.

I learned about integrity on that job, doing what is right, living up to your word. I think about that job too sitting in my office listening to people complain that the temperature is too hot/cold in the building or some other minor inconvenience or how they're not going to do such and such a job because it is beneath them.

His contract's were not very involved and were constructed simply, he was honest in his dealings with everyone and gave more than you paid for, such was the pride he had in his work and reputation.

## **Lessons in Manliness: My Grandfather**

From Nick Roberts



In the center of west Texas lies a small, dusty farm town named Lubbock. Home to Buddy Holly and the original Stubb's barbeque pit, this place is also the residence of my grandfather.

My visits to Lubbock are always memorable and centering in ways that are not always apparent- it seems that I learn a new life lesson as I delve into my grandfather's story while sitting around the table in the kitchen of the house he designed and built.

This man, William Brown, is the constant symbol of virtue and class in my mind: being devoted to his family, country and God in unwavering fortitude.

A native to Louisville, Kentucky, my grandfather was the first from his family to attend a University. His story is amusing by today's standards I think- he literally just strolled up to the admissions office, took a test (no SATs at this time), passed and said he wanted to study chemical engineering on a whim and off he went. After failing his first year my grandfather says he made the best decision of his life: to pick up and try again. His second go at a degree came to fruition four years later when he graduated with a chem-engineering degree. He then refused an immediate high-paying job offer to take a break for a stint in the Navy (amidst the Korean War).

Upon his departure from the military, my grandfather picked up a job within the Dupont Co. where he met my grandmother (they have been happily married for over 50 years).

These days he goes to church daily, is a member of the Knights of Columbus, and owns a grape farm in Lubbock.

A figure of hard work- my grandfather silently teaches me every time I'm in his presence.

## **Lessons in Manliness: My Dad**

From Kevin Shinn



I read this at my dad's funeral four years ago. He grows greater in my eyes with each year that passes. Thanks for letting me share it here.



It took a while, as it does for most youth, to realize that the vistas of the world I was seeing was a direct result of the shoulders I was standing on. I thought in order to matter in the world, you had to go out and conquer it. But what I have learned from my dad, the man named Jack Shinn, I now believe that it's just the opposite. You make a difference by simply letting the world come to you, and then offering blessing to each and every person that comes your way.

From time to time, I would make it back to Route 2 Box 162, sometimes bringing university students with me to visit the farm and experience the country life. Without exception, every person I brought there was greeted by my Dad with a hug and a kind word. Sometimes those students would later tell me how much that meant to them. Dad seemed to think that it may be the only hug they got, so he would offer it. It didn't matter the color of their skin or how long their hair was, they got the same attention. You make a difference by letting the world come to you and offer blessing to each and every person that comes your way.

As I got older, this lesson became more and more evident. People would say to me how much they appreciated Dad's smile or sense of humor or offering a piece of candy. They remarked how positive he always was, how willing he was to help out. In his latter years, he dealt with much physical pain, but you would only know it through the grimace on his face. He never complained about it and never allowed it to rule his spirit.

No summary, however, would be complete without the story I have told many, many times. It's a story that encapsulates his life and what he valued most. It's a story that happened when I was about 12 years

old, but I didn't hear it until nearly 20 years later. The story takes place at Route 2 Box 162 Bartlesville. With very few kids around my age, I had to learn how to entertain myself. Dad helped that effort by buying me a little Yamaha 80cc dirt bike. That motorcycle provided me countless hours of fun. With 26 acres to my discretion, one would think that would be plenty of space for a 12 year old boy to ride. But for some reason, I decided to include the front and back lawn in that 26 acres. As you can imagine, motorcycle tires are not kind to growing grass, and it didn't take long before a nice little path was worn around the front of the house, to the back of the house, then out to the pasture. Round and round I would go, living in my mind the adventure of being a world-champion racer, or being chased by bad guys.

This path was pretty unsightly, given that it was visible to everyone that passed on the road out front. One time a neighbor had stopped by to visit and he asked Dad this question. "Jack, how come you let your son tear up the yard like that? Why don't you make him keep out in the pasture?"

Now this was a pretty logical question given the amount of land we owned, but my Dad's wisdom sometimes defied logic. To know my Dad was to know what a deep reservoir he was. Even though he was a man of few words, he was also a man of countless thoughts and musings. In these past few days, I have read many of those thoughts recorded in the margins of his Bible.

I believe what set my Dad apart was his ability to look at his choices and side with that which was of most importance. In other words, he had his priorities right. He responded to the neighbor by saying, "The grass will come back. But the boy won't."

Now if you drive by Route 2 Box 162 today, you will see the grass has come back. The boy lives in Lincoln, Nebraska in a home of his own, with two kids of his own. He hopes to be the kind of man Jack Shinn was, a man who hopes that as the world comes to him, that he will offer blessing to each and every person that comes his way.

I will miss you, Dad

## **Lessons In Manliness - My Grandfather Fred**

From Peter Anderson



One of the men in my life that has had the biggest impact on my life is my grandfather, Fred Gustaf Anderson.

Fred was born one of two children to a hard working middle class family of Swedish immigrants. He was raised in Minneapolis, MN, and lived, for the most part, a carefree existence. He was a good student in school, and was a good brother to his older sister Gloria. If that was where the story ends it wouldn't have been a particularly eventful one, but it doesn't.

World War II came along. At the time my grandfather was a carefree 18 year old, considering if he should go to college. Pearl Harbor happened and my grandfather's entire life changed. He enlisted in the Air Force, and after going through some basic training and training in his specialties, he headed off to war. He said goodbye to his sweetie at the train station (my grandma - see the pic below) and left for England.



Before he flew over the Atlantic Ocean my grandfather got sick, and wasn't able to fly over with the rest of his crew. He stayed back - and his entire flight crew was lost, crashing somewhere over the Atlantic on their way to Europe. We are extremely thankful he didn't get on that flight - God had a plan for his life - and for ours

Once my grandfather had recuperated and flown over to England, he started flying sorties with his crew on a B-17 flying fortress. Grandpa Fred was in an extremely dangerous position - he was a waist gunner on the B-17. Flying missions over Germany and other Nazi occupied territories was extremely dangerous, and many B-17s never returned from their bombing runs. Unfortunately, my grandfather happened to be on one of the planes that didn't return. His flight was shot down over Germany. My Grandpa Fred was able to survive the crash, parachuting into enemy territory, where he was captured and taken as a POW.



(Here's my grandfather in his flight suit - at 19 years old)

My grandfather spent several years in a German prison camp waiting for the war to end. I didn't talk to him about his experience more than a couple of times, and since he died when I was only 14, I didn't ask as many questions as I would have liked. But I remember fragments of him talking about how there was never any food, and when they did get some it wasn't very good. I remember him talking about how he had a big steak when he got home, and it was like a piece of heaven.

He survived the war, and returned home to my grandmother (see his return in the photo below). They started a family and eventually had 5 boys - including my father. I'm so thankful that he persevered through those hard times while a POW and didn't give up. He gave my father and the rest of our family a chance to exist!



My grandfather taught me many things, and most of them were taught by example. He taught me the importance of sacrifice, both for your country and for your fellow man. While he may have been drafted eventually anyway, he decided to join of his own free will because he felt strongly about the

cause of freedom for all.

He also taught me about the importance of being a man, and of doing things even when you don't really want to. He may not have really wanted to go fight in this war, but he realized he was fighting for something bigger, and he wanted to do his duty.

He taught me how to work hard. He worked hard his entire life to provide for his family, even when it meant working long hours. All the same, he was still attentive to his boys, always providing a strong father figure for them.

Finally he taught me of the importance of his faith, and how in the tough times there is a higher power that you can look to. He wasn't ashamed to be sensitive when the occasion called for it, when it came to his faith, and his family.

My grandfather may not have been a powerful political figure, a movie star or a billionaire, but in my eyes he was still a great man.

My Grandpa Fred taught me how to be a man.

## **Lessons in Manliness: Wallace Louis Exum**

by Mike Lambert



Today, at 82 years young, Wallace Louis Exum remains the embodiment of true Navy leadership. He provided me and my fellow Navy officers with some great lessons in manliness. He is a man who lives his life richly in our Navy's history, has performed bravely in battle, written lovingly about our Navy's past and prepared so many young men and women to lead our Navy's future. He is a manly man.

In September 1943, the Navy brought onto its rolls an improbable leader and a truly remarkable individual in an underaged 16 year old Seaman Recruit named Wallace Louis Exum. Born in Akron, Ohio and raised mostly in the Los Angeles, California area by his two very loving parents, "Wally" Exum knew he had to perform his patriotic duty (the ultimate lesson in manliness) and join his young friends fighting the war in the Pacific. Waiting until he was "old enough" was not an option. He convinced his parents to sign for him. Soon thereafter, he was a Sailor.

Seaman Exum had not been in the Navy long before he strayed from his true course. More than once, he ran afoul of the Navy's rules and regulations. Somewhere early-on he earned the nickname "Bigtime" for his easy-going manner, his extra thick Navy mattress and his home-of-record -- Los Angeles. More than once he had some difficulty in finding his way to his ship on time. But he never did anything seriously wrong and NEVER ONCE did he ever do anything with malice against anyone.

17 February 1945 marked one of the many milestones in his life when he was wounded in battle as his Landing Craft Infantry (LCI-457) came under fire during the battle for Iwo Jima. On D minus 2 day, 17 February 1945, Landing Craft Infantry vessels supported underwater demolition teams (UDT), which conducted beach and surf condition surveillance and neutralized underwater obstacles. Japanese coastal

batteries heavily damaged 12 of the vessels, resulting in 38 killed and 132 wounded. At 18 years old, Wally was among those many young men wounded who earned the Purple Heart Medal - talk about a lesson in manliness!

Having won the war on both sides of the world, the military released many young men from the service. Wally Exum was among those men. But, somehow, he always found his way back to the Navy. He served in the Navy during the Korean War and Vietnam. Over his career he found himself at sea for 18 years and gave the Navy and the nation 42 years of selfless service. His service took him around the world. He continues to serve the Navy in retirement today as a "Goodwill Ambassador;" his wonderful books tell the Navy's story – and a wonderful story it is.

In 1981 at 55 years old, he was the first (and only) Chief Warrant Officer assigned as an instructor to the Navy's Officer Candidate School (OCS) in Newport, Rhode Island. Somehow, the Chief of Naval Personnel, VADM Lando W. Zech Jr. had a personal hand in assigning CWO3 Exum to OCS. As a Celestial Navigation instructor, Wally would prepare hundreds of young men and women for successful careers as Naval officers – showing them all how to "navigate life – steering one's true course". VADM Zech was certain that CWO3 Exum was the right man to develop these young men and women into professional Naval officers. VADM Zech sent exactly the right man. By all reports CWO3 Exum was an excellent navigation instructor. With few (if any) exceptions, the officer candidates loved their instructor. Frequently he would spend many extra hours in the evenings with the officer candidates, teaching them the finer points of using a sextant to "shoot the stars" – absolutely essential to celestial navigation.

His evening lectures always ended with the same admonition to the young people trusted to his care. "Remember, ladies and gentlemen", he would always say, "you can shoot the stars but we never shoot the moon." The groans from the officer candidates would follow him all the way back to the parking lot where he parked a beautiful convertible Cadillac that his "even more beautiful" Joyce (one of the two loves in his life – the other being his daughter Marilyn) had given to him. Without their realizing it at the time, Warrant Officer Exum was teaching these young people how to navigate their lives – not just celestial navigation. He taught them good manners, courtesy, honesty, patience, teamwork, integrity and so much more - lessons in manliness.

He taught hundreds of young men and women to be good Naval officers. Those officers went on to lead thousands of Chief Petty Officers and Sailors in our great Navy. It is reasonable to say that CWO Exum impacted the lives of tens of thousands of Sailors through his good work and leadership in Newport, Rhode Island. He helped produce countless Navy Captains and certainly a few Admirals for the Navy. Not too bad for a 55 year old Chief Warrant Officer who was originally uncertain about his ability to get the job done for his friend and mentor Vice Admiral Zech (a manly man from the Navy submarine force who saw combat in the Pacific).

Following duty as an instructor and Company Officer at Officer Candidate School in Newport, Rhode Island, CWO4 Exum was assigned as the Security Officer at the Fleet Activity Sasebo, Japan. Once again, he was challenged to put Sailors on their true course and provide them lessons in manliness - namely, always do the right thing. He had no idea that he would be providing course corrections for his Commanding Officer. But, it didn't matter; Wally was going to do the manly thing - the right thing. The CO was off course and it was CWO4 Exum's duty to bring him back to the right course. Turns out the CO was violating Navy Regulations by allowing bulk sales of alcohol to Sailors during all hours of the day and was not attentive to many security issues confronting Fleet Activities Sasebo. Besides

being against Navy Regulations, these bulk alcohol sales were creating all kinds of discipline problems among the Sailors in Sasebo – a lot of Sailors and a lot of alcohol are not a good mix. CWO4 Exum tactfully and discreetly let the CO know that the bulk alcohol sales were prohibited by Navy Regs and were causing some discipline problems among the Sailors, as well as some black-market issues with the Japanese. CWO4 Exum also informed the CO about a number of security issues the base faced. The CO wouldn't hear any of it. CWO4 Exum knew he had to get the CO on course to protect the CO from himself and to protect the Sailors. He told the CO he would take it up the chain of command. Anyone who knows anything about the Navy understands this put CWO4 Exum in a really tough spot. No one enjoys telling their CO that he's wrong. And the CO sure doesn't enjoying hearing it. But CWO4 Exum had long ago committed himself to "steering a true course." CWO4 Exum filed his report and the CO promptly sent the Chief Warrant Officer to the psychiatric ward at the Naval Hospital in Yokosuka, Japan. It was readily apparent to the doctors examining CWO4 Exum exactly what the CO had in mind. They kept CWO4 Exum aboard for a short period and released him back to Sasebo "fit for full duty." Somehow the bulk alcohol sales ended soon thereafter and CWO4 Exum got the attention of the right people in the chain of command to correct the many security deficiencies aboard Sasebo. Once again, this part of the Navy was back on its "one true course."

And that is what his life is all about. You'll find him teaching celestial navigation in the middle and high schools in Washington State from time to time. I am sure those students haven't figured it out yet but 'ol mister Exum is teaching them how to navigate life. Those kids are still getting lessons in courtesy, teamwork, honesty and so much more. Count on CWO4 Exum to make sure all the charts are current, we're steering by the stars, we're taking the whole crew and everyone is steering "one true course." That, my friends is a true lesson in manliness.