

CRIBB<S>NOTE – JUNE 20, 2010

No matter how much fathers do, it is almost never enough. There are demands and expectations for much more from them. The fact that fathers help to give us life does not carry much weight on the scale of important events and contributions. Instead of being praised and honored for their role in bringing us into existence, too often fathers are reduced to “sperm donors” or some similar moniker that demeans them.

Fathers are taken for granted. Rising everyday to travel on treacherous thoroughfares for the single purpose of conscientiously providing for their families does not earn them a special place in society. In fact, media portrayal of working dads is usually laced with ridicule that show them as buffoons whose intelligence level is equal to a great game of golf.

Fathers simply don't carry the respect bestowed on mothers and grandparents. Fathers swim in the same squirmy waters as disrespected in-laws and unwelcomed uncles. They are the butt of jokes and become convenient scapegoats for societal ills. They are expected to carry the brunt of responsibility when things go wrong, but they should not expect a modicum of reward or appreciation when they skillfully navigate through troubled seas to rescue their children out of harm's way.

Fathers don't get a break. They are called at all hours to deal with matters beyond their control. Their ability to successfully resolve a crisis does not merit reconsideration of their image and the popular misperception of their skill sets. Being a father requires a knack to keep going despite well-honed efforts to discourage and distract them. Fathers just aren't regarded among the most prized parents.

There! It's said.

One hundred years ago on June 19, 1910, Sonora Smart Dodd had a different idea. The daughter of William Smart, a Civil War veteran, Mrs. Dodd decided to do something that would honor her father who raised his six children. She loved and appreciated her father for what he had accomplished.

Mrs. Dodd was inspired by a sermon preached in her church on Mother's Day. She came away with a sense that her father also deserved to be recognized. Out of her determination a national movement was launched to celebrate all fathers. Her desire to create a Father's Day was met with laughter and ridicule. But, she persevered against the jokes and resistance. It was no easy journey.

Although she succeeded in capturing the attention of religious and political leaders to set aside a special day for dads, it wasn't until 1972 that Father's Day was officially proclaimed a national holiday in the United States.

The rough ground on which fathers walk and toil to assure their families' security often is saturated with deep pitfalls. Their souls can be tortured by the constant tugging and persuasive lures of upward mobility and self-imposed expectations. Fathers strive to do what is right and good for their children, spouses and partners. They seek to attain lofty positions and over compensate to shield against the onslaught of nagging demands.

Through it all, fathers go on.

It is not lost on us that Jesus referred to God as his Father. He recognized his innermost needs required the omnipresence of a loving, forgiving, and nurturing Divine Parent. God provides unconditional affection and mercy. God believes in us and trusts us with the welfare of Creation.

Fathers trust their children and extend unconditional love. They believe in our ability to accomplish great tasks and overcome incredible obstacles. They never give up on their children and always encourage them to go on.

I am immensely grateful to Mrs. Sonora Smart Dodd for standing up on behalf of her father and all fathers. A century after her campaign began, we honor our fathers. This Father's Day I hope we will re-ignite her spirit and resolve to correct the graphic images that misrepresent our fathers. **HAPPY FATHER'S DAY!**