

# Observer Life

**Breakthrough**  
Technology makes it  
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## Chat room

Kathie  
O'Donohue

## Devoted Dad's her hero

**D**ad is my hero, and now that I have lived with my husband just as many years as I lived under Dad's roof, he remains my hero.

Though he is aging, I still see that youthful glimmer of mischief in his eyes. He—along with my mom—continues to be one of the most influential shapers of my life. While so many children today have un-invested fathers, I feel blessed that my Dad was a central force in my life.

Strong as a bull, and sometimes as stubborn as one, I view my dad as a person of great strength, both physical and mental. He often worked late into the night to support his family of nine, and my day wasn't complete until he sneaked up into our bedroom at night and told wonderful stories created exclusively by Dad for us. He always included a character in his stories that bore amazing resemblance to me or one of my siblings. Only after we saw Dad could we sleep.

Dad was a man of great faith. I would sometimes catch a glimpse of a shadowy figure kneeling aside the bed in prayer. I ponder the humility of this gesture, even as a small child; that a man as "great" as Dad would submit to the authority of his God. Dad never missed Sunday Mass.

Often in the background, Dad was a foil to the many activities that consumed the extraordinarily busy lives of two parents and seven children. Yet, he was there. I am certain the burden of providing for so many often weighed heavily upon him, but he never gave up, and in so doing provided an enduring example of selflessness and perseverance.

He worked as a tree artisan, the word "worked" an extreme understatement. My dad could put a colony of beavers to shame! When I ponder the injuries he sustained over the years, I can't help but admire him and wonder at his vitality that has only recently begun to wane. Dad never quit, and this work ethic followed him to the present.

### CHARISMATIC, CREATIVE

In his heart of hearts, however, Dad was a multi-talented artist! Though he would quickly deny it. Among other things he could carve, build, draw, sing, and write. He had incredible creative energy and once built a life-size World War II airplane in our back yard to use in a film project he was creating. I could honestly say I was the only kid I ever knew with such an item in her yard!

Other kids liked Dad, even teenagers. There was something charismatic and inviting about him, and he knew how to engage people. Yet, Dad clearly understood the boundary between father and friend, and he wasn't afraid to discipline. He had a strict sense of right and wrong, so unlike the often hazy "idea" of these concepts today.

PLEASE SEE O'DONOHUE, C6



By Dan... (L) Little D, whatever the name he is, he is for me! My Dad, he's the best he's been on the trip. He's proud of us all no matter what. Ten minute phone limits, he home by 10, turn out the lights. Your room's a pig pen. Diplomats and hugs he gave us at graduation, we look at him now with such admiration. There's five of us in all ranging 28 to 21, look at us Dad how well you've done. From a broken finger in ninth grade to emotional PMS at 25 - I've always been the one to cry. But Dad is there he shows no fear and hasn't for all these years. This picture is older as so are we, much too old he sitting on his knee. However the age the love is unchanged ... I love you, Dad, Happy Father's Day.

Love, "Trislie"  
Garden City

One of the best times I had with my dad was at the Grand Canyon. He and I woke up at about 5 a.m. and hiked over to a scenic part of the canyon to watch the sun rise. We talked as we watched the bright ball of fire slowly rise above the rocky landscape. It was so beautiful and peaceful. It was a very special time with my Dad because we both enjoy the beauty of nature. I love and admire him and will never forget this great experience.

Jennifer Erley, age 12  
Plymouth

My favorite memory with my Dad is fishing. We go fishing every year. Last year my Dad was teaching me how to fish and he broke his pole! It was really funny. I caught the most fish. I really love doing this with my Dad.

Jonathan Vracan, age 8  
Canton

The nicest memories with my father is football. Watching on television, watching my brothers play, or when I played him and my mother would wait at the fence for me and the team to congratulate us. My father just passed away this January so this will be the first Father's Day without him. Happy Father's Day.

Love, Joe

My favorite outing with my Dad (Daniel) is when we go skiing at Blue Mountain. Next year I'm going to try snowboarding. I love my dad very much!

Brandon With  
Farmington

In the winter my Dad took me to the Summit. We swam in the big pool. Afterwards we went to the water slide. I went first and then my dad. He yelled, "Yipee!" when he went down the slide and I laughed. It was a memorable time swimming along with my Dad at the Summit.

Daniel Borisyov  
Canton

My Dad is the best Dad ever! Everything he does is wonderful! Every night he comes into my room and reads to me. I love him so much. I think he is the best. Happy Father's Day, Dad.

Karl Darden  
Livonia

I think the best time I've ever had with my Dad was the time we went up to Cadillac, Michigan, to go fishing. It was my first time on a fishing trip and you'll never guess what happened. My Dad had cast out the line and then he gave me the rod. I felt a small tug and I started reeling it in. When I reeled in the fish, it turned out to be a 16-inch brown trout - the largest one ever pulled out of that stream. It was definitely a great bonding time between my father and I. I've never had more fun. I can't wait until the next fishing trip. Happy Father's Day.

Love your son,  
Joey Darden  
Livonia

By the time that I was in high school, my dad was a single parent due to the untimely death of my mother.

## Being with

## Favorite memories of good times with their fathers

In the late 1800s, William Smart, a Civil War veteran, lost his wife as she was giving birth to their sixth child. He raised his children alone on a farm in Washington state. One of his daughters, Louise Dodd, later realized the extreme self-sacrifice her father had made throughout the years and the love he had for his children.

In 1909, Mrs. Dodd proposed a day to honor her father in June, which was the month of her father's birthday. Father's Day was slow to catch on. What Louise had done was not even well-known in her own state despite the governor's proclamation.

The idea of honoring fathers with a special day was actually reinvented independently in several other places, each locality thinking it was starting something new. By 1916 President Woodrow Wilson had endorsed the idea and in 1924 President Calvin Coolidge recommended national observance of the day "to impress upon fathers the full measure of their obligation" and strengthen intimate ties between fathers and children.

We asked our readers for their favorite memories of being with their fathers. Here are the responses.

For my junior prom I had shopped and shopped for the perfect dress and just couldn't find it, so I went to a dress shop and had one made.

Two days before the night was to be danced away with all of my high school friends, my date called and said he didn't want to go. No other reason other than that, he just didn't want to go to the prom. I was devastated. As a teenager who didn't have the self-esteem to go to the prom alone, I locked myself in my room with all of my perfect prom attire and didn't see the light of day for the next 48 hours.

My Dad did the only thing he knew to be a constructive solution to his little girl's problem. He put on his suit and had me tie his tie (he still doesn't know how to tie a tie) and bribed me into getting into my prom getup that seemed anything but perfect by the time.

So while all of my friends were slipping into the bathroom to catch a slip of something that they had no business drinking, I was dining and dancing the night away with my dad at Weber's Inn in Ann Arbor.

Somewhere between putting that dress on and halfway through the night my Dad got me to laugh and then to dance. I'm sure that more than one time he wanted to go to that guy's house and let him know, in no uncertain terms, how devastated he had made me feel. Instead he took me to his favorite fancy place and requested "Beautiful Tonight" because he said I looked beautiful that night.

Now that I have kids of my own I can realize that the amount of hurt that I felt could have done nothing but paled in comparison to the hurt my Dad must have felt to see that amount of pain in his little girl. And, without a mom around to soothe the pain in the way that a mom may have been able to do, my dad did the best thing that he knew how to do. And, as a daughter I will never forget the way my Dad made it all better for his little girl that day.

Though I do not have any pictures of that night, I do have one of the next time that we were all dolled up together: my wedding. Thanks for the perfect prom night, Dad!

Jodi Johnson



Katie Smith kisses her Dad.

I spent the summer of 1978 studying International Law at Oxford. Before departing on the trip, I mentioned to my parents that I planned to spend a couple of weeks touring England and Scotland after the school semester. My father had family roots in Scotland, and he decided on the spot that he was going to join me on the tour. I must confess I was a little apprehensive about the idea. I don't think I'd ever spent eight hours alone with him, let alone 10 days. But plans were put in motion, and touring we went.

We saw Stonehenge. We walked through Westminster Abbey. St. Paul's and Salisbury Cathedral. We visited Sterling Castle, Edinburgh Castle and the Tower of London. We saw Agatha Christie's Mausoleum in London. We hiked across the Isle of Iona and saw the burial grounds of many Scottish kings.

We stayed in great bed and breakfasts, and in some not-so-great ones, too.

The highlight of the trip was spending an afternoon



Justin Dotson, 4, canoeing with his Dad.

playing a round on the links of the Old Course at St. Andrews. Since we were both lifelong golf fanatics, that was a real treat. Earlier that summer, Jack Nicklaus had won the Open at St. Andrews. I can assure you that Jack could not have enjoyed his final round there anymore than my Dad and I did that day. I lost my father four years ago, but I'll never lose the memories of that great trip we shared in 1978.

Michael Legg

I love my Dad so much. I like when we play basketball, golf and I like when we play Nintendo. I love when we scream! My favorite thing is beating him at the last second! He's my best pal in the north, south, east and west.

Ryan Gilwa, age 7  
Livonia

My Dad is not the typical father - he's a father of five (one daughter 44 and four sons 41, 40, 38, 34). He sacrificed his life for numerous years. You see, he was an assistant principal for a Catholic high school for over 30 years. So my Dad was Dad to hundreds upon thousands of young men and women at Benedictine High School. He taught us respect, pride and integrity.

My most memorable outing happened in 1976. Dad coached football, track (boys/girls) and was the athletic director. He started the position of assistant principal that year and stopped coaching football. The new coach was terrible. Anyway, at the all sports banquet the returning football players presented my father with a plaque which read "Dad PLEASE come back to coaching WE NEED YOU!" He was so touched with this that tears rolled from his eyes.

Now 66 and having been retired for six years, the plaque still hangs on the wall in his home for all to see. Sometimes, I swear when I see him wipe the dust off of it, I see the tears fall as he remembers the memories of that night. My Dad is not just my dad - he's my best friend.

Thaddeus John Mac Jr.  
Redford

Our favorite place we like to go with our Dad (Joe) is fishing! We like to take our canoe and go out to a lake. We take our lunch with us and eat it in the boat. Our Dad teaches us all about how to catch big fish and helps us try different lures to catch them. We will take him fishing on Father's Day because that is where he would like to go.

We also like to build things with our Dad. We use all kinds of tools. Our Dad helps us build special projects for school too. We have fun together. Our Dad is the best and we love him a lot. Happy Father's Day, Dad.

Douglas and Brian Giroux  
Livonia

Our favorite adventure with Dad (Ray Klieber) was when we went to Cranbrook to see the robotic zoo. It was a beautiful day and Daddy wanted to surprise us by taking us to see the robotic zoo. At the robotic zoo they had robotic bats, giraffes, rhinos, flies, grasshoppers, platypus and other animals. After that we went out to eat some doughnuts (we brought some home for mom).

Then it was time to go home and go to sleep. We

PLEASE SEE LETTERS, C4

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