

Father's Tears

A Father's Day Story of Love and Pain

BY DR. CORREA, SR.

"I want to be happy and free. I want to go on dates, dance and have fun. I want to experience the good times that others experienced in this big city. My children do not have to be a detriment to my happiness..." After nineteen years of being married to this beautiful and younger wife, my patient did not know, at that time, that he was about to experience the worse nightmare of his life.

Let me share with you this story of a father in tears on this Father's day. He was a successful business professional in a another state on the Bible belt. His presence, charm and well reasoned demeanor was the end results of years of experience and intellectualism.

Six years early, after a short illness, he gave his last farewell to this father on this earth. As the only child in a family of three, his responsibility now, was to take care of his elderly mother. Due to her delicate condition, his wife and small children moved to Oregon. He stayed a little bit longer to close his business and then, moved to this state, to be reunited with his loving family.

My patient shared that, during their separation, his estranged wife started having fun with a younger man. Dysfunctional and addictive behaviors took control of her life. "I want to be free and happy" was the main motivation to her decision to abandon a nineteen year marriage. With a circle of friends that believed her self centered story, she was advised to file a restraining order based on physical abuse. She was assured that there in Oregon, this legal move is well supported not only by the court, but also the gender of the judge. This was a great opportunity to obtain her fast freedom.

One day my patient, who is a well known advocate for the family unity and an advisor for the news media, received the court's restraining order. Three police escorted him away from his home, his children and

possessions. This man who helped many to succeed, now was hunted, humiliated and shamed. In only twenty minutes, my patient became homeless.

The day in court arrived. She dressed up like Miss America. As an experienced performer, her tears and acting were so convincing, that the court believed her false and untrue story. There was not any physical evidence or proof of any kind of abuse. The case was not substantiated by police, medical records or testimonies from witnesses that at least, heard the violent abuse happen. The court made their verdict. The restraining order did not allow my patient to get close to her, to his house, to his children, to their school, to write or to call his children.

The court in this prosperous State of Oregon omitted a very important part in their decision. They hear the story (real or fictional), make their personal evaluation and decision. However, without taking into consideration the psychological and emotional condition of the person who filed the complaint. In the case of my patient, his wife was diagnosed in the past as a paranoia-maniac depressive individual. We respect the judges for their great knowledge of the laws. Nevertheless, when it comes to the future of the family unity, they lack the expertise of the Psychiatrist or the Clinical Psychologists. Thus, place them as the initiators for the raising statistics in divorce and child delinquency.

One month after the court restraining order was put in affect, my patient was served with the divorce papers. The following month they were in the divorce court. In 48 days the marriage of nineteen years was dissolved and the children became part of the statistics. Children of divorce become broken pieces that no super glue can put them back together. However, "she was happy!" One year later, my patient's mother, the one who was his spiritual and moral support during these challenging and painful times, died of

a failing heart.

I am wondering during this Father's Day celebration, how many fathers who had passed through a similar predicament, are celebrating their court decisions. How many of these fathers are long in to be with their children and hear the sweet sounds of; "Hey, daddy, happy Father's Day!"? Like in the case of my patient, how many mothers are using their children as a weapon toward the fathers? How many mothers have sent their children on vacation to keep them away on Father's day? For how long do you believe the destruction and slinger of the family unity will continue? How the personal evaluation of one judge could help us build a better tomorrow for our families? What is the roll of God in all of this?

Well, here we are. One more Father's Day in front of us. What kind of advise should I give to this hurting, grieving man? What words of encouragement could I share with this roll model and falling hero? We say that time is the best healer, but every year we have Father's day, birthdays, Christmas and New Years without the children we adore.. What a paradox!..

If you are a father reading this story on Father's Day. If you are passing through the same frustrating predicament. If you are experiencing the pain, hurt and grief from the separation of your children, I have few seeds for success. Look toward your future. What goes around comes around. God's time table is different to our time table. It is not important where we came from, but to where we are going. In front of you build a Big dream, so you can conceive it, believe it and achieve it. Always remember, if your dream is big enough, the facts do not count.

Ah!... I almost forgot something very important for you on this Father's Day. I understand you. You are not alone. In this story I am the Doctor, that patient, that professional, that father in tears on this Father's Day... alone.

Observing

Nominations sought for General George C. Marshall Leadership Award-1998

Vancouver Mayor Royce E. Pollard and the Marshall Leadership Award Committee are seeking nominations for Vancouver's annual General George C. Marshall Public Service Leadership Award. According to Pollard, "The leadership principles and dedication to country which General Marshall stood for must never be lost. Through this program we intend to ensure that those principles and values are passed on to future generations of our citizens."

The award recipient will have the opportunity to tour the Marshall Foundation in Lexington, Virginia, visit Washington, D.C., meet with local elected representatives, and participate in the Leadership Clark County Program.

The Marshall Leadership Award program aims to acknowledge, encourage and support potential leaders in our community. The award was started in 1989 to recognize a young person's commitment to public service and

demonstrated leadership potential.

To qualify for the award, a candidate must be an actively involved Clark County resident, 35 years of age or under, and have completed a four year college degree. Selection is based on demonstrated leadership ability, commitment to public service, academic achievement and potential for an ongoing leadership role in public service.

The 1998 recipient will be announced by Mayor Pollard on Thursday, Oct. 8. There will be a public ceremony in the George C. Marshall on Vancouver's Officers Row on Wednesday, Nov. 4.

General Marshall, Nobel Peace Prize recipient in 1953 and author of the post WWII Marshall Plan, was commander of Vancouver Barracks in the mid-1930's. This award was created in his honor in cooperation with the General George C. Marshall Foundation.

Last October, Charlene Ryan, the 1997 Marshall Award recipi-

ent, visited Washington D.C. and the Marshall Foundation. While in our nation's capital, she was a guest at a formal, black-tie Association for the United States Army banquet. Several Secretaries of State and generals, including former Chief of Staff Colin Powell, were present.

Nomination forms can be picked up at the following locations: Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce, Fort Vancouver Regional Library (Clark County) locations, Clark College and WSU. Return nomination forms to the Mayor's Office (PO Box 1995, Vancouver, WA 98668/210 E. 13th St., Vancouver, WA 98660). Nominations can be submitted by individuals or organizations by the Monday, Aug 31 deadline (or postmarked by this date).

Previous award recipients are: Cindy Gibbon, John McIlvain, Steven Dearborn, Douglas Sessions, Paula Martin, Darin Atteberry, Shawna Burkholder, Thomas Hagley, Jr., and Charlene Ryan.

Explore the secrets of Officers Row

Fourth and fifth grade students are invited to experience daily life

Fourth and fifth grade students are invited to experience daily life at and around historic Fort Vancouver in the decades from 1850-1890. The class meets June 29 through July 3, from 9a m to noon, at the U.S. Army Headquarters Building at

Officers Row. Through drama, art, toys from the past, guest speakers and field trips, students will learn about Vancouver's roots and rich past. They will get to know the real General Grant, learn about Native Americans and barn-

storming at Pearson Field. Sign up at Bagley Center, 696-8219, or Marshall Center, 696-8236. For more details, call class co-instructors Mina Milligan at 694-6741 or Maria Wrightson at 694-1229.

Fire Marshal encourages safe fireworks practices

Fourth of July fireworks will go on sale, and may be purchased from approved stands and used, from Sunday, June 28, at noon through Monday, July 6, at noon. Vancouver Fire Marshal Rick Atkins reminds parents to ensure that children use only legal fireworks purchased from approved stands.

By state law, fireworks sales are limited to people age 16 and over. Sellers must require proof of age with a driver's license or photo identification card issued by a school or government.

To prevent injuries, the fire marshal encourages parents to closely supervise their children during the upcoming fireworks season. "It's important for parents to be present when fireworks are ignited, and to ensure that the materials are lit in an open area away from homes, vehicles and other combustibles," says Atkins. He adds that parents should teach children to:

- *remain a safe distance away from the fireworks
- *read and follow all warnings
- *never try to re-light fireworks that have not fully functioned, and
- *keep a bucket of water nearby

Very young children should not be allowed to use fireworks. Because of the intense heat, even sparklers can be unsafe if used improperly.

Hospital emergency rooms treated an estimated 7,600 fireworks related injuries in 1996. About 40% of those injuries were burns to the hands, eyes and head.

Children under age 15 sustained about one third of the injuries.

A good additional source of information about fireworks safety can be obtained on the Internet at: www.gov/wsp/fpb/psi.htm.

Study Volunteers Needed HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

African American volunteers are needed for a 30 week hypertension research medication study. If you are 18 years or older with high blood pressure and in general good health, you may qualify. Volunteers will be thoroughly screened by the research team and their private physicians consulted. Study medication, study-related clinic visits and testing will be provided at no charge for those who qualify. Reimbursement for travel will be given. For information call 228-3217, Mon.-Thur. 9 to 4, Fri.- 9 to 1.

Clinical Research Group of Oregon
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Portland, Oregon 97205



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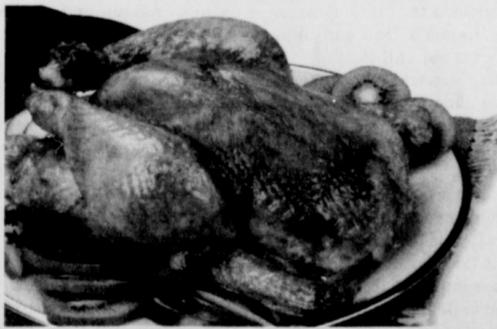
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