

I REMEMBER DAD

BY: His daughter Edythe Myrtle Felt Thompson Thurman
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My memories of my dad are very happy ones. He always made me feel special, and very much loved. For some reason I don't remember being disciplined or scolded by my father in my early years.

A few memories of my father previous to me starting school are very clear in my mind. He took me with him quite a lot, to the store, the barber, the dentist etc. One time he took me with him to the dentist, Dr. Folsom. While the dentist was working on his teeth I was in the room with them, and the dentist said to me: "I bet you are your daddy's sweetheart aren't you?" I replied "No I'm his peach". That is what my father called me when I was very little.

My father worked at Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company, on 6th South and West Temple, in Salt Lake City, Utah. We lived at 828 South 1st West, just three blocks between our house and his work. About the time he would be expected home I would go outside and watch down the street for him to come home. I would recognize his walk from about two blocks away. When he got down to the corner from the house I would run to the corner and wait for him to cross the street. Then he would pick me up and carry me on his shoulders the rest of the way home.

If he had to work late and mother had a meeting or some place she had to go, he would take me to work with him. He would sit me on a high stool with a lot of letters in front of me. He would use these letters when he set type for printing. I would make words out of the letters.

It seems to me that I spent a lot of time with my father. He liked candy and I can remember going to the store with him and he would buy me some real large gumdrops. To this day if I eat a gumdrop I'm reminded of my father.

One time when mother and I had been shopping, and we were on our way home, and were walking along, it seemed to me very fast, I saw some pliers laying on the side walk, and I picked them up and took them home to my father. He was so pleased that I was really proud that I could give them to him.

My dad taught me so many things, but mostly I remember I could ask him any question about the church and heavenly things, and he could always answer them, but it was always something that he could back up with scripture and teaching from the prophets. He was always reading, the scriptures, church publications, or books by LDS authors, the newspaper, Life magazine, and Saturday Evening Post. (I think this is where I learned my love of reading.) He had a rocking chair that he particularly liked to sit in, and he didn't like his newspaper all messed up. If I read it before him, I would always put it back together just like it had never been opened.

He was ward clerk, and I remember how much he loved his very first grandson, Bobby, Bob and Marie's child. During the war we would always take Bobby to church and he would always sit on the stand with my father. To this day I can see them together and the special bond between them.

One lesson I will always remember happened when my friend Bonnie Holmes and I were playing and I said something that hurt her feelings, and she went home crying. My father came to me very upset, in fact he was angry. He asked me what I said, and I told him I was only kidding. He said to me that I didn't have any right to hurt someone like that, and I was to never do it again. I've always tried to remember that and not hurt anyone. I'm sure I've failed sometimes, but I could not deliberately hurt anyone. I never heard my father criticize anyone.

He always respected authority, and obeyed anything that someone in authority asked him to do. One Sunday when I was in my youth I can remember our Stake President, William Perschon, speaking to us and he mentioned in his talk that he was sure the reason my father always had a job during the

depression was because he paid an honest tithing no matter what. In those days we had, tithing, building fund, fast offerings, budget and sometimes other things besides our tithing to pay. He not only did what was expected of him but I never heard him complain about it.

He never complained about giving of his time or means, and never criticized other people, and was always quick to say that we had no right to judge other people. When I was in my high school years we had an apostle that was excommunicated and my father said: what he did was wrong, but we don't know the whole story so it wasn't right to judge or to criticize.

The ward we lived in was the 4th Ward, Pioneer Stake, on 6th So., 2nd West Temple. We had many reunions, road shows, plays, movies, dances and etc. These use to include, fish ponds for the children, raffles, ring toss, and things that now are considered gambling and not included. When we had ward reunions, we would start with a wonderful dinner, always put on by the Relief Society sisters. They did all the cooking, all the work, and while they did the clean up, we would have a nice program with music and readings, and etc. then we would end it with a dance. I was about thirteen years of age. While we were at one of these reunions my father asked me to dance with him. I kept telling him no, but he made me, and I had tears in my eyes the whole time. I was very shy, and felt that everyone would laugh at me, and I couldn't stand the thought of it. It also taught me something, and that is that I could accomplish more than I thought I could.

My dad never complained, and one time I remember he fell of the roof and he through his shoulder out of the socket. When he went to the doctor he put his foot under his arm and pulled his shoulder back into place. Except for the look on his face you would never know he was in pain.

When I was in high school he came home from work one night and he was in a lot of pain, and he went to bed. We called the doctor, but he would not go into the hospital. The next morning when the doctor came to see him, he made him enter the hospital. His appendix had ruptured, and gangrene had set in. While he was in the hospital, they were testing the family's blood for a blood transfusion

Just about a year earlier my best friend was at school, and someone came to school and got her out of class and told her that her father, who worked for the city, had been in an accident and he was killed. I can remember I was with her and she was crying and saying, "I don't have a daddy anymore."

When mother called the school and told them to send me home that my dad was ill and they needed me at the hospital I thought sure he was dying. I didn't even have a dime for bus fair so I had to walk home the three miles. When I arrived home my mom was really upset because she told them not to worry me, but to tell me that they wanted to check my blood. Anyway for about an hour I knew what it felt like to lose my Dad because I was sure he was either dead or dying.

The only time my dad ever told me he didn't want me to date or associate with a particular person was when I was eighteen. It's the only time I ignored his wishes and I went anyway. I didn't stay out very long because it wasn't in my nature to disobey my parents, and I couldn't enjoy myself knowing I had hurt him by doing as I pleased instead of listening to him. Besides I knew in my heart that he had never given me any advice that was wrong.

My mother and father would go to the Coconut Grove to the dances. They would go on Tuesday for waltz night, and they would go again on Saturday night when they did all kinds of dancing, and of course they had big name bands. They would also go to a movie on Friday night. I would go to the movies with them and, we never had to worry about ratings then, because they were all good clean movies. When I was fifteen my mother said I could go to the Coconut Grove with them. It was formal and mother always wore a formal. She bought me a very pretty formal, and I danced every dance. One young soldier boy wanted to take me to the Hotel Utah Starlight Gardens for dinner and dancing. However, my folks told him I was too young and they said no. I was really upset. Since then I have been to the restaurant, but they either quit dancing or we just didn't stay I don't remember. I did think it was nice of this young man to ask my folks though and I didn't have to tell him no.

Many times when I had questions about the church or church doctrine, and was searching for myself whether the church was true or not, it would be my father that I would talk to. He knew a lot about the church and he always had an answer for me. He and my mother had very strong testimonies, and a lot of faith, and I am grateful for their teachings and their deep faith, and love for our Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ, and for all of their family.

All of the children were called home, in 1962 I think. Dad was in the hospital and had surgery, for prostate cancer. They didn't expect him to pull through. Don and I went home, and Marguerite was there, and I think Paul and Afton were living in Provo. He did pull through and Mom said the doctor told her that if he hadn't had such a good heart he wouldn't have made it.

Not too long after the girls and I moved to Salem, Oregon in the summer of 1965, dad called on the phone and said that they had sold their house on First West, and they were purchasing a house on 6th Ave. He said he needed \$200.00 more and wondered if I could help him out. And I was more than glad to do so. I don't remember my father asking for help, and this was a first for me. It was such a little thing after all of the sacrifices he had made in his lifetime. I was glad to be able to do something for them instead of being the one to receive for a change.

Dad came to see us in the summer of 1965, just after the girls and I had moved to Salem. (I was a widow at the time.) We drove over to the coast and dad really enjoyed this. We had a black Labrador, named Shadow and a Manchester Terrier, named Itsy. Shadow loved to retrieve sticks from the ocean and we had fun throwing sticks into the ocean and Shadow would retrieve them.

He never liked to be away from home very long, and he didn't like leaving mother. Mom did not like traveling very much and she didn't feel like making the trip, but dad worried about her and couldn't wait to get back home. Whenever he visited anyone he would be anxious to leave after he had enough visiting. He would always say "Mae is getting tired we better go". Or else he would call her Mrs. Felt and she didn't like this very well. She would make some remark, like I'm your wife not your mother.

In the spring of 1972, while my brother Paul was serving as Mission President in Arizona, Fred and Lisa and I got in our camper and drove down to see them. We tricked mother into going for a ride in the camper, and as we went by Provo mother said "Oh we are going to see Paul and Afton." That is exactly what we did, but she thought we were going to Provo and we went to Arizona. When it started to get late and we were getting tired mom got up and shook the doors separating the bed from the rest of the camper and said "Isn't this thing ever going to stop?" They really enjoyed the trip though and we went through the Mesa Temple. We were really glad we took the trip because dad went down hill very fast after that.

In April of the same year dad got his hand caught in the printing press while working at Welfare Square, where he worked after retirement from the Deseret News. It was very painful and he never complained or said much about it.

Bob and Dru brought the folks to Salem to see us. He was very restless though and as usual he wanted to go home before the rest of them were ready, and on Mother's Day before church he decided he absolutely had to leave right then. Both Dru and mom were very disappointed, and Dru even left a bag of clothes and had to call from the Dales, and asked us to send them. It was so unlike dad to travel on Sunday and I couldn't understand. Later I decided that he was afraid he wouldn't be able to work at Welfare Square any more and he didn't know what he would do if he didn't have a job to go to every day, even though he was eighty years old. He never went back to work.

In July we called on Mother's birthday which was July 3rd to wish her a happy birthday, and when dad was on the phone he sounded so old and tired and he didn't feel well. I asked him if he was ready to come and live with us and he said "Yes". We had been asking them for a long time to live with us, but we wanted the decision to be theirs. We were afraid they would change their minds, so we left the next morning with our truck and camper to pick them up. When we arrived dad hugged me and tearfully said "I thought we would die here all alone". Mom hugged Fred and expressed that she was so glad to see us. We

packed what things they needed and locked the house and turned around and headed right back to Oregon. It was a real emotional time for everyone, but we knew it was the right thing to do.

At that time it was 925 miles from Salem to Salt Lake City. Fred had not had any sleep all night and it was getting really late so we decided to stay in Baker, Oregon at Marguerite and Ken's home. Fred slept about two hours and dad was so uncomfortable that we headed for home, and arrived in the morning before noon. Dad was in the bed the whole time, but he was so good about it.

Dad started to improve, and Fred and dad said it was because of all the Walla Walla onions that he and Fred were eating. We had to get him established with a doctor, and the doctor requested his records from Salt Lake, but they never arrived so after a few weeks of waiting the doctor said they better give him a physical and run some tests. Dr. Neely he come through the tests OK until he had to drink that awful stuff they have then drink, after fasting, and he got deathly sick and started vomiting., and we had to take him home without all of the tests.

When he was hospitalized there wasn't anything they could do but try to ease the pain. When Fred and I took mom to the hospital to see dad there was a nurse in the room when we walked in and dad said to the nurse "a ray of sunshine just walked into the room.". He told mom that the separation wouldn't be very long. He looked at Fred and said that mom was the finest woman that ever lived. Then he said to Fred, that he had one just like her. It was the best compliment that I have ever had.

One of my conversations with dad, we were talking about mom and he said he thought she would be happy with us. He also said she was a beautiful woman when she was young, and I can remember commenting that she was still beautiful. She was eighty years old and still didn't have a lot of gray hair and very few wrinkles. She had a hard time walking because she had pain in her back, but other than that you would never guess her age.

About three weeks before dad passed away the doctor said there wasn't anything they could do for him, and he wanted to come home. There was nothing to think about, if he wanted to be home, that's where he was going to be. My boss told me to take all the time I need from work. Fred built a room in the garage for Lisa because mom would never get any rest if she had to sleep with dad. So Lisa was pushed into the garage, but she didn't mind. She was so good about helping. She worked in a nursing home, and taught me a lot about helping my mom and dad. He would be so restless that when he couldn't sleep he would call one of us to help him out of bed and two of us would help him walk from the bedroom to the living room, and then he would be exhausted and have to go back to bed. We knew that he was suffering so much it never occurred to any of us to object to interruption at meals or during the night. Fred was so good to dad, and took care of all his personal needs, and it would have been so hard for dad to let anyone help him. He was always so appreciative of what we did and never got angry with any of us. It was a joy to have him in our home those last few months of his life, and I'm grateful that I shared the last few months of dads life.

He was in so much pain and seeing him in pain was the hardest part of the whole thing. However, near the end his passing was peaceful. Around midnight the last night of his life I was in by his bed and I started to cry and put my head on his chest and said "Dad I love you", and he said "I know and I love you too". I prayed silently to the Lord to take him and ease his suffering. I didn't know whether I should feel guilty for such a prayer, but I just couldn't bear to see him suffer any longer. He immediately relaxed and I went back to bed.. About 2 o'clock AM Fred got up to check on him and he was gone.

Dad was among the finest men I've ever known, and set a good example for me. I have had friends tell me that they wish their dad was like mine. I know how blessed I am to have good, honorable, parents, and my life has been filled with love. Not everyone has this blessing.

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