

A Father's Day Tribute

My father wore spats and a gray Fedora, not all the time mind you, but for special occasions. He was very handsome. People said he looked like Clark Gable. He had a mustache, he was tall and had a certain charm, and a wonderful sense of humor.

He had many trophies and medals. Several for skiing and ski jumping, speed skating, Soccer, Ping Pong, Tennis, Bridge and Golf. The last trophy he won was in his late 60's. It was the Apawamis Golf Club trophy. He won it three times over the years. The rule was that if you won it three times the silver trophy was yours to keep. For many years we kept it on the mantle, now my mother has it in her China cabinet.

He played the mandolin. He danced the Viennese waltz with me. When we danced I felt just like Cinderella at the palace ball. He loved all sports; he really should have had two sons rather than two daughters.

I remember when he took me to Macy's and bought me skis. There was a lot more snow in Norway than in Oakland, New Jersey, but he had plans and high hopes for me. He talked to me about the Olympics and how with practice I could be a champion.

There was that Christmas when all the girls were getting figure skates, all except me that is. I opened the box and there was a pair of racing skates. You know the kind, the ones with the long blade out in front. He took me out on the big pond in our backyard and taught me how to speed skate. He showed me how to lean forward, hands clasped behind my back and go like the wind. That was such fun. I remember how proud he was when I picked up speed.

I have a wonderful memory of he and I skating cross hands gliding across our frozen pond. You can just imagine how wonderful I felt.

When I was a teenager he built a cement tennis court in our backyard. He taught me the game. He taught me so well that I beat all the boys in my high school's tennis club.

My father was born in Norway and left when he was just 16. He went to sea. Norway had the second largest Navy in the world at that time. His plan was to travel the world ending up in America.

When I was older he took me back "home" as he called it. Proudly showing me where he lived, where he went to school and where he skied. Norway is such a beautiful country I couldn't help but wonder why he ever left.

When I asked him he told me that of all his subjects in school he loved American History best of all. What could be more exciting to a young boy than cowboys and Indians?

Rumor also had it that in America the streets were lined with gold.. He just had to come.

How could you not love a man that held you when you cried, played the mandolin for you. Taught you how to ski and to skate cross hands? And on occasion would dance the Viennese waltz with you.

Every now and then if I close my eyes I can still see him in his spats and gray Fedora.

Daddy died in 1978, and every now and then I think of him, and when I do I miss him so.

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