

Thomas D McDermott

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My father died this past June. He was 84. He was sick for almost three years, the last year and half bedridden. He probably spent more days in the hospital than out.

Thanksgiving 2003 was a happy time for me. He sat in his wheelchair at the head of the table for last time. The smile he had the entire day was priceless and one I will never forget. It was a most happy day for him.

My father was a laborer. I was brought up in the lower middle class. Money ran out Monday. Payday was Wednesday. He worked for Texaco, in their Bayonne, NJ plant. I believed he had 35 years of service when he retired. His responsibility was Havoline 10W-30 motor oil – quart cans. He drove the fork truck.

My Father drilled in me countless times to never get arrested because I would never get a job. I never did drugs because if it.

He worked hard to send me to college. He wanted better for his children. I recall fondly when I had made it on Wall Street. A few were asking each other what businesses their Father's were in. One said banking, another manufacturing. With this group, I knew they all were Chairmen. When they looked at me, I thought for a second and said "oil." I laughed to myself – knowing what their faces would look like if they only knew. It didn't matter to me. My degree was my ticket. I was grateful.

My father was part of the greatest generation, having proudly served in the big one – WWII aboard the Navy's DE-139, the USS Farguhar. There was nothing he enjoyed more than to re-tell countless stories of his experiences. I knew them all.

I always remember my father as being very strong and fast. God forbid he missed a day of work. As a little boy, someone was about to beat me up. Kids in the neighborhood alerted him. I remember seeing him run down the block so fast, tackle him and then tell him in no uncertain terms to leave me alone. He did. Back when I was growing up, parents took matters into their own hands. Today, it would be front-page headlines. He made me feel safe.

Goodbye Daddy, Rest in Peace.

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