

May 10, 2017

Warmth... something Central New Yorkers are looking forward to more than ever.

Warmth, not the overbearing, oppressive type, always makes us feel better and looking forward to more. Twenty one years ago, a great ray of sunshine, my mother Anna, left me to go to on to her eternal resting place and a piece me was forever gone here on earth. Golf became my vocation, a golf course is where I met my wife and the game itself is where I can be called a most reverent term: 'coach.' However, memories abound and linger daily when I fondly remember my mom, the lessons learned and why Mother's Day is most often a bittersweet trek back in time for me.

As far back as I can remember, it was my mother who said "play well Joey," as I left for a junior event, a high school match, or simply a day of golf with my dad. No one could have been more proud when I decided to pursue a life in golf and no one person probably got on their knees more every night to pray for my success. It was she who "warned" every girl I brought home to dinner that she would be playing at best a reserve role to my passion for golf and playing golf with my dad. It was my mother who packed lunches for my golf bag when I was preparing for a day of junior golf at En-Joie or IBM (now Traditions at The Glen). And how many rounds did she walk or ride along with my dad and I when we played daily during our annual Florida vacation and take pride in her "boys."

Now, while Mother's Day is celebrated this Sunday, I would choose to soften the word mother a bit and substitute the word "mom". It was Mom, or Mommy who showed affection and shared her words of encouragement when the score was too high on the scorecard or too low on the report card. It was mom who kindly and passionately gave me a hug after an admonition from Dad (surely warranted) and a word of encouragement when most needed. Mom knew my ambitions lied in playing a game that she never played, yet in that holy way did in fact understand. She somehow knew what made me tick, long before even I understood what I was all about. She was my sports psychologist, my first cheerleader, the best chef I knew and nothing was more peaceful than that nightly tuck in bed right after we knelt and prayed together thanking God for giving us each other. To this day, every night's silent petitions to my Lord begins with... "Dear God, please bless Mommy and Daddy..."

The love between a mother and son often will be overshadowed by a love for a wife and children, but no relationship, no love affair; will ever be deeper and more long lasting. A mom believes in her son, protects him from detractors, exaggerates his talents, overstates his height (and often understates his weight...!) and with a degree of tenderness that can never be understated. There will always be that lingering image of my mom waving goodbye to me that Christmas Day of 1980 as I pulled out of our driveway in Endicott, NY to embark on my year of chasing my dream on the PGA Tour. And of course, there was that fateful day on the eve of The Pensacola Open in 1981 that the phone call from my Dad simply said... "Mommy fell."

As Mother's Day nears, so very many feelings are evoked, some inarticulate, while others roll off my tongue emitting a smile, melancholy yet strangely at the same time jubilant. It clearly is pertinent and necessary to note here that I am so lucky to have had two mothers, my birth mother, the late Mrs. John (Rosalyn) Pascarella and my mom, Anna. Truly I have been blessed, as so many others before and after me have been.

My propensity for Mother's Day notwithstanding, Sunday will once again send me on a rollercoaster of emotions. Golf has become a sacred journey for me... some sixty-three years as a participant, the last

forty-four as a registered PGA Professional. Honesty, integrity and fair dealing are meaningful intrinsic buzz words of my profession and if you add affection, caring, love and nourishment, you have a mother's job description.

I have never thought of a day at the course as a day of work... It is simply what I do. Mom had her hands full with me, but I feel she didn't consider her sometimes burdensome days' work either. To her, I was a gift, a blessing and a son.

Happy Mother's Day to everyone... and please take to heart how fortunate we all are to share our feelings on this most special of days. So... think warmth... think mom.....peace to all.

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Joe Tesori, PGA