

As an earth's witness to a love that happened over many years, I witnessed this beautiful love story that you also may know true to your heart. This is what I witnessed growing up in a steel manufacturing town in the United States. My birth date year was 1964. You may also be the witness in your own life of a love between others that went not unnoticed over the years.

My brothers? There are two. My sisters? There are also two. With me being the next to the youngest with a distance of two and half years that separate us and with me being 10 years of the younger that separates me from my oldest sibling of a brother, I am a witness to my parents enduring love for many years.

The memoir is of a living mother and father today.

My father worked for a steel mill drawing wire that had him work nights mostly ever since memories of my childhood. Summers and Winters, my father wore the steel toed boots, safety goggles, long sleeved shirts with a red and white or blue and white handkerchief stuffed in his pocket. Worked in weather conditions of the summers with no air conditioning where my father worked in temperatures that reached 100+ degrees in heat drawing wire under fans and high wall open windows that over looked the Rock River that empties into the Mississippi in the upper half of Illinois- a 45 minute drive westward is the state of Iowa. At times, my father slept on the couch too tired to get to bed watching the morning news. Christmas' each year affected by the supply and demand of steel products with a few years of layoffs during the month of December. Christmas' were always a Christmas with memories good and controversial. In later years, with a Christmas of a winter's sweater that was given to my father that zippered in the front from not the oldest but next to the oldest brother that had obtained a professional position in a corporation out of college- not really what my father wore but happy my father was happy to receive anyway.

My mother a staunch Christian woman was active in the women's circle of the *First United Methodist* Christian church that very seldom missed a service of church every Sunday morning with us, me, my brothers and sisters in tow *except for my father*. Growing up my mother sewed many of our clothes that we wore that included an Easter memoir of an Easter of outfits my older sister, me in my very young youth and my younger sister all wearing dresses my mother with the use of a pattern cut-out of flowered blue material she sewed together on her sewing machine- my younger sister wore the baby doll dress. My mother had my brothers, sister and I in the car and off we went to church that Easter while my father, that just gotten home from work, slept on the couch.

In Illinois in the past, though the summers were very hot in Illinois with humidity that seemed as the clique' you could cut with a knife, the winters could be very bad. Winter in the years of 1976, 1977 and part of 1978, when I was in 6th, 7th and 8th grade, had blizzard conditions of snow fall count that was pushed to mountainous snow heights in and around the ditches that reached as high as the roofs of the houses with limited visual for many houses with the driveway entrance. To see down the roads when backing out in the street to leave one's home for daily life events, usually a passenger of the car stood in the street had to motion for the driver in the car when it was clear to back out of the driveway. The local radio station broadcasted road blocks that were set up due to the blizzard conditions. My father had to drive around those barriers to get home some of those winters-home 2 miles outside of town was considered the country. It was during those years and before those years, every Sunday my mother asked my father this question "Would you like to go to church with me today?" The response. "Not today, maybe next week," my father responded and he would retire to sleep upon the couch watched the 60 Minutes television show, the morning news or retired himself to the bed to sleep.

Life continued over the next years, beyond the years of 1976, 1977, 1978, I entered high school the winter of 1978 and 1979. Swam on the swim team in the next town that was across the bridge. Worked at the recreation center across the bridge my sophomore, junior and senior years. At the end of 1982, I graduated in a class that numbered around 200 and across the bridge to the next town two additional high schools graduated classes- that averaged 200 from the catholic high school and around 300 from the other public high school that year.

During the years of my high school, in memory recalled, I witnessed every Sunday, my mother asked my father "Would you like to go to church with me today?" The response. "Not today, maybe next week," my father

responded and again he would retire to sleep upon the couch watched the 60 Minutes television show, the morning news or retired to the bed to sleep.

I was not even one year out of high school when my mother was diagnosed with cancer. During that time of my mother's chemo treatment that she drove herself out of town to a larger city hospital in Illinois for laser treatment, there were those Sundays that my mother was still able to attend church. On those Sunday's my mother asked my father "Would you like to go to church with me today?" The response. "Not today, maybe next week," my father responded and again he would retire to sleep upon the couch watched the 60 Minutes television show, the morning news or retired to the bed to sleep. The same question my mother asked until she was admitted into the hospital for surgery. That Sunday while my mother was in the hospital, I sat in my parents living room watching television in the morning, when my father surprised me and asked me "How does this look?"

"Looks really nice," I commented not moving from the couch I sat upon. My father freshly showered was wearing a zippered front sweater from a Christmas past that he never wore before and nice clean dress pants.

"Thought I'd go to church today," my father commented and down the stairs he went to exit the house. My father left *without* me in tow. With a slight distraction from the watched television, I watched from the couch through the living room window my father's car back out of the drive and drive up towards town.

My mother returned to my parent's home with a lengthy recovery from surgery. I cleaned the house and did the grocery shopping. Did not attend Church that year-had not decided what my life was about to be at 19 years of age just graduated in May and it was the later part of the Summer. My oldest brother was not around, next to the oldest my other older brother with the Christmas sweater zipper choice gift of the past to my father and older sister were away at college. My younger sister, I drove her to high school events.

I witnessed, several times, my father chose to dress for church and left without saying anything and without anyone in tow. For years prior before my mother's cancer diagnosis, I witnessed, my mother every Sunday she asked my father "Would you like to go to church with me?" The response was always the same with "maybe next week".

It was a Sunday morning that I witnessed, in a half-listened state of being distracted from the television in the living room during my mother's recovery from surgery at my parent's home that I heard my father talking to my mother in their upstairs bedroom. With ear's that half heard a conversation that listened turned into my full attention to the question, "Would you like to go to church with me today?" my father asked. The response. "Yes, I would like that," my mother responded.

As a witness, prayers were answered for both that Sunday of a question asked for many years between my mother and father. Though, they went to church that morning without me in tow, that Christmas sweater my brother gifted to my father may of been the sweater my father needed that first time he decided to go to church that year he decided to attend by himself- the word and meaning of Christmas was delivered from my father's prayers from God of my mother's recovered good health. God had answered my father's prayers and prayers of myself, my brothers and sisters.

Prayers were answered for both (my mother and God) on a mother's recovery day Sunday-that made a full recovery. Blessings from God for all of us. To this day, my mother and father go to church together.