

IN HONOR OF A WISE MAN



By Susan Landeis | December 18, 2015

There is a quote that has great meaning to me, and reminds me very much of my father-in-law. "You may not have everything you want, but you have everything you need." Those simple words have deep meaning and apply to so many aspects in life. Whether it's about material objects on your Christmas wish list, your views about religion, or simply what is necessary to survive. They speak of a humble truth. At 92 years of age, he still had strong opinions and impeccable values. He was resourceful in everything he did. In the 34 years that I had the pleasure of knowing him, we did not always see eye to eye. In fact, I often perceived him as stingy and sometimes even insensitive. He was a WWII veteran, a hard working farmer who lived off the land, and a dedicated family man. He survived some hard times and knew the value of a dollar. He applied his faith in God to every part of his life.

When I first married into this family, I politely listened to his stories about how they used to pay the doctor with a chicken or pig in exchange for medical care. Enjoying things like candy or sweets was almost a forbidden luxury. He still remembered his first ice cream cone and what a special treat that was! And of course, there were the war stories that were still painful to talk about. As he got older, we all knew the stories by heart. He still loved to tell them, and maybe we didn't listen as intently as we once did in the beginning.

These stories were a reflection of his values, strengths, and a life well lived. He quietly passed away just before the Thanksgiving holiday. The world is a different place without him, but also a better place because of him. I am in awe of the dedicated life he lived, and the solid man that he was. I will always look back and appreciate that pearl of wisdom, and valued lesson in his words. We all have our special stories that become a treasure after we are gone.

This holiday season, remember to honor the elderly people in your life. Give them the gift of your time and attention. Treasure their words and value their infinite wisdom. They are a window into the distant past, and a reminder of your family heritage. Having an elderly person in your midst is truly a blessing to behold!