

My calendar marks July 28 as "Parents' Day." I have never heard of such a day & would not have guessed it exists, especially so soon after Mother's Day & Father's Day. Nevertheless, what a wonderful opportunity to honor parents together!

I am one of the few exceptions to the rule in prison: I was raised by both natural parents, both held regular jobs, & neither used drugs or alcohol. I was brought up in a Christian church & taught strong work ethics at a young age. My parents provided me everything I ever needed & most of everything I wanted. And, for the most part, I was little trouble for them.

Though I began using drugs & alcohol in high school, this did not cause any problems for me, & my parents did not know about it. I would soon dishonor my family, my Marine Corps, & my country, but until that time they could still be proud of me.

As I sank deeper into my addictions, my parents continued to love & support me. When I neglected my wife & children, my parents provided for them. When I destroyed my military career, they welcomed me home. While I unceasingly dragged our family name through the mud around the community, they never disowned me. And when I committed a heinous murder a mile from their home, they visited me in jail & appeared in court with me at every opportunity. I will turn 38 years old this summer. I have not ceased to be a burden on my parents. They have not began to complain.

It has not been easy being my parents. It is easy to imagine a son 1,000 times better than what I have been. I could not wish for better parents. There are only two people in this world who know what it is to be so blessed by God: my sister & me. The rest of you just don't know what you're missing.

Happy Parents' Day!

Daniel Womack.