

JOE GAIWARD/613

AWHILE BACK I WROTE A TRIBUTE TO MY FATHER WHO PASSED AWAY TWENTY YEARS AGO. WE LOST OUR MOTHER THIS PAST YEAR ON DEC. 21, 2015 AND I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU A LITTLE ABOUT HER.

GROWING UP I ALWAYS FELT LIKE DAD WAS MY BEST FRIEND, I JUST DIDN'T FEEL AS CLOSE TO MOM. I LOVED HER AND I KNOW SHE LOVED ME, BUT WE WERE JUST NOT THAT CLOSE. IT TOOK A LOT OF YEARS FOR ME TO REALIZE HOW MUCH I CHEATED MYSELF OUT OF A BEAUTIFUL RELATIONSHIP!

AFTER MY ARREST IN 2007 WE BECAME VERY CLOSE. WE STARTED TO TALK, REALLY TALK. I LEARNED A LOT ABOUT MY MOTHER DURING THESE CONVERSATIONS. MY FAMILY HAS ALWAYS DEALT WITH ISSUES BY PRETENDING THEY NEVER EXISTED.

I LEARNED SOME THINGS I DIDN'T KNOW, AND I LEARNED MORE OF SOME TRAITS THAT I WAS ALREADY AWARE OF. SOME THINGS I FOUND OUT THROUGH OTHERS WRITING TO ME ABOUT ALL THAT MOM MEANT TO THEM. I ALWAYS KNEW SHE HAD A HEART BIGGER THAN HER LITTLE FRAME SHOULD BE ABLE TO SUPPORT. HER GENEROSITY TOUCHED MANY LIVES, SHE SPENT MANY MANY HOURS AT THE FOOD BANK, VISITING THE SICK, AND VOLUNTEERING AT CHURCH. EVEN IF SHE WAS EXTREMELY TIRED, IF SOMEONE CALLED, SHE WOULD GO. AFTER SHE RETIRED AND WAS ON A FIXED INCOME, SHE WOULD OFTEN USE HER OWN MONEY TO SUPPLY OTHERS NEEDS.

THROUGH OUR MANY CONVERSATIONS OVER THE PAST NINE



YEARS, WE NOT ONLY GREW THE BOND BETWEEN MOTHER AND CHILD, BUT WE ALSO BECAME FRIENDS. I KNEW THERE WOULD COME A DAY IN HERE THAT I WOULD LOSE HER, I JUST WISH IT WASN'T SO SOON, WE SPENT THESE NINE YEARS HEALING AND GROWING CLOSER, YET IT SEEMS ONLY YESTERDAY. WE LOVED AND CHERISHED OUR TIME TOGETHER THAT OUR FOUR HOUR VISITS FELT MORE LIKE FOUR MINUTES.

WHEN I WAS ARRESTED SHE KNEW THAT I WOULD NEED AN ANCHOR, SOMEONE TO HELP KEEP ME SANE (OR AS SANE AS ONE CAN BE HERE.) SHE THREW HERSELF INTO THAT ROLE AND I THANK HER SO MUCH. THESE YEARS WOULD DEFINITELY BEEN MUCH HARDER WITHOUT HER.

I BELIEVE ONE DAY WE WILL BE ABLE TO GO ON THAT PICNIC WE TALKED OF OFTEN. UNTIL THAT DAY I WILL MISS HER TERRIBLY. I AM SO THANKFUL FOR OUR TIME TOGETHER AND I KNOW HEAVEN IS A LITTLE BRIGHTER SINCE ONE OF ITS STARS CAME HOME. I LOVE YOU MOMMA, MORE THAN I CAN PEN INTO WORDS, I LOVE YOU.

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