

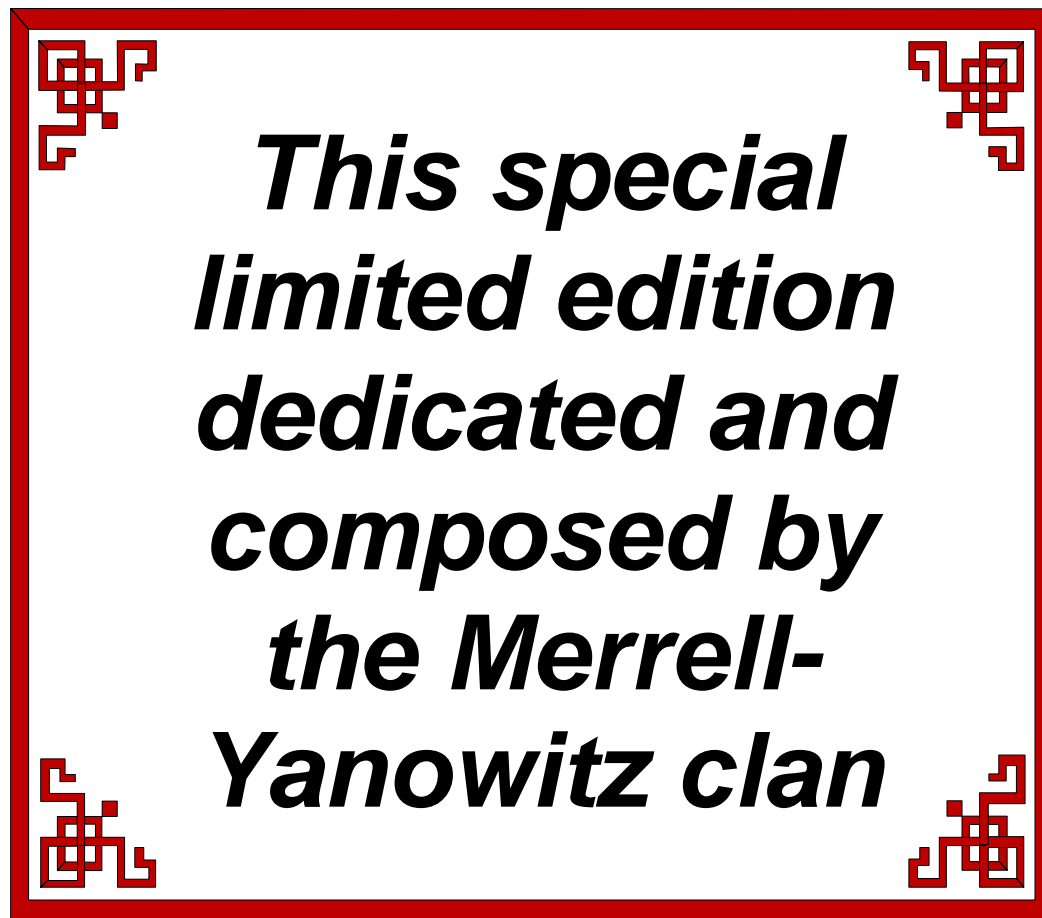


NEWS EXTRA!!!!

**ED AND MAE YANOWITZ
MARRIED 60 YEARS
MARCH 2, 2001**

***FAMILY CELEBRATES
ACHIEVEMENT, REMINISCES
AND KVELLS***

***RIPLEY'S BELIEVE-IT-OR-NOT
BIDS FOR EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS***



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Introduction

A marriage—a lifetime committed relationship (at least one intended to be so)—immediately creates new family connections (with the family memories that tag along) and gradually expands those connections, from grandparents and parents and brothers and sisters and in-laws to children and nephews and nieces and grandchildren and sometimes even great-grandchildren. This document is homage from many of those connections alive when Ed and Mae celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

Like all things in life, their history is a function of each observer's experience and ways of viewing the world. But probably all can see the general path of their marriage: living in the Bronx and Manhattan, being separated while Ed went into the army at the end of World War II, raising three children, taking up chicken farming for a dozen years, running a frozen custard stand, receiving college degrees, becoming teachers, watching children marry (and re-marry), having grandchildren, owning a shore home, retiring, living in a retirement community.

This document fills in some of the details from many different points of view.

Mink/Mimi/Millie

I remember when we were living in Tennessee, Ed and I used to sing songs when we washed dishes. We would sing songs like "The Flea" or "Pirates of Penzance."

I remember when we were on the farm...

Mae used to make a 1-2-3 cake that was delicious.

The kids would put on plays that Eddie would direct.

Judi liked to dance.

It was fun.

I wish you a happy, happy 60th anniversary.

Virginia and Lou

Some Recollections of the Life and Times of the Merrell and Yanowitz families.

A few quick sketches of life in the Merrell household and then on to the wedding of sister Mae and her beau.

All five Merrells went on a vacation together. How do five Merrells fit in a room with two double beds? It is easy if you have the three girls lying sidewise in one bed. Mother and Daddy could not get over how clever they were. I remember that part but not where we went.

Then there was Dr. Chechet. He would come to the house to check up on his charges. He would stand in the doorway of our bedroom and hold on to the opposing door-jambs with both hands. We delighted in drawing pictures of our Dr. Chechet with both hands holding our doorway up. I think the fun we had in drawing those pictures helped in our speedy recovery.

Mae, do you remember those two incidents? Well, now to something you could not have remembered that happened on your wedding day. We had gathered in the living room to do the "dearly beloved" scene. Mae, you looked beautiful in your wedding dress that was bade by a girl friend's fother as a wedding gift. Ed, you looked all smiles and happiness. I started sniffing. It got so bad that I had to go into the bathroom to burst out crying. I was so taken by the good that was taking place in our family that I could not stop crying.

You got a lot of kissing in the sit-down dinner. Your guests would tap on their glasses with a spoon and that was your cue to start kissing. You really got a lot of kissing that day, but little eating. Well, I have taken you up to your wedding day. Your children can take it from there.

Many happy returns from Louie and Ginny.



This is your life, Ricky Yanowitz

I remember you from when your mother would put you in your bassinet on the apartment house roof to get a suntan.

Then there was the time at our house that you were playing a game with me and some boxes. You would hide in one box and get me to guess where you were. I was rewarded the second day by your request, "Aunt Virginia, let's play that game where you laugh at me." I was so taken by your words "you laugh at me" that I remember them to this day.

When you were all grown up you and Jason came to see me while you were touring Washington. You gave us a lecture on Medieval literature. Quite a contrast from "you laughed at me." I was delighted.

Judi

MEMORIES of childhood to share, on the occasion of my parents' 60th Wedding Anniversary, March 2, 2001. (That's a lot of years!)

A lot of my memories of growing up involve journeys. The whole family would get in the car, the five of us, and go. It seemed to me that there was something magical about getting into a car and just our family journeys us in the car. Ricky, the back seat for a time. We played and geography for part of the time, and time. And I was often ney, the idea of it, was



taking off. The thing about was that there were five of David and I had to share approximately five hours licence plate games, ghost part of the time, slept for squabbled the rest of the carsick. But, still, the jour-exciting.

I remember trips to Brooklyn and to the or another. Sometimes visit a grandparent or staying for a week. It but there was my in it. I didn't mind. special a appeal to age, all playing stoop I just kind of sat and learned these games, with the smell of the concrete, the call of the ice cream truck, and the hustle and bustle of the people. While the children played their city games, the grown-ups came out with folding chairs to sit and gossip.

Washington, D. C., trips to Bronx, to visit one relative we would take a trip to Mimi and find ourselves didn't seem quite planned, suitcase with my clothes New York City had me, with lots of kids my ball, jacks, and jump rope. watched, not having but I loved being there,

One of our trips to New York came right before a major blizzard. We must have come in for a party, wearing a with a velvet and flats. A subway in-was going to holding his waist. Sure Blizzard of the highway, tions, and New Jersey realized the can still see the snow and inching towards the car to see where the fire was coming from. I can still hear



because I was green plaid dress collar, stockings, drunk in the formed us that it snow "up to here," hand up above his enough, it was the 1956. We took to despite the condi-drove down the turnpike until Pop car was on fire. I him lying down in

Mother pleading with him to come away from the car before it blew up. Ricky, David and I had been directed to get out of the car, and we stood there in the falling snow, watching, not knowing what to do. The fire put itself out, but I believe we had severely compromised brakes as a result. We made it to New Brunswick where we turned off and stayed with our friends Perry and Esther Kaiser overnight. Somehow we made it home the next day, arriving at a driveway that was buried in several feet of snow. We had to leave the car and walk in that snow, I in my dress, stockings and flats, David on Pop's back, and all of us floundering, up our endlessly long driveway to where a cold house awaited us. I remember Pop lighting a fire in that great fieldstone fireplace when we got home. It was wonderful to have a fire in our fireplace at the end of that trip.

Of course, the biggest trip we took as a family was the one to Florida when Grandma Bertha and Grandpa Dave moved down there to live in the orange groves where you could "reach up and pick oranges right off the trees." That must have been where I learned that ripe oranges are green. It was an amazing trip. I think we had the Renault then, a pretty small car for a family of five, two of whom were teenagers. I don't really remember much squabbling, though. The discomfort must have been outweighed by the fact that we stayed in motels on the way down and back. MOTELS! All the way to Florida! Picking oranges right off the trees! It was unimaginable. And an enduring memory, one of many, in a lifetime of family journeys.

HAPPY 60TH ANNIVERSARY!
Love, Judi



David



Here are some of the memories about Mom and Dad I am fond of and cherish:

Those Friday Nights we had—where we kidded around a lot and played Monopoly or Clue or Pit trying to trick each other or make our own brand of jokes;

The passionate conversations at the dinner table about books or politics or ideas;

Going to museums and having Chinese food afterward;

All of us getting silly and giddy together;

We've always been a punny family—I think Mom and Dad led the way with that;

Dad grabbing Mom passionately and kissing her or making a mildly off-color joke and hearing Mom protest while seeming to enjoy it all the time;

Watching Shakespeare on HALLMARK HALL OF FAME or OMNIBUS together or some other program equally demanding for me as a kid;


I loved being around them when they were truly stimulated and satisfied by literature or music or a play: I remember enjoying Dad's wonder at nature—showing me frog's eggs (or anything else when we went fishing together) with reverence and delight;

Enjoying Mom really have a good belly laugh at something she really found delightfully funny.

There are a lot of moments like this for me that I remember and appreciate.

Ricky

For better or worse, my parents gave me a lifelong love of theater in particular and performance in general. I can see Dad working to develop a new role, Mother running lines with him, listening to his complaints about other actors, and attending performance after performance. Watching that began with a circular to remember the name of special occasion he would imitation of the actor who his extravagant rendition François Villon, I think) the context for which I had certain films he wanted his kids Rolling on the floor, I gasped for breath at key scenes (“The party of the first part...”)



in the Marx Brothers’ *Night at the Opera*, and I basked in what in my childish years was the heartwarming tone of the supposedly black rendition of Christian history and the reassuring God portrayed by Rex Ingram in *Green Pastures*

When we were still young enough, Dad would tell us his adventures, which only as we became educated did we realize were famous tales—Sinbad is the one that jumps to mind—retold with Dad at the center.

He and mother devised a tradition all three of us kids would always remember: the family would gather, originally on Friday nights, to play games together—acting out stories or improvising them or inventing them by taking turns to add a sentence or paragraph at a time, playing charades (in which Dad was notorious for taking 20 or 30 minutes to act out the entire film for the phrase “Ten Commandments”), playing games. Before long, Friday Night became a family label we kids would pleadingly invoke regardless of the night of the week.

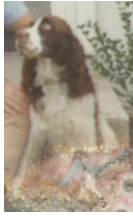
On these occasions, from their record collection they would play classical music which we kids competed to identify. (As a result, though I could not hum the notes for you, to this day I reflexively and smugly recognize from their first two notes *Scheherazade* or the *Moldau* and other symphonies my parents owned whose names I cannot normally recall until stimulated by those notes (nor do I know more about Rimsky-Korsakov or Smetana than those notes). As a young adult, I learned from reading John Holt how typical we children were, learning not the content but the strategy to win.

One evening (maybe Friday, maybe not...) they announced they were going to hide a few dozen clothespins around the living room and the kid who found the most would win...whatever. Told we could open our eyes and search, it took several minutes of opening drawers and looking under couches before we realized that like Poe’s purloined letter, the clothespins were in plain sight—on tables, the TV, other furniture—and even then, as we grabbed the ones we saw, we still had trouble adjusting our vision to spot others equally obviously placed. For weeks or months after that we pleaded to play the same game, which of course, once our parents reluctantly yielded to our entreaties, never again worked.

Despite frequent efforts, Dad never succeeded in drawing me into his love of nature, and no doubt I’m the less for it. To me the farm was torment, but he seemed to thrive on it. Heat and humidity, cold and ice, ever-present clouds of dust, chickens pecking each other to death, skunks stealing eggs, chicken hawks stampeding hens into a corner to trample one another to death—while these might distress him, he seemed to remain unbowed before them. Slaughtering aged, now eggless hens (culls, which you could tell according to the number of adult fingers you could press side-by-side between the bones through which eggs should pass—the more fingers, the better the layer) for our food by hanging them upside-down, stretching the necks with one hand while slicing them off with a kitchen knife in the other, he was some combination shadchen and ancient hunter-gatherer providing for his family without the squeamishness that characterized my own “civilized” response.

He would tell us stories (recaptured in his memoirs of 20 or so years ago) of growing up in the City and having a thirst for nature that would take him to one or another of the large city parks. I

have no doubt this prompted him to choose chicken farming over, say, college, when it came time to use the starting whom I known was sea, with forcing and sitting on a boat waiting for a ble (as opposed to a tug caused by the water on which we bobbed). And the frequent aquariums over the years magnificent tropical fish lazily propelling within a delicate, artificial ecosystem knew that term) in which today a fish swimming sinuous laps in mindless tomorrow floating on its back for my and gently scoop out with a miniature flushing it down the toilet (or is that only imagination?). A female of one species would swim bloated for days, then return self after depositing dozens (hundreds?) transparent newborns who, it always soon devoured by worldly, adult fish in think my father had few greater thrills in when any of his baby fish survived to



GI bill. But it wasn't just chickens. There were dogs he wanted me to love, with the collie Algy (the name of one of the 3 pigs in his account of that tale) neglected beyond reason, and ending with the cocker spaniel Sack (also as Sad Sack, whom everyone seems to remember) after I left home. There and out to worms and onto hooks genuine nib-movement of there were filled with themselves (not that we might be harmony, father to find fishnet before my or another to her svelter of miniscule, seemed, were the tank. I life than maturity.



Having bought his first (we moved to a second one a few years later) chicken farm in the tiniest of towns (Judi and I attended a one-room schoolhouse there) in 1946 soon after leaving the army, within four or five years he and Mother found it impossible to make a living from farming. And so while my mother took on secretarial jobs, my father experimented with career after career: delivering eggs to city folks, learning landscape gardening (surely an echo of his zest for nature) and trying to sell South Jerseyans on it—other work, I think, though I can no longer remember.

None of this nature business was a picnic for Mother. Having dutifully followed her husband to his dream life, she was a kind of latter day pioneer woman striving to make the best of things while contending with rural entropy, most memorably the dust that invaded every cranny of the home she so wanted to keep clean for her family. Regardless of the license plate mounted like a miniature hitching post beside the front entrance for scraping shoes before entering the house after working in the coop, bits of manure still got tracked in.

But no defeatist she: while I don't remember her sharing in the building of the chicken coop that my father erected from scratch (where did he learn how to do that?), she was a full partner in other farm chores, sorting and candling eggs, filling and lugging buckets of feed ("scratch," grain sprinkled on the floor, and "mash," a powdered greenish-gray mixture deposited in long and narrow, foot-high metal hoppers from which the birds ate and into which they routinely defecated) to distribute to the ungrateful birds, hauling cratefuls of 25 dozen packed eggs. When my father had his heart attack in 1958 and was in a hospital at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania (treated, we were reassured, by the—was there only one?—same doctor who had attended Eisenhower shortly before), for some weeks my mother scurried between caring for the chickens (no doubt I shirked as much as I could), driving the two hours each way to visit the hospital, keeping house, getting her kids off to school, and probably working a regular job as well. (Rushing to a sickbed has been something of a motif for my mother: in 1965 when I was in a Southern California hospital after dislocating a shoulder in a motorcycle accident mid-way through my first graduate school, my mother appeared unheralded in the



hallway as I did multiple double-takes to absorb it was she; in 1992 she spent a couple of months nursing her dying elder sister, Silvia, in North Carolina.)

I expect it was my mother more often than not who ferried us to friends' homes or school events. She cooked our meals (eggs at least once a day, chicken frequently, pot roast from time to time), cleaned the house, and took up financial slack by working as a secretary. (Had she taken secretarial courses during her two years in college?) The one job I remember (were there others?) was for Udo and Taoromina, makers of Progresso food products. I think it was Taoromina for whom she was a secretary, but in any event it became clear that, as I later discovered of secretaries in academic departments, she was the one in the office who really knew what was going on and should have had an executive's title and salary.

Always political—I have the impression they met as fellow-travelers—my parents were union organizers among chicken farmers. Somewhere is a photo of my father holding a picket sign in Washington, DC, demanding price parity for eggs. Major forces in the Farmers' Union in our area, when solidarity began to deteriorate my mother wrote a lovely satire, "The Little Co-op," a copy of which I hope she still has. For a couple of years—1948-50—Dad's brother, Hy, and his family (Henry was born during that time) came from France to join them on a nearby farm and help elect Henry Wallace—and, I suppose, generally to build the revolution.

Persevering at trying to make a go of the farm long after it could ever again support the family, my parents merited post-graduate degrees for what they learned about chicken farming and small business and balancing career with family and coping with adversity. Receiving no such diploma, crossing the age of 40 they made the shift to an entirely new life. Indeed, my most powerful memory of my parents is the sense they projected that you don't have to yield to life's buffets, at least not forever (and perhaps you have that spirit to thank, Mother, for the way I have pestered you about making more of a life for yourself amidst the trials of Dad's dementia in recent years).

Told he was suffering from depression about the life he was leading, my father got out of the Valley Forge Heart Hospital in 1958 a few months from his 40th birthday to be shepherded by my mother (or so I imagine it) from one college campus to another in our neck of the NJ woods. Studying in between serving customers at our Tastee-Freez frozen custard stand on a sharply angled corner in Millville, NJ, he studied for (and passed) a US History high school equivalency exam to complete his high school diploma and entered Glassboro State Teachers College to earn a degree in three years, including summer school. At first at least, he loved it: I remember photos of him wearing a freshman beanie with a sandwich-board sheet of cardboard, presumably signed by miscellaneous upperclassmen, hanging from his neck.

At the same time, my mother was returning to college at Rutgers' Camden branch. With partial credit from her two undergraduate years before she married Dad, she and he and I and Judi all



received college diplomas within a couple of years of one another. Where my father, I think, gradu-

ally lost his zest for college in the face of mediocre teaching and expectations, my mother never ceased to thrive on classroom challenges and was in the midst of a Ph.D. program before she decided she'd had enough. (My father began a master's program, was bored by the content, and, as family lore had it, simply stopped attending without ever dropping out.)

Having declared bankruptcy on the chicken farm—an action they resisted from pride but should probably rather than tilt at windmills—they them. Finally they began to travel, at France, Greece, Spain, I can't their home became maps and prints photos of foreign house in Toms shore and spent with visiting grandchildren. My father bought a motorboat, fished and crabbed and clammed.



have taken years earlier the American economic found teaching liberated had decent incomes. They least once a year I think—Egypt, England, Italy, remember where else—and increasingly decorated with and small sculptures and lands. They bought a River at the New Jersey summers there, sometimes

I have no doubt that experiencing my mother's engagement with life made it relatively easy for me to embrace the women's movement that evolved alongside the civil rights and antiwar activities of the 1960s.

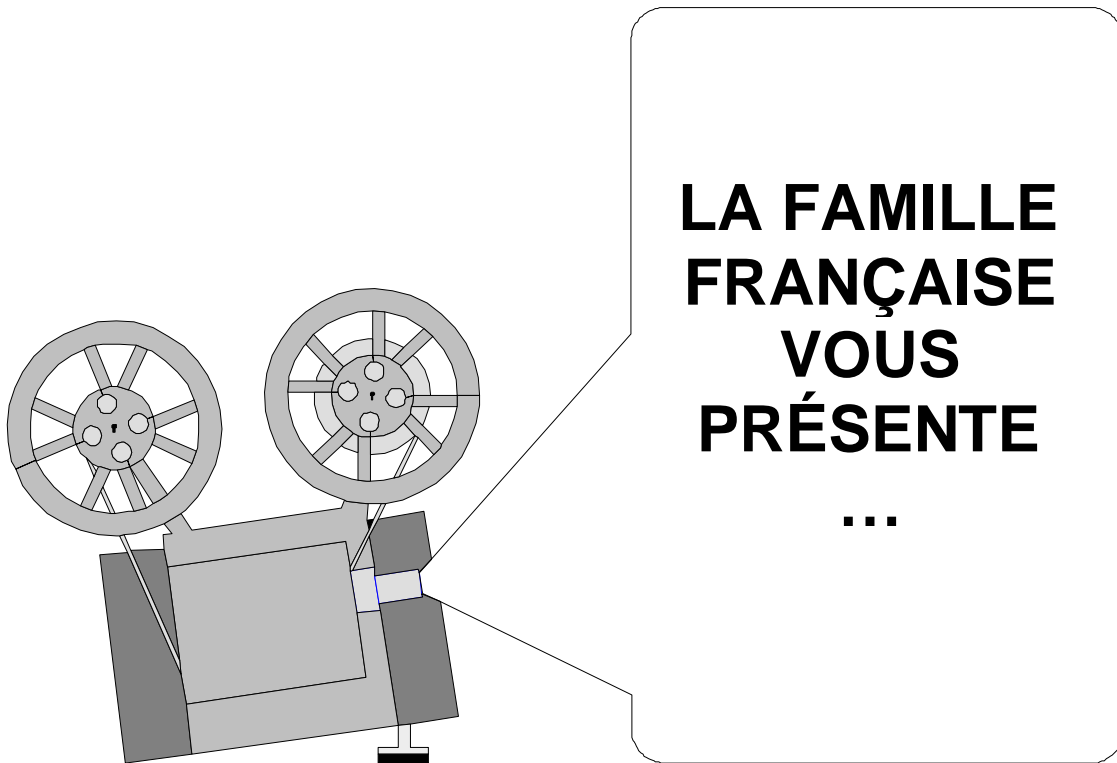
And then there was the day I left for college, when Mother recounted to me an item she read of a mother who, in the same circumstances, handed her son an envelope to open upon arrival at school. The contents were a clipped pair of apron strings. (Copying this action would have felt derivative to her; telling me allowed her to personalize the experience with her own words and tone.) When I came home that Thanksgiving feeling totally unable to cope with school (I had to study, something I'd been able largely to forego in high school while still getting high grades) and wanting to drop out, my parents, who had long lived to see one of their children attend college, conferred and then asked me to stick it out til the end of the semester. Then, if I still wanted to quit, they would accept it. I don't know what changed, but I never did leave school (though having since seen so many people who quit college to return later with great success, I eventually understood it would not have been the catastrophe we all then felt it would be).

The apron string story is one of a series of emotional gifts my mother gave me, some since I've been an adult. Those who know her know that showing feelings comes hard but not having them, and she was most successful when channeling her feelings through carefully chosen words. (Actually, in the last couple of decades I have seen her become increasingly comfortable with *showing* feelings, too.)

When, in my 40s, I flew for a day from Massachusetts to confront her with painful insights I'd had in my psychotherapy about my feelings towards her, she was beyond wonderful in her willingness to listen and engage over feelings I recited that surely felt at least as painful to her as they were to me. And at Jason's high school graduation party, when I reminded the gathered relatives and friends of her concern whether I could raise my son successfully when his mother and I split up three months after he was born, she spoke to say approximately, "I don't usually make mistakes, but that was a whopper," a statement I cherish (and I hope she can understand why and so cherish herself for presenting that gift to me). Moments like these have been greater gifts than anything she could have bought me in those days on the farm when she and my father felt inadequate over inability to afford more material presents for their children. May my comments not only commemorate this anniversary but also help my parents put into better perspective just how effective they were as parents.

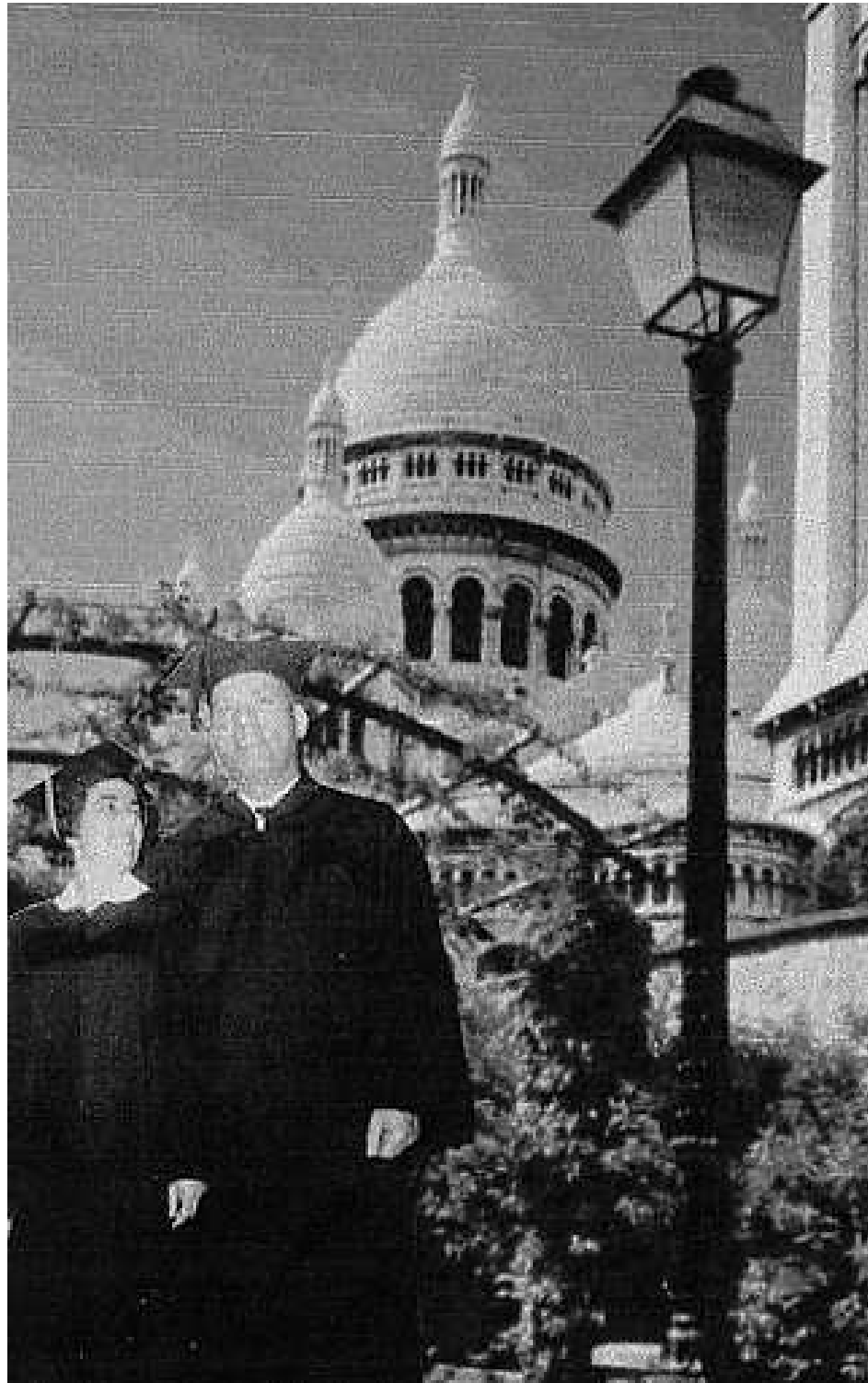


The French family



M_{agique}
A_{pparition}
E_n France
des
E_{poux}
D_{iplômés}

[Magical apparition in France of the married graduates]



Chaque regard posé par Ed sur sa Mae adorée...
...c'est comme le 14 juillet! [*Each look Ed gives his adored Mae...it's Bastille Day*]



Ce bouquet dessiné par Nelson

Vous est envoyé par

Toute la famille de France!



*[This bouquet drawn by Nelson
Is sent to you by
The entire French family!]*

Amy

*Words and
pictures by
Amy
Ledbetter...*

I have one story.

1970? Ben, the girls and I stopped for the night in New Brunswick. Mae and Ed were in the duplex, with Grandma and Grandpa downstairs.

I remember Sad Sack. Mae and Ed had a phonograph that fascinated me. You could stack records and they would play in order. One of the records I remember was Danny Kaye in 2 by 2. I went out and bought the record.

Ed was teaching at the time, as well as doing play productions.



Mae and Ed younger than seems possible



Bill holding (Judi?), Ricky(?), Amy (?)



Judi, Silvia, Virginia, Lou, Lou's brother (?), Amy

Elena

*...and
photos
gleaned by
Elena &
Lew Maya-
Scott*

It's a challenge trying to figure out how to thank [Ed] for making fun of my southern accent. I got rid of it pretty quick (though it does show up at the strangest times). I always enjoyed his picking on me -- kept me on my toes whenever he was around.

I think that's why so many people in my life now pick at me. It's a way they can show affection without getting gooey and thanks to your dad, I can hand it right back. I hated it when he apologized for picking on me so much the last time we saw each other.

In my younger years, your dad was real quick at finding my buttons. But he did teach me to think fast on my feet.

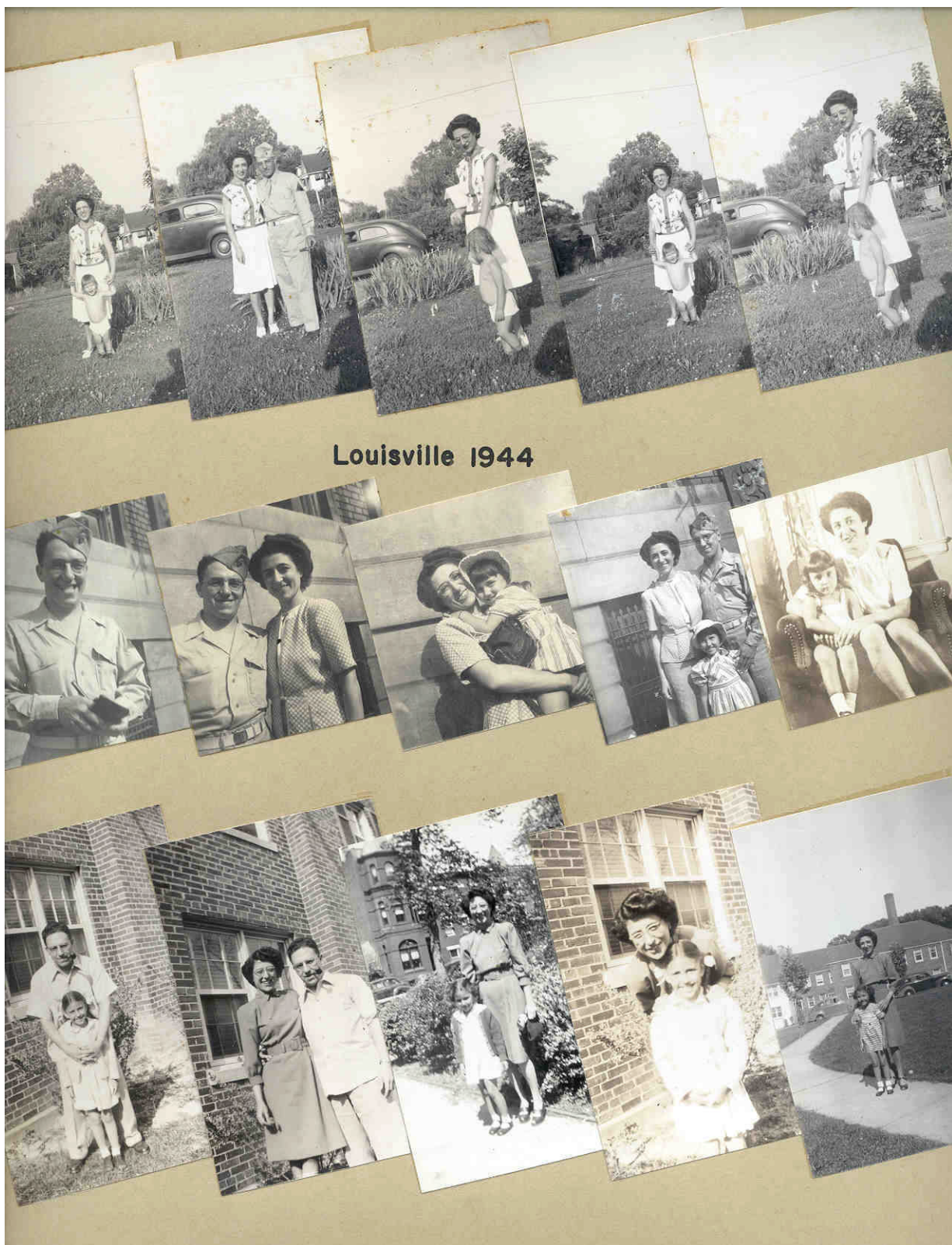
--Elena



Silvia, Virginia, Mae (probably 1923-4)



David Merrell, probably before 1948



Louisville 1944

Silvia, Bill, Amy



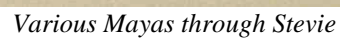
Ed, Ricky (c. 1943)



Mae, Judi (c. 1943)



Bertha, Mae, unidentified baby, David Merrell, Silvia





ELENA'S FIRST CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS DAY 1950

...and more Mayas through Elena

VICTOR JOINS THE ORGANIZATION



BEST WISHES
FOR A MERRY
CHRISTMAS



CHRISTMAS
DAY
1952



...and through Vic



Silvia, Bertha, David Merrell, Virginia (probably before 1948)



Ed, Mae, Heidi (c. mid-1965; first grand-child)



Heidi, Mae, Judi, Rachel (c. early 1968)



Silvia, Lew, Elena, Bill (Elena's and Lew's wedding, May 3, 1975)



Virginia, Lou, Silvia, Stevie (Elena's and Lew's wedding, May 3, 1975)



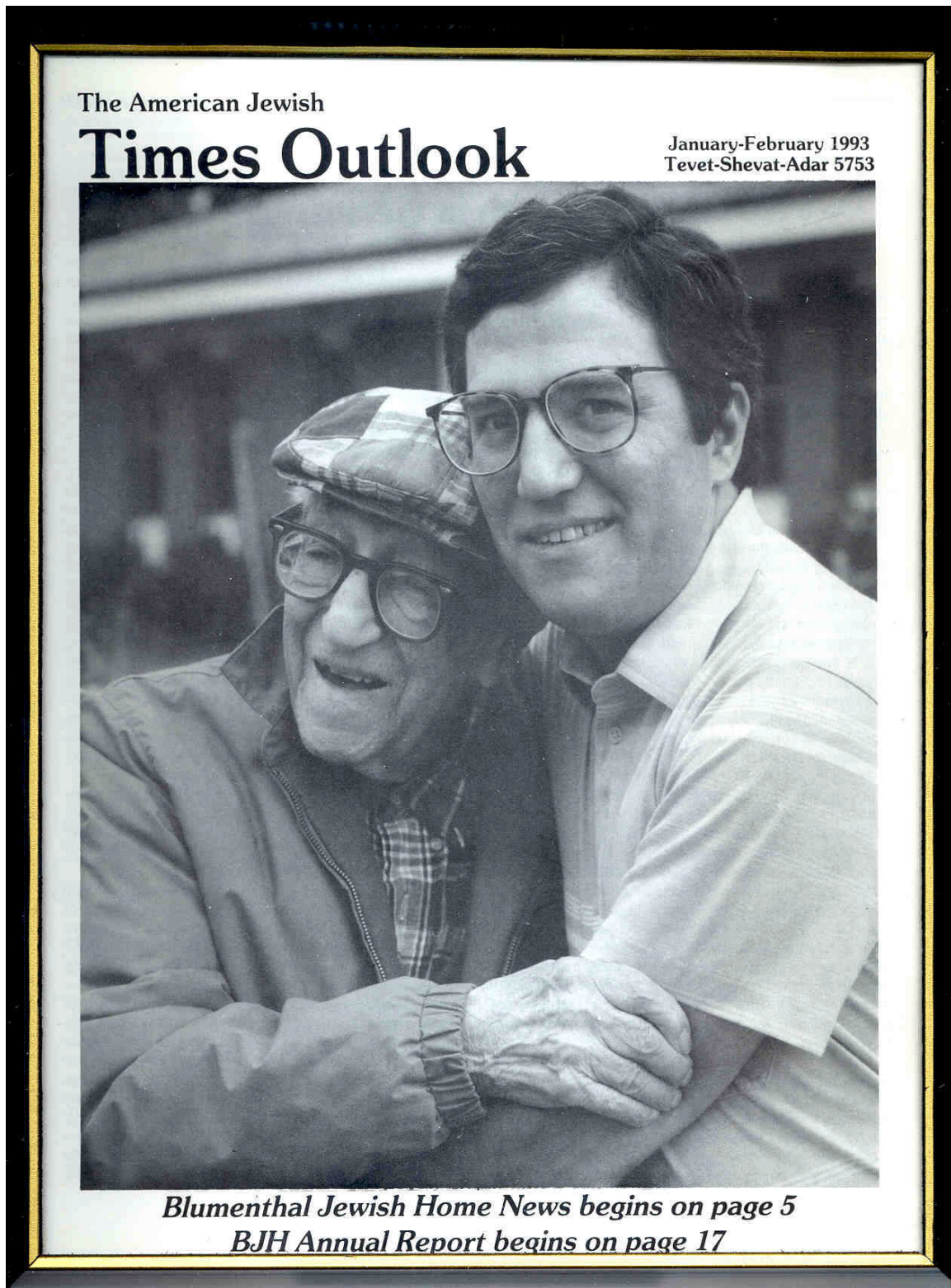
Vic, Amy, David Merrell (c. 1976)



Silvia, Bill (December, 1981)



Elena and Lewis



David Merrell, Vic



At Silvia's funeral (1992)

Rear: Amy, Judi, Ricky, Deborah Fraley (Amy's daughter), Vic, Debbie (Vic's wife), Scott Davis (Amy's son-in-law/Cathy's husband)
Front: Elena, Lew, Cathy (Amy's daughter)



The evening after Silvia's funeral (1992)

Rear: Vic, Sarah (his daughter), Amy, Elena, Judi, Debbie (Vic's wife)
Front: Ricky, Sky (Vic's daughter)

Heidi

Memories of the Shore

I have happy memories staying with you at your house by the Shore. I think I was about ten and Rachel seven. Grandpa would take us out in his boat and let me drive for a little while, until he gave up and took over so we wouldn't keep going in circles (I was relieved). He would set traps for crabs at the dock at the back of the house and let us pull them up. The red and blue crabs would walk sideways on the grass and scare Rachel, who would run away while I laughed. Grandma would come out and comfort Rachel.

I remember Grandpa telling me how beautiful I was, and I told him I didn't like the little blue veins on my face. He assured me that they were beautiful and delicate. He took pictures of us and developed them.

Grandma always seemed to be busy in the kitchen, making delicious meals. I remember "clams casino" the most—it was an unusual and tasty dish. And of course, there were always ice cream sandwiches in the freezer, our favorite. I never liked going to bed at night, but I did at this house, where the sheets were clean and crisp and the bed lovingly made up by Grandma.

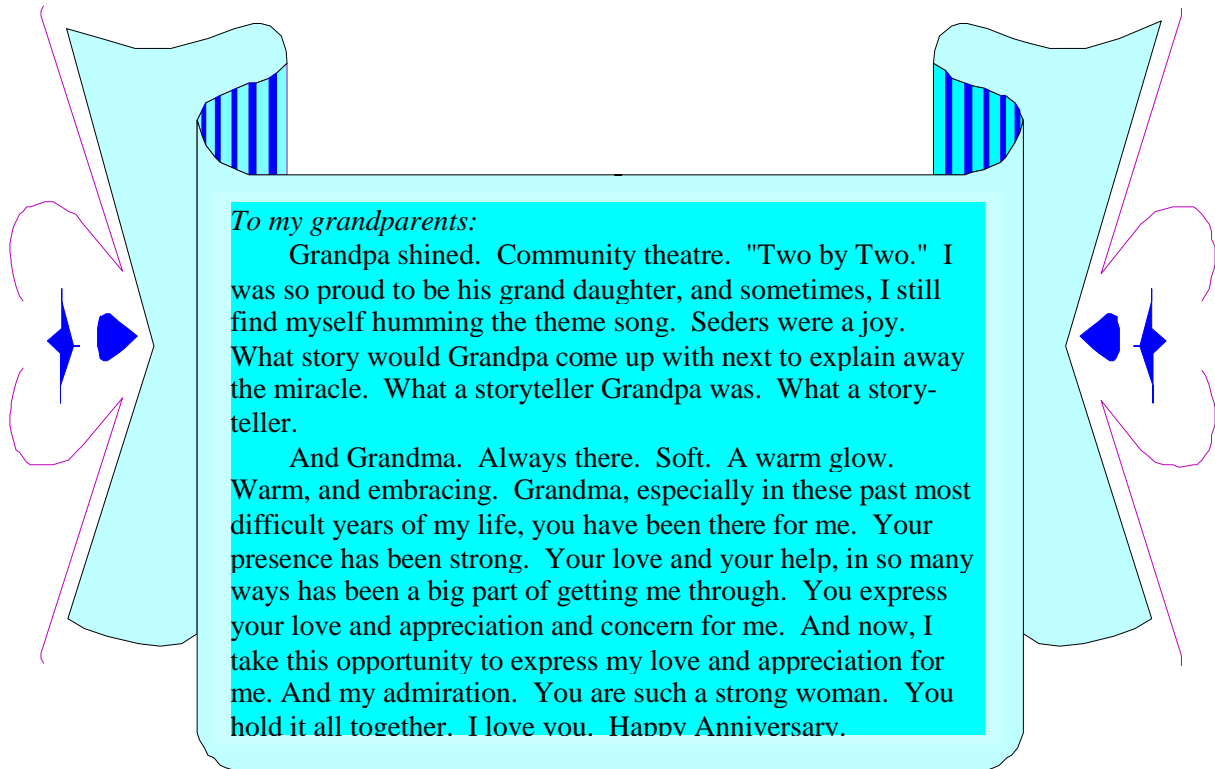
Those days were warm, lively and fun. They stand out as times when I felt completely safe, with no cares or worries. I am grateful for those times with you and wish there were more.

Happy Sixtieth Anniversary, Grandma Mae and Grandpa Eddie. I love you,



Clockwise from upper left: Rachel, Heidi, Jason, Mae, Sol

Rachel



Jason

Wow, has it been 60 years already? Seems like it was 50 just a decade ago. Congratulations on building a life together. I want to share my memories of it. Most of them are that of a child playing, oblivious to the greater goings-on in the world.

Playing Flinch, fishing, pecking away at the Apple][+, going to that carnival at the shore, developing photos in the basement, learning how to get a supermarket to pay you for shopping, "a bargain isn't a bargain unless you need it," building couch forts, wondering what was so special about a whiskey sour, stories of the past, and

Grandpa—I've learned that the combine toothless insults with heartfelt ... You're the most wonderful woman

Grandma—When I stayed (was I there for a month?), you

safe, and know that I was loved. Thank you. (I also appreciate all those trips to the library!) I love you both.



eating, eating, eating.

best way to express love to your spouse is to emotion ("What was I thinking marrying you? in the world.") My wife thanks you.

with you guys the summer we moved East created a space for me to just play, feel

Solomon

Contributed a portrait of his grandparents.



Congratulations and love from your family