

My Life

John Norberg



## It's a good day for memories

She used to write backward almost as fast as forward. When I was a boy at summer camp in Wisconsin, I received letters from home that could be read only by holding them to a mirror.

They came with a box of cookies. I admit eating the cookies before wondering how to read the letters.

This is Mother's Day, and my mother is a remarkable woman, just like yours. She is 90 years old.

When I was a boy, I was certain she had eyes in the back of her head because even when she wasn't looking she knew when I was doing something wrong.

I married a woman with the same ability.

I remember grumbling one Saturday morning that my pancakes weren't coming fast enough. So Mom flipped them at me across the kitchen, hot off the grill one after another.

She tutored me in math and stayed up half the night helping me finish school papers I had put off until the last minute.

She comforted my brother, sister and I when things went wrong. When we dragged it on too long she told us it was time to quit feeling sorry for ourselves.

She was born in 1920 and had a storybook childhood in Chicago. Her parents emigrated from Norway and Sweden. She is a child of the Great Depression; a World War II bride; the mother of baby boomers. She is the last of her greatest generation in our family.

Before she went gray, which she has always blamed on me, she had a wisp of white hair above her forehead. She loved teaching.

She is one of millions of mothers this Mother's Day living with dementia.

It's such a harsh word.

She knows who we are, but she's confused. She lives in a world that was years ago. She's in a skilled nursing facility. Sometimes she cries and is angry with us, and I don't blame her.

But I'm not thinking about that today. Today I'm remembering letters written backward, pancakes flipped across the kitchen, eyes in the back of her head. I'm remembering Christmases, birthdays, vacations, family dinners, which she made special. I'm remembering singing in the car and laughter.

It's a good day for memories. It's a good day to make memories. Make lots of them because time is so short.

Happy Mother's Day, Mom. I'll always remember.

John Norberg writes a weekly column for the Journal & Courier. Read his columns at jconline.com and johnnorberg.com

# Just like you, Mom



Linda Rau, left, and her daughter, Heather Circle, teach a class at Dance Moves and Gymnastics in Lafayette. Rau opened the business in 1982. (BY JORDAN KARTHOLL/JOURNAL & COURIER)

## Local mothers inspire daughters to follow their career paths

By TAYA FLORES  
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In a bustling gymnastics studio on the east side of Lafayette, Heather Circle leads a class of about 10 girls. She prompts them to begin swing presses as part of a

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**She's no dummy:** Indy film producer inspired by ventriloquist mother. **D2**

drill to prepare the body for leaps. Atop beams of varying heights, the girls gracefully swing one leg forward and back while

balancing the other leg on the beam at Circle's command.

"Get ready for jumps," she said as the girls finished their last set of swing presses.

In essence, Circle has followed in the footsteps of

her mother, Linda Rau. Rau taught gymnastics, dance and other classes at the Lafayette Family YMCA for nine years before opening Dance Moves and Gymnastics in 1982.

Rau owns the business, and Circle oversees staff and coaches as director of operations. The mother-daughter duo runs the two-gym operation.

But Circle did not follow her mother's path intentionally. She sort of tumbled into it — like a gymnast who misses a back handspring.

"I didn't want it to be my career at first," Circle said. "It circles around eventually, and it's hard to get away from, (but) I couldn't imagine doing anything else."

Moms traditionally have a strong impact on their children, especially their daughters. The following local

women share how their moms inspired and challenged them and left lasting impressions that eventually led to the ultimate form of flattery — imitation.

Katie Dodds also has followed in the footsteps of her mother, Trudy Nelson, a fourth- and fifth-grade gifted and talented teacher at Wea Ridge Elementary School in Lafayette.

"My mom is the one that really pushed me to do elementary education because she thought that I've always been pretty outgoing," said Dodds, who teaches fourth grade at Happy Hollow Elementary in West Lafayette.

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Megan Chapman, right, and her mother, Peg Ponto, are nurses. (BY TAYA FLORES/JOURNAL & COURIER)

### LAST-MINUTE GIFTS FOR MOM

Need to pick up a last-minute Mother's Day gift?

Dana Holmes, gift guru with gifts.com, gives tips for finding that special gift in the nick of time:

- Spa Finder gift certificate — Pick your price of \$25 or more. These gift certificates can be printed at home or emailed, making them the ultimate last-minute gift idea. They also can be redeemed at spas around the globe so Mom can find a local one. Moms always deserve a little pampering and down time. Find one at gifts.com

- Quality time — Although this gift is free, it's probably the one Mom wants most of all. Plan a date with her, whether it's having a high tea at home in her honor or taking a walk around town together while you catch up. She'll appreciate every minute of it.

- If Mom isn't close by, you can call a local florist in her town and ask them to make a special delivery to her on Mother's Day. She'll never know you were scrambling, and she'll feel so special. Flowers make every room brighter and will make her think of you every time she sees them.

- Do Mom's dirty work. Moms always have a list of chores they are avoiding but really need to get done, such as organizing the garage. Give her a handwritten certificate that she can redeem for one (or more) dirty jobs around the house.

- A picture is worth a thousand words. Pick out one of your favorite pictures of you and mom together — new or old. Find the perfect frame to display it. Moms love to show off their kids even when they're all grown up. Remember, it's an added bonus if the grandchildren are in the picture, too.



Fourth-grade teacher Katie Dodds, above, answers Carson Arias' questions about a test at Happy Hollow Elementary. Dodds' mother, Trudy Nelson, also is a teacher. (BY TAYA FLORES/JOURNAL & COURIER)

Trudy Nelson, left, and her fourth and fifth grade gifted and talented students review American history presentations at Wea Ridge Elementary School. (BY JOHN TERHUNE/JOURNAL & COURIER)

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