

December 2015: The Best Gift of All



Greetings!

My family lost a special person a few weeks ago, my dad. He lost a long and hard-fought battle with cancer that left us all emotionally and physically spent. I thought about him constantly as a small group gathered at our house for Thanksgiving. My husband, an excellent cook, worked hard brining and smoking the turkey before expertly carving it just as my dad did years ago.

We said Grace before the big meal just as my dad always led the family in prayer, reminding us kids to be thankful and present before diving into the mashed potatoes face first.

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Do You Know a Neighborhood Hero?

I'm partnering with the Jefferson Park and Gladstone Park Chambers of Commerce as well as the Six Corners Shopping District to encourage residents of the Northwest side of Chicago to nominate unsung heroes of the neighborhood. We all know that special neighbor, activist, business owner, or young adult doing great things in their community. It's time to recognize them by telling their story!! I'm honored to be involved. More to come on this effort in 2016.



[Let me know](#) if your neighborhood is interested in celebrating your local heroes!

Featured Story: Bob Walsh

Below is from my very first book made for my dad - the inspiration behind this business!

Bob was born July 1, 1940 in St. Leo's parish on the southside of Chicago. It was a working class neighborhood filled with immigrants from Poland, Italy, Ireland, and other parts of Europe. Bob's father William, a Chicago policeman, always had colorful language for the neighbors and



the boiling pot of kids his son played with everyday. The kids would play tag up and down the alley and Cowboys and Indians alongside some nearby railroad tracks. The tracks were up on a hill that became the epicenter of their makeshift playground. In winter, they would sled perilously down the steep hill, ending up on Sangamon Street. In summer, they used an abandoned railcar alongside the tracks as a fire pit and even cook with it.

"We'd throw whole potatoes in the pit. The skin would turn black, but

underneath was a perfectly baked potato."

Bob's childhood home on Sangamon was a classic Chicago bungalow, still standing today. He would grow up in this house together with his parents, William and Rebecca, and four other brothers, Bill, Joe, Dan and Jim. The house had two bedrooms and one bathroom, tight quarters for a family of seven. To make life more manageable, some creative real estate tactics came to play.

"We had a semiannual migration to the attic during the winter months, and then out to the back deck in the summer months. That was the only way we could fit five Walsh boys in that house."

**In memory of Bob Walsh
July 1, 1940 - November 11, 2015**

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Thanks for reading. See you next month. - Nora



Memoir for Me

773-294-2449 | nora@memoirforme.com

<http://memoirforme.com>