

Memoir for Me

capture a life story

On Elves, Gifts, and the Spirit of the Season



From the Blog: Ode to Elf, a Story of Love and Hate

It was only two days into December when my 6 year-old turned to me and asked, "Mom, did Elf skip going to the North Pole last night?"

Yep. We had already forgotten to move the elf. This was going to be a long month.

Now I'm all for creative spirits, but if I see one more Pinterest board or Facebook picture of the Elf on the Shelf doing something cute, ridiculous or even raunchy, I might poke my eyes out with one of its tiny felt hands.

[Read More](#)

Let us answer the question, "What can I get Mom and Dad for Christmas?"

Give the Gift of Memories.

Our book deadline has passed but it's not too late to order your Memoir for Me gift certificate for that special family member.

We interview your loved ones. We write their story. You treasure it forever.

[Order your gift certificate today!](#)

I couldn't stand the smell of the neighborhood when we got close. The stockyards had a "hold-your-nose quality!"

Despite the smel. Pat loved the individual attention. Other fond trips with her mom include ice skating lessons at Michael Kelly's or shopping in the bargain basement of Marshall Fields for house dresses and support hose.

Pat's father, Thomas Foley, was a soft-spoken lawyer with a quick smile and wit. Despite work demands, Thomas tried not to bring his work home with him.

I don't think of Dad working long hours and if people called the house for legal advice, we were all taught to say, "he wasn't home." I remember being embarrassed by it, but Dad always said, "They know I have an office."

Pat was a nervous child with a stomach to match, hospitalized for ulcers all the age of six.

They had to come and carry me out of church at the school mass one day. I couldn't walk.

She spent the next several weeks at Little Company of Mary Hospital while doctors tried to diagnose what was wrong.

They thought it was rheumatic fever, but they diagnosed it as an ulcer. Ma and Dad both had ulcers.



Pat's parents, 1940



The Foley family on Easter, 1953

Mom in the Foley household were bland to accommodate all these delicate stomachs.

I had a diet to follow. I remember eating a lot of cream cheese and jelly sandwiches.

Behind Pat's excessive worry gene was a caring heart.

I can remember looking out the window on to 82nd for my dad to come home and if it was inclement weather or icy, I'd be worried about him getting home.

Pat's paternal grandparents and an aunt and uncle lived downstairs. Pat remembers Grandpa Bill Foley babysitting her as a small child. He was a retired Chicago cop, with many friends in the fire department.

I would play school in the backyard and Grandpa would watch over. I would walk with Grandpa over to the firehouse on Astland to visit the other firemen he knew over there.

Having family living downstairs also made it easy to gather for holidays and other celebrations. When Pat thinks of Christmas, she thinks of the family china and silver.

I think of Ma or Aunt Margaret laying out the table for the holidays. It was a great honor to be able to put out the glass for the first cocktail with sherry on top. I thought it was so beautiful.



More Than Just Books! Only \$20!

Memoir for Me signature bangles in silver, gold, or rose gold make a perfect holiday gift for anyone—because everyone has a story!

Gold or silver plated, and adjustable to fit any wrist. Buy one or several and wear them stacked. It's the ultimate accessory with a story.

[Buy yours today in gold, rose gold or silver!](#)

Nominate a Hero Today!

Do you know a Northwest Side Chicagoan doing great things in the neighborhood? Nominate them as a **2017 Northwest Side Hero** today! If chosen, I will interview this hero and write their story, sharing their great deeds with others. It only takes a minute to recognize greatness.

Photo includes Russ Gremel (far right), a Northwest Side Hero of 2016. You can read his story [here](#).



[Nomination Form](#)



Featured Story: The Foley Sisters

Below story is from a special book I made for my mom and her three sisters for Christmas.

The Foley family had enough to get by but lived simply, with the family of six living in a two-bedroom apartment with one bathroom. The breakfast room in the back of the flat doubled up as a bedroom at night. It was a good thing the girls went to Catholic school and wore uniforms because there was little money or room for clothes.

We had a pair of jeans, a Sunday dress and a uniform. That was about it.

With these limited wardrobes, getting dressed was an Olympic sport.

The first one out of the house was the best dressed.

The sisters were kind to each other but personalities did clash from time to time. Mary Ann and Pat were more mild. Norine and Alice bumped heads a bit. Sometimes the only place for peace and quiet was in the bathroom. Alice's sister Norine secluded herself in the bathroom and once became stuck in there.

She had locked herself in the bathroom! Poor Uncle Ray had to scale a ladder on the outside of

the building and get in through the window.

[Read More Stories](#)

Happy holidays to you and your families. Thanks for reading! See you next month. - Nora

Memoir for Me | nora@memoirforme.com | memoirforme.com

STAY CONNECTED:

