

RUNNING MY MOUTH JUST LIKE DAD

How My Dad's Resilience and Big Heart Shaped My Life

Father's Day always gets me reminiscing about my dad, whom we kids called "Pop," a real standout character with a life story that could easily fill a book — or maybe two. "Character" is an apt description.

Born in Iowa, his journey wasn't an easy one. He lost his mom when he was just 2 years old and then had to navigate a rocky relationship with a physically abusive stepmom. But through all the ups and downs, he became a loving father as best he could, and taught me lessons that have profoundly shaped my approach to life and work.

He was shunted off to his aunt and uncle's farm every summer where he learned hard work and responsibility. In later years, he would break down in tears recalling memories of times with those loving relatives.

After the Navy, he worked in the Louisiana oil fields and proudly spoke of it as the manliest work he ever did. His first wife died of alcoholism and he himself wrestled with the black dog of depression throughout his life. He underwent shock therapy treatment when I was in high school.

Despite his hard upbringing and battles with depression, Pop was always there for our family. He became a salesman, first falling flat on his face trying

to sell life insurance, then becoming successful selling automotive add-ons across 12-15 states. For years, he routinely drove more than 100,000 miles a year. But, throughout my childhood, Pop never missed a Boy Scout hike or a basketball or football game, even if he had just driven 500 miles home from a week or more on the road. He had this way of showing up, *really* showing up, which taught me a lot about what it means to be present for the people you care about.

Pop could sell ice to Eskimos, as the saying goes. Eventually, he had a home office where he'd make sales calls, charming just about anyone over the phone. I picked up more than a few communication tips from overhearing his conversations — how to be persuasive, sure, but also how to genuinely listen and talk to others with respect.

After retiring, trips to WalMart and Meijer became social events: He'd make the rounds, chatting with employees, whom he knew by name, and buying more groceries he didn't need. The butchers would set aside for him the meat that was nearing expiration dates to take home and freeze. Going out with him meant scheduling an extra hour for chit-chat alone! Eventually, we'd drop him off at Walmart after

church and pick him up three hours later as he needed all that time just to socialize.

He prayed every night on his knees, and regularly included prayers to forgive his abusive stepmom. In his 70s, he was able to do so. Even before that, for nearly 30 years, he wrote to her every week until she passed, just shy of her 100th birthday.

Everyone at church knew him. He got louder the worse his hearing got and he always joked he'd be "running his mouth half an hour after I'm gone." So, of course, we put "still running my mouth!" on his gravestone in Dayton National Cemetery — a little humor to honor a man who loved a good laugh. He'd have loved it.

Beyond the laughs, Pop taught me the value of hard work, from his days in the oil fields of Louisiana, to the way he protected anyone who seemed to get the short end of the stick. He taught me to give everyone a bit of grace because you never really know what someone else is going through.

As Father's Day rolls around, I think about how much of him is woven into the fabric of who I am today. From how I run my law practice to how I interact with people daily — his integrity, resilience, and kindness continue to guide me. So here's to my dad, my Pop — the man who taught me more about life than anyone else and knew how to keep a conversation going!

— Jim Monast



Client Success Story

WE WON FOR BARRETT

Our friend and client, Barrett, had a case that is a prime example of a saying I like to quote when asked about a particularly outrageous workers' compensation claim result: "Welcome to the world of court, where just because you are right does not mean you will get justice."

I've opted not to use Barrett's full name as he still works for his employer and likes his job. Fortunately, while photos from his accident are downright scary, he recovered well from his injuries and ... well ... let me tell the story.

Barrett works as a safety coordinator for an international engineering and sciences company. He travels around Ohio and provides safety consulting for drilling companies, often driving to several sites per day. One morning, while driving on a highway undergoing road construction, he was involved in a car wreck that demolished his Ford Fusion. Looking at pictures of the accident, I'm amazed he walked away relatively unscathed.

He was taken to Kettering Hospital and put through \$18,000 of medical tests. Remarkably,

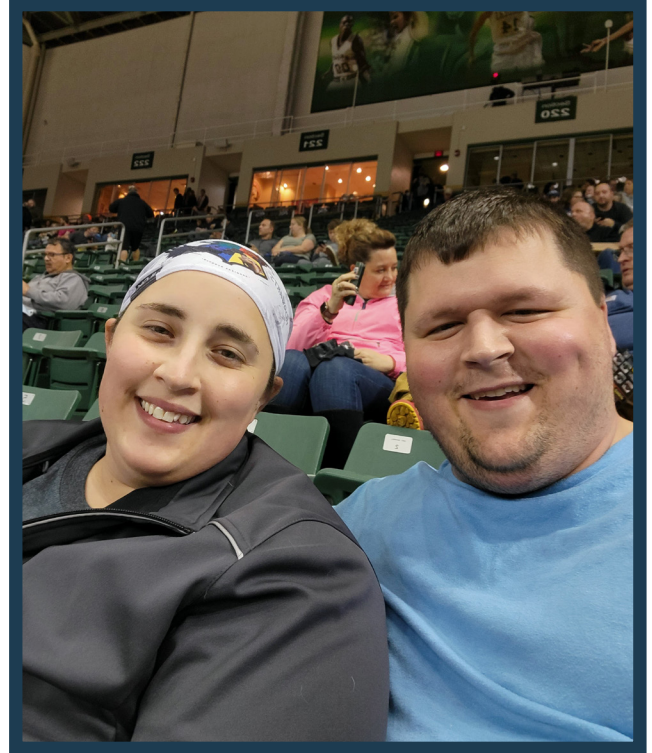
he mainly suffered bumps and bruises and asked to return to work after a few days.

Ohio has a legal doctrine in workers' compensation injuries known as the "going and coming" rule. In a nutshell, the rule says if you go to the same work location every day and get in an auto accident on the way to work or on your way home, your injuries aren't covered under workers' compensation. The theory is you have no more risk than anyone else of getting in a wreck, so it's not work-related. But, if you're a traveling employee, you are typically covered.

Before he hired us, Barrett went to his first hearing alone and lost. We appealed and won his claim before a senior hearing officer, presenting evidence he traveled every day, often to multiple sites in a day, and logged over three times the miles of the average commuter.

His employer, which touts itself as wonderful to work for on its website, fought his claim by appealing to the Industrial Commissioners who decided to hear the appeal, something they rarely do. In an order showing how little they understand the nuances of decades of case law involving fixed and non-fixed situs employees, they decided his extensive travel posed no special hazard to him, reversed and disallowed his claim.

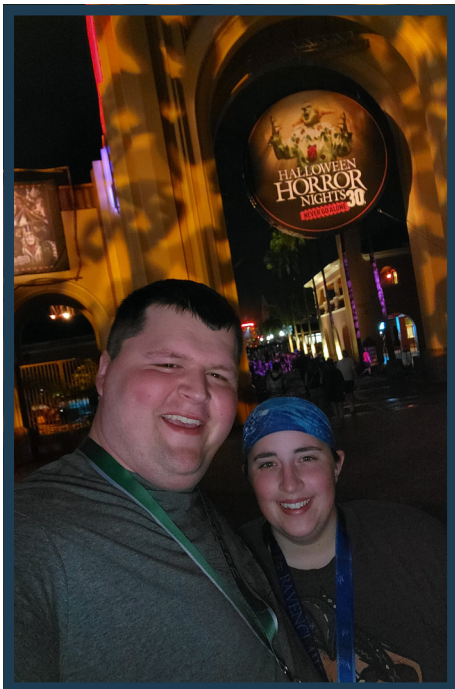
In most cases, this would have been even more of a travesty than in Barrett's. However, as mentioned, his injuries were remarkably slight, and he returned to work quickly. After our win following his initial disallowance, his \$18,000 in medical bills had to be paid (Ohio law requires them to be paid after a successful appeal hearing), and this was his main concern all along.



But his employer didn't pay those bills, even though they assured the Industrial Commission they had when they filed their Hail Mary appeal.

After the commissioners denied Barrett's claim and we learned his bills hadn't been paid, the company and its legal counsel arrogantly balked at paying. They changed their tune when we filed an administrative complaint against them, which can result in a revocation of self-insurance status. After considerable huffing and puffing, moaning, and groaning, they paid the bills.

As Barrett's attorney, I earned no fees from his case despite many hours of work — and I'm fine with that. I got his bills paid, his injuries weren't worse, and he's recovered and is back to work at a job he likes. Plus, I could stand up on his behalf against an employer that fought against a devoted employee and even tried to skate on paying his medical bills as the law requires. Not every payday is monetary.



THE PLAYFUL PUP WHO BECAME A BEACON OF HOPE

FROM POLICE ACADEMY DROPOUT TO RESCUE HERO

He may have flunked out of school, but that didn't stop Roger from being a hero! This golden retriever has been vital in digging under the rubble of Taiwan's catastrophic earthquakes, but he didn't have the best start.

Deemed too friendly and playful to work as a drug-sniffing dog, Roger failed his police academy exams. Of course, this rambunctious pup wasn't calling it quits just yet. Instead, he became a certified rescue dog and showed his true talent and courage when a 7.4 magnitude earthquake hit Taiwan in April 2024. As part of the Kaohsiung Fire Bureau, Roger saved lives and recovered those lost under the wreckage.

It wasn't long before Roger became a national symbol of hope. After his hard work, a local reporter interviewed Roger, and his playful antics stole the whole world's heart. From taste

testing the reporter's microphone to tearing apart a stuffed ice cream toy on camera, it was clear Roger deserved all the praise in the world for his efforts.

According to Kaohsiung Mayor Chen Chi-Mai, Roger and his other rescue pup pals earned themselves plenty of treats and toys after the incident. The mayor told ABC Australia, "After receiving the ice cream toy, he didn't mind messing up his appearance while enthusiastically chewing on it." Still, he didn't mind Roger's goofy nature and unique interview skills as the canine brought "smiles to everyone despite their exhaustion."

While he may be full of energy, Roger is actually nearing retirement. At the seasoned age of eight, plans are in place for him to retire and hang up his vest by the time he turns nine. His post-service life will be one of leisure and love, filled



with endless days of playing and relaxation, a fitting reward for a dog who has contributed so much to his community.

Roger's story is a powerful reminder of the unexpected paths our lives can take and how our unique traits can lead us to fulfill roles we never imagined. From a playful pup deemed unsuitable for police work to a hero who rose to the occasion when disaster struck, Roger exemplifies how perseverance and adaptability can carve out a legacy of heroism and hope. Yes, a golden retriever can teach us all that.

SUDOKU

			8			5		
	6				9	1		
	4			2	1		3	
3	8							
7								3
							4	9
	5		9	3			8	
		3	5				9	
		1			4			

1	3	9	8	4	7	5	2	6
2	6	3	5	9	1	7	4	
5	4	7	6	2	1	9	3	8
3	8	2	4	9	5	6	1	7
7	9	4	1	6	8	2	5	3
6	1	5	2	7	3	8	4	9
4	5	6	9	3	2	7	8	1
9	7	3	5	1	6	4	9	2
8	2	1	7	8	4	3	6	5

ANSWER



EATS WITH ELLIE

BAKED SWEET POTATO FRIES

These fries are crispy on the outside, tender on the inside, and packed with nutrients!

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large sweet potatoes, cut into wedges
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper
- Salt and pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425 F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Place sweet potato wedges in a large bowl and add olive oil, paprika, garlic powder, cayenne, salt, and pepper. Toss to combine.
3. Arrange the sweet potato wedges on the prepared baking sheet in a single layer.
4. Bake for 20–25 minutes, flipping halfway through, until golden and crispy.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Stories of Resilience and Humor This Father's Day
- 2 Client Success Story
- 3 A Golden Retriever's Unlikely Path to Becoming a Hero
- Baked Sweet Potato Fries
- 4 The Appeal and Evolution of Scrabble

MY WORD! EXPLORING THE RICH HISTORY OF SCRABBLE

In 1931, the Great Depression — the worst economic crisis in American history — had thoroughly dampened the country's spirit. Amidst the crisis, Alfred M. Butts, an out-of-work New York architect, decided to create a game to take his mind off the economy. Aspiring to develop a classic to join the ranks of other timeless card and board games, Butts came up with the idea for a board-and-tile game he non-committedly named "Criss Cross," which we now know as Scrabble.

THE ARCHITECT'S PLAN

At its core, Scrabble was inspired by crossword puzzles and always featured the iconic lettered tiles, each with separate quantities and point values. Butts determined the point values by surfing through his collection of local newspapers and counting how often each letter appeared. To prevent players from creating too many cheap plurals, he included only four "S" tiles in each box and assigned the letter a measly 1 point.

Butts was eager to share his idea with the world, but the world was not as eager to receive it. He pitched the game to several publishers and retailers, but all rejected it. Butts had to retail it on a small scale, and the game did not become the surefire hit he expected it to be. It wasn't until fellow New Yorker James Brunot discovered the game that things changed for the better. Brunot offered to mass-produce the game and, in exchange, would provide Butts with a portion of the profits, which Butts happily agreed to.

BRUNOT'S BARGAIN

As soon as Brunot secured the rights to the game, he began making significant changes to it. These included redesigning the board, its

color, players' starting position, and the location of various score multiplier tiles. But his most important contribution was changing its name to Scrabble!



The owner of Macy's then discovered the game and offered to carry it in his stores. Brunot went from creating 12 copies of the game an hour when he first acquired the rights to 2,000 sets per week by 1952. By 1954, *millions* of copies were sold. Today, the game has been translated into over 20 languages and has sold over 100 million copies. People play the game worldwide, in tournaments and living rooms alike, and it has allowed millions to share in the joy initially envisioned by a down-on-his-luck architect in a time when hope was a distant prospect.