



Honoring Dad

JEFFERSON CITY — This Sunday will mark a holiday that some would like you to believe is all about tacky ties, tools, and steaks. While those items are certainly nice for Father's Day, the holiday should mean a little more.

The origin of the first modern Father's Day was on July 5th, 1908 in Fairmont, West Virginia. It is believed to have been inspired to honor fathers after a deadly mine explosion in the area the previous December. That disaster killed 361 men, many of them fathers. Some reports have the holiday going back as far as the 1830s to honor 123 fathers who lost their lives defending an outpost in a battle. The idea gained more momentum in the early 20th Century, but it wasn't until 1972 that President Nixon would make this third Sunday in June an official national holiday.

As I mentioned before, Father's Day seems to be more and more geared toward shopping and the retail sector. That's all right, but I think there's something dads can give back to their kids: leadership. There's research out there that shows children need the type of firm leadership only a dad can provide. Those children do better in school when their fathers show an interest in their education, and they have more confidence the more time their dads spend with them showing them affection. Too many times the father is just not around, either physically or emotionally. Men who have children need to step up to their commitments and make sure those kids are taken care of. Even for fathers who are providing a decent home and living for their children, you need to find the time to give to your children the gift they need more than anything else: you. Spend time with them. Go to their games or concerts. Be their father.

For me, the day has always held - and continues to hold - a special place in my heart. I always remember when I was little, giving my Dad his gift for Father's Day and thinking he was magic because he ALWAYS could tell what the gift was before he opened the package - even if we wrapped it different or put it in a box. He always knew that it was either Captain Black Pipe Tobacco or Old Spice. I was too young to realize he knew what he was getting every year since every gift we gave him for Christmas, his Birthday or Father's Day was always Captain Black or Old Spice. Every time I smell Captain Black pipe tobacco or Old Spice, I am taken back to those Father's Days of yesteryear.

Maybe my father was part magic, because when my son sits on my lap and helps me open my fathers day gift, it is as if I am five years old sitting right there on his lap again telling him "you'll never guess what I got you this year, Dad!" And that is a gift no one would ever return.

If you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by phone at (866) 271-2844.

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