

## Having a scientist as father

I think the biggest influence my father has had on my life is my curiosity and enjoyment in being busy. As I work on this, I am working at one of the many volunteer event planning positions I work on throughout the year, and just as he is still going and innovating as he approaches 80 years old, I enjoy working with other people to coordinate an excellent event.

When we lived just outside of Washington, DC, Dad worked well in breaking the mold of a traditional family by being almost the only single father in the neighborhood. He headed up my brother's Cub Scout Pack for three years, and I almost became an honorary cub scout since I was brought along on all the trips as I couldn't stay home by myself. He tried to volunteer and work with my Girl Scout troop, but they weren't quite ready for a male 'Cookie Mother' for the annual cookie sales fundraising. Dad helped me participate in sports almost year around, proudly supporting me to become the only girl to play in little-league baseball in Arlington County for three years! He cooked, cleaned, and did everything around the house except for ironing and sewing, and was happy to have us walk to the local drycleaner to sew on our patches for our various scout uniforms.

While I can't recall learning when my father was a scientist, I do recall he traveled a lot. When we lived in Boston, when I was in summer day camp in 1978 (seven years old), our last summer there before moving to Washington, DC, I remember making a red, stuffed bunny with a moustache to take with him on his business trips as company. I also remember

being terribly embarrassed when I saw six years later that he still packed it for every trip. I recall he told me that of course he still took it with him. I guess he understood the changing attitudes of a young child to a pre-teenager!

For many years, I mostly just told my friends that "my dad works at the VA and visits hospitals around the country". The full realization of his research work came in 1985 when I was 15 and we moved to Columbia, MD for him to take his job as the head of the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging.

If there is one thing that drives me nuts about my dear old dad, it is that he is humble and self-deprecating to a fault. He has been an incredible father, an even more amazing scientist and contributor to the world of gerontechnology, and I am so proud and happy that he is being recognized as terrific all around person he is.



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