

Reflections on being a Fienning

1 message

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To: Edie Croake <ecroake@wccnet.edu>

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Hi Edie:

It seems appropriate that I answer you on this day, May 26th, which would have been Dad's 101st birthday. I was so fortunate to have him as a father. He taught me so many things but mostly he loved me forever and always (as did Mom but we're talking Fiennings here!). I think what I admired most about Dad was his commitment to family.....certainly his own wife and three children but to his parents and siblings, nieces and nephews. What a blessing it has been for me to have so many relatives - so many aunts and uncles and oh so many cousins!! It is such a gift. In this century and time, having 10 children is unheard of and, if you have 10 children you're considered weird. But I love the George Fienning story - one that is near and dear to my heart. My Dad admired his father so and it is the belief and devotion to God, loving nature, the dedication to his family, hard work, and character of George Fienning that we all admire and certainly aspire to in our own lives. When my Dad would get down, he would remember how his father George lived through the transition of life in a foreign country, the tragic loss of his own father to ~~suicide~~ ^{alcohol}, the struggle his mother had to raise her 3 children alone in a country where she didn't speak the language, the joy of marrying the love of his life to be thrown into despair upon losing her to the flu epidemic, the epic loss of his business partner and the feelings of responsibility to the man's widow and children and the myriad of other challenges that came into his life. Grandpa Fienning was an inspiration to all his children and then, and therefore, to his grandchildren as well.

Adversity or challenging times certainly builds character and Grandpa Fienning had a strong, strong faith that he instilled in his family. I know he had a very personal relationship with Jesus because I don't know how he could have survived all that was sent to him without a partnership with the Lord.

The Fienning Family is so diverse - we come from lots of different places and backgrounds. We've involved ourselves in lots of vocations and activities. But even though we are diverse, we are united in love.....love of God, love of Family and love of Country. I am proud I am from "Fienning stock". The older I get (and move down to the "front row" of family pictures) the more I admire the character (and characters!) of my family. When I was young I took for granted that I had scads of relatives. As I have journeyed through life I see

what an enormous blessing it is to have so many relatives when I encounter people that have little or no family. Family teaches you much.....tolerance for differences for one thing. And it is true that sometimes cousins are your first (and longest) friends. I'm grateful for Facebook as I am able to find out more about cousins that I rarely see or grew up with. On Facebook I can see where they live, what interests them, what jobs they have, how their children are having children and how we're all coping with life. Facebook has opened up a lot of new friendships (aka knowing your cousins) and I am grateful.

I just hung the towel rack of Grandpa's from the Grocery Store that I won in an auction one year. My handyman that hung it remarked about how cool the continuous towels were. I know those were handmade by Grandma and slipped right on the pale green painted dowel in the wall mount. I also have a small table that Grandpa made that I treasure. I wasn't around Grandpa and Grandma much because we lived 4 hours away (and they died when I was a teenager) but my Dad would not let me forget who his parents were. He was proud of them and he made me proud of them as well.

OK, I'm teared up now.....I think I'll quit but I surely will be interested in whatever it is you're putting together. You have such a gift with words and such a devotion to the Fienning Family. Thank you in advance for this grouping of stories. Edit wherever you want. This is just a stream of consciousness thing.

Looking forward to seeing you in July.d Again, thank you for your efforts in keeping us connected.

Much Love,

Kathy