

much more traditional role in our society, but in my dad's mind, that did rule did apply to me. I do believe that any confidence and any success that I may have achieved in my life are directly attributable to my dad's belief in me and my abilities and my mom's nurturing of any skills and abilities that I may have possessed. How do you thank a parent for that?

And as for my mom, what can I say that you don't know already know? She fell in love with my dad when she was 16 years old. He proposed to her on Christmas Eve of 1940 and they were married February 15, 1941 when she was 20 and he was 24. They lived together and loved each other for 67 years. 67 years filled with wonderful memories. Those of you who know my parents know how close they were. They were like the proverbial bookends – each holding up one side of the family. She took care of him and he took care of her. They were a team. My auntie Lillian used to call them the "golden couple." She said that my dad was the president, and my mom was the "general" and that the general would give the president his orders, and he would follow them. I guess Lillian knew my parents very well. I could go on and on about my dad and my mom and their devotion to one another, but you all know what I'm talking about. However, I would like share this with you -- In his final days, although it was difficult for him to speak out loud, the four words my dad managed to utter loudly and clearly were to my mom, and they were "Helen , I love you."

No finer tribute could be made by a man to his wife.

In closing, I would like to read a few paragraphs written by Henry Van Dyke. I ask if you would envision a large clipper ship in full sail headed out to sea.

*"I am standing upon the seashore. A ship at my side spreads her white sails to the morning breeze and start for the blue ocean. She is an object of beauty and strength. I stand and watch her until at length she hangs like a speck of white cloud just where the sea and sky come to mingle with each other.*

*Then someone at my side says: "There, she is gone!"*

*"Gone where?"*

*Gone from my sight. That is all. She is just as large in mast and hull and spar as she was when she left my side and she is just as able to bear the load of living freight to her destined port.*

*Her diminished size is in me, not in her. And just at the moment when someone at my side says: "There, she is gone!" There are other eyes watching her coming, and other voices ready to take up the glad shout: "Here she comes!"*

*And that is dying."*