

DAD...you're still my hero!

With father's day just passed, many Canadians were thinking about getting a card or present for that special man in our lives...our fathers. Some even got them in the mail in advance of this special day. But sadly, for some of us, father's day is a day of sorrow and remembrance of fathers no longer with us.

I remember watching the tears flowing freely down my mom's unbelieving face of grief as we gathered to pay tribute to my dad Ron Hooey that February in 1999. I watched, as she seemed to shrink before my eyes under the weight of her grief. I listened as person after person got up to share stories of how much my dad had meant to them, and how he had impacted their lives. I wondered, did they ever tell dad of their admiration and love. Sadly, she too left us that year.

As I got up to share my thoughts and to honor my dad, I was overwhelmed with the loss of the man who had been my hero. The man who had chosen to be my dad by adopting me those many years ago. The man who had modeled love in everything he did, and in how he treated my mom, my sister and myself. The man who always seemed to have time for me, despite his own busy schedule, to talk, to challenge, to discipline when I needed it (and I did quite often during my teen years). The man who had always been in my corner, believing in me, encouraging me and loving me regardless of how I was progressing. The man who had, the night before he passed away on his 82nd birthday, called me to tell me how much he loved me and how proud he was of me. I was so glad I 'd had the chance to tell him often how much he had meant to me over the past 10 years, and that the last words I'd said to him were, "luv you pop!"

It has been over 3 years since dad left us and almost 2 years since mom joined him and I miss them both terribly. Their lives meant something to me and continue to be an inspiration to me.

My challenge to my fellow children across Canada is not to wait until it is too late. If you love your father, don't wait until father's day, or worse after he cannot hear you. **TELL HIM NOW** and tell him often! **Dad, you are still my hero; and you will be until I join you someday.**

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Bob 'Idea Man' Hooey, DTM, PRA, CKD-Emeritus, Accredited Speaker, 2011 Spirit of CAPS recipient is an inspirational leader, speaker, and a prolific author whose works include **'Legacy of Leadership, Strive for significance – lead on purpose!'**, **'Speaking for Success'** and **'The Courage to Lead!'** His articles have been featured in a multitude of North American trade and global consumer publications. He is a respected leader who has been honored by CAPS, NSA, Toastmasters, and the United Nations for his leadership contributions. His creative *Ideas At Work* have allowed him to travel the globe sharing insights, encouragement in 61 countries, so far. With Covid-19 he has been zooming around the globe to share his ideas. His **innovative Ideas At Work!** have been successfully applied by global leaders as well as Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies.