Parents are very special

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This column is being written on Mother's Day. My Mother was a strong influence in my life just like a lot of mothers in this world. I didn't come from a one parent family, but my siblings pretty much did.

My father passed away when I was 19 and a sophomore in college and my mother was left to raise my three siblings. I want to say she did a great job or, at least, with my sister and two brothers. But since I am writing this in the same town that I live I am sure the jury is still out about her success with me.

I know that in my household the same is true. Marlene has done an outstanding job with our two sons, and I have stated that many times. She helped form their values in the very formative years and then I got to work with them after that. I hope I had some positive influence on them but their mother did most of the work.

My mother was old school. She expected her kids to do what was right, and if you had to think about whether it was right or wrong, it was probably not right, so don't do it.

I have always been very proud of my mother because she wasn't afraid to look at the two roads and take the one less traveled. She remarried eight years after Dad passed and ended up going to seminary school and becoming an ordained Methodist minister.

At that time there were not a lot of women pastors in the church, but it didn't stop her. That was a trait that she passed to her children.

I don't think that my brothers or I have been the first to do anything too important, but I think just because something was difficult to accomplish it didn't scare us from trying it in our coaching careers. My sister, on the other hand, was the first women to be an athletic director at a college or university in the state of Kentucky. I know my mother helped make that possible.

Mother was a great supporter of her children. She knew that since all of us were coaches and would work with young people that we would be in a position to influence and possibly help set the path of our students and athletes.

She always noted that doing the right things for the students should be very high, if not at the top of the list of things we wanted to accomplish. "They will remember things about what you do or say to them that you won't remember yourself," she would say. I know she was right about that. "You will have the opportunity to give them an opportunity to excel and try not to take that away from them if at all possible," she'd say.

When I was still at home, I thought Mom and Dad were unreasonable. They were narrow-minded and were so demanding that they were almost cruel to me. Funny how that changed and they got smarter and smarter as I got older and older.

Even though my Mom has been gone for seven years now and my Dad for 50 years, Mother's Day and Father's Day still have meaning to them.

My mom did get to see some of our teams play. She didn’t miss any of the State Championship games in Lincoln and she made it once in a while during the years. But she had three other kids who were coaches and as a minister her weekends were busy also.

I think Dad would have been proud of his kids because he was a big sports fan. I don’t know if he was disappointed I didn’t come back and farm, but I know he knew what I wanted to do and that was what he supported.

I am happy that my parents were tough on me at times. I know in my coaching career I didn’t get it right every time, but I tried to weigh all the parts and tried to do what was right for kids. Giving them a chance to be successful was still what it was all about.

Don’t wait too long to tell your mother or your father thanks for all they have given you. It doesn’t take a long speech and it means a lot.