

# THE Mother of Inspiration

## The Foundation: Autobiographical Note

I can still hear grandma's soothing whisper travel through the late night air of the Brooklyn apartment bedroom that we shared for so many years. Chatting with my roommate Mary in our room now while falling asleep transports me directly back to this bedroom in the middle of Brooklyn and reminds me of the most memorable times of my early years.

I was born into a family whose life in the United States was built on hard work and a powerful determination to persevere through all of the challenges obstructing the path to success. The gratitude that I possess for the generations of my family that came before me whose efforts allow me to experience this life in the U.S. has resulted in me being on a mission ever since my childhood to make the most of everything life presents me with. My admiration for my family is what fuels me with the motivation to abide by this lifestyle since I know that the challenges I face do not compare with my two grandmothers leaving Lithuania and Germany to find themselves across an ocean with no money and surrounded by a strange culture and language, or the stress my parents possessed everyday of earning enough money to feed and put a roof over my brothers and me. My entire life story really builds off of the respect and admiration that I feel toward my forebears, most specifically my two grandmothers because behind that thick and aggressive German accent and that stern Eastern European personality were my two grandmothers of inspiration.

## The Memories

The childhood of Carolyn Adams was truly one of strength and joy. It was normalcy for her from a very young age to be immersed in the stresses of running a household and supporting a family. Even though she always says that she has never seen a work ethic as strong as that possessed by her closest family members, putting three meals a day on their apartment dining room table was often a task that came with significant difficulty. She had to dedicate hours of work to obtain

what many young people have handed directly to them. The frequency and magnitude of the fear of not being able to adequately support his family unfortunately, on occasion, drew Carolyn's father to turn to unfavorable methods of stress reduction. Yet Carolyn's awareness and her amazing spirit led her to become a strong support for her father, developing a relationship of love and admiration at such a young age between the two that she says will never be forgotten. Out of these struggles came a beautiful child with a passionate adoration for life.

Whether it was playing in the tennis club at Thomas A. Edison High School or taking a trip to the local amusement park with friends, Carolyn always tried to keep a bright smile across her face. In her childhood, she truly did display her main goal of life - to make the most of the opportunities and situations presented to her. Carolyn has stressed how much she values education and her gratitude for this wonderful high school which enabled her to accomplish incredible things and acquire knowledge that she would use throughout her entire lifetime. Her love of the business world developed here as she studied four years in the business pathway offered at the school. She has often stated that one thing she missed out on in the business program was the pursuit to fluency in a foreign language. Carolyn's solution: befriend people who speak multiple languages and enjoy the concept of languages with them. One of her closest friends here to this day is a speaker of Russian, German, Spanish, and English. This is a vividly clear example of Carolyn taking advantage of the opportunities she has and not being disappointed about a lacking opportunity, but rather taking the initiative and physically creating the opportunity for herself. She embodies her belief that opportunities do not happen, one creates them.

## Meeting John

Following her education, Carolyn began work in the financial field for an insurance company. Accepting challenges as they were presented to her just as she had done in her childhood, Carolyn made the perfect employee who was loved by her colleagues and bosses for both her work ethic and personality. In these early adult years, she met who would become the love of her life. His name was John Adams. Carolyn and John knew that they were made for each other since the

first day that they met at a gathering. She describes John as a compassionate, handsome, and intelligent man. He was her rock, supporting her and rooting for success in everything that his wife did. Her lifestyle would change as they bought their own home together in Hightstown, New Jersey, a place much different than Carolyn's hometown of Brooklyn, New York. The images of the beautiful scenery and landscapes, often with John standing in them, of this new home continue to stay in her artistic mind to this day. She still thinks of these picturesque scenes as she creates her beautiful artwork that currently lines the walls of her room.

Carolyn's willingness to embrace change led her to quickly become more of a country girl, with her new favorite places being the local farm stand surrounded by the vast cornfields and Mercer County Park, draped in the greenery of plant vegetation. Life brought immense happiness to the lives of Carolyn and John that would only become intensified with the addition of a new member to the Adams family.

## Baby Johnny and Motherhood

Baby Johnny brought pure delight and joyfulness. Carolyn continues to emphasize how amazing of a person he truly was from the day he was born. He was the son that every mom and dad dream of having the day they get married - a handsome, polite, and fun-loving child. Forever grateful for all of the time that she was able to spend with her son during his youth, this mom also had the blessing of watching her son grow up in front of her eyes and being with him in so many stages along the process to adulthood.

Just as she has a rule for herself to take advantage of opportunities in life, she is a strong believer that every single moment counts and needs to be enjoyed. This has certainly been on display when it comes to motherhood, with Carolyn appreciating every second spent with her son. It was not always sharing laughter as there were moments when tears were shared between Johnny and Carolyn, but to her, these were opportunities to apply all that she had learned from her two grandmothers and mom to help a son that she could call her own.

Always putting Johnny's wishes and needs above their own, Carolyn and John were able to raise an incredible young man who would go on to

graduate from college, earn himself a job that he enjoys, and get married to create a family of his own that currently lives in Hopatcong, New Jersey. Recently, many of Carolyn's favorite moments have occurred with her daughter-in-law who makes frequent visits that are always highly anticipated. She considers her to be a daughter of her own, joking that she now has two children. By talking on the phone often with Johnny, Carolyn has maintained a beautiful and inspiring relationship with her son to this day, with him loving her just as much as she admires him. She is a mother of inspiration.

## Dreams Come True

Emphasizing how her life has been different in more ways than she ever imagined it would be while sitting in her Brooklyn bedroom, one of these unpredicted events stands out in particular to her as she also considers it to be her greatest accomplishment. Carolyn is so proud of the fact that she was able to attend her community college for two years while living in Hightstown. Not only did she break such a tall and thick concrete gender barrier, but she acquired so much knowledge at this university that resulted in her changing her career entirely. After taking and successfully completing high level courses in the real estate field, she was immediately hired by a local real estate firm.

One of Carolyn's favorite stories occurs right after she obtained her real estate license and was hired by the firm. It was her first job. She was assigned to help a young, newly-married couple find what would be their first home together. Emphasizing how important helping others was to her throughout the entirety of her life, she thought these would be the perfect clients for her. What an honor it would be to help a newlywed couple, just like her and John once were in the same Hightstown, New Jersey, find their dream home. Everything was going smoothly, and the clients had even selected a home they cherished and won the bidding war to purchase it. Just when Carolyn thought she had succeeded in helping fulfill the dream of others in only her first assignment, she was informed that she wrongly completed certain paperwork that would significantly delay the purchase. What does Carolyn do after that purchase is finally completed? She asks for another assignment immediately, and after many more years in the

field, she is always proud to say that she never once made that mistake again. "You cannot be afraid to make mistakes. Just learn from them so you do not make the same one twice," she frequently advises.

Carolyn has always considered herself to be very religious and to value her connection with God very much. Despite being a member of the Lutheran church, the fact that she goes to the masses offered here in the home even though they are conducted by Catholic priests illustrates how strong her desire to connect with God truly is. Something that continues to make her smile to this day is thinking about the many years that she spent teaching Sunday School at the local Lutheran church in Hightstown. She is so proud to have been able to help young members of her church community become closer to God by sharing her knowledge in a way that encouraged her students to want to develop a more solid connection with God. Dedicating so much of her time volunteering to help children with their religious education, Carolyn truly is a mother of inspiration to many more kids than just Johnny. I think a suitable title for her, after the years of contributions she made to this community, would be the "Hero of Hightstown."

## The Recent Years

Carolyn's beloved husband John passed away some years back which was completely devastating for Carolyn and her son. This man was the love of her life, and they maintained such an incredible relationship until the day of his passing. She frequently emphasizes how much she learned from the years together with John, how intelligent and pleasant of a man he was. He had worked for years for IBM fixing computers, and Carolyn often says how the one regret she has in all of her time with John was not listening to him more about computers. Often, he would try to help her learn more about the functions of computers, but she never took very much interest in this technology, preferring reading and artwork over screens. While continuing to miss her husband everyday and having him be on her mind every morning when she gets up, religion has helped her very much to not be so sad about him being gone but rather to smile at and appreciate the wonderful memories that they had together while knowing that God is keeping him safe in heaven everyday.

With her love of music, literature, and visual arts, Carolyn continues to consider listening to classical music, reading books, and creating artwork three of her favorite hobbies. In addition, she has had an interest for history ever since her high school years, resulting in her considering one of her favorite activities in the evening being to watch the programs on the PBS channel that document historical events from all around the world. Just from walking with Carolyn through the halls of the home, it is extremely easy to see how many people love her here. Since first meeting her, she has expressed significant gratitude for all of the kind people here as well as the opportunities provided to the residents.

## Author's Note

Carolyn, it has truly been an honor getting to know you and spend time with you throughout this summer. You have inspired me in so many ways and taught me so many valuable life lessons that I promise you I will never forget. Your strength and spirit truly amazes me everyday. It seems as though you are stronger than ever, even after experiencing such a tragic loss and a horrific and frightening stroke. You have made such an incredible mark on this world, and I hope you feel the same pride about that as I feel respect toward you. Our friendship will always stick with me, and I pray that it will continue for many years to come. Thank you so very much for opening up your heart to me and trusting me to create this story of your life that has been so inspiring to me. The answer to your apologies for speaking too much or being a blabbermouth is that every one of those words truly sticks with me and were so inspiring to hear.