

Memorial Day remembrance stirs feelings of gratitude for one reader

DEAR ABBY: The Friday morning before Memorial Day, I read the letter in your column from Carmella La Spada from the White House Commission on the National Moment of Remembrance.

On Memorial Day, I was invited to a barbecue at the home of friends, so I decided to create our own moment of silence.

The gathering included myself, my teen-age son and the host family, which consisted of two more teens and several older relatives. The host had served in the Navy during the Gulf War, so the moment of remembrance held extra meaning for him.

At 3 p.m., the group gathered around the American flag in the front yard. I read Ms. La Spada's letter aloud, as it explained beautifully the reason for the moment of silence. Then my son, who plays the trumpet, played a beautiful rendition of "Taps."

The experience gave me a deep sense of gratitude for the freedoms we enjoy, made possible by all of the men and women who have served in our armed forces down through the history of this country.

In that moment, I felt the connectedness of us all.

Thank you, Abby and Ms. La Spada, for helping to make the day truly meaningful.

Please sign my name. I am proud to live in the land of the free.



Abigail Van Buren

• Dear Abby

—TERESA ST. GEORGE, WENATCHEE, WASH.

DEAR TERESA: I'm sure Carmella La Spada will be as pleased as I am to know her letter spurred you to action.

And I hope your letter reminds everyone who sees it how fortunate we are to live in this great country. The freedoms we enjoy today are the result of great personal sacrifice, and we must never forget it.

DEAR ABBY: The letters you have printed about acts of kindness — as well as those about the insensitive treatment people with disabilities have received at some restaurants — reminded me of an experience I had.

My father had many strokes and could no longer speak. However, in spite of his disabilities, my father was excited about giving me away at my wedding.

I took him to a tuxedo shop in North Seattle for a fitting. The young man who helped us could not have been more than 19 or 20 years old. He looked

my father in the eye and addressed every question to him, although my father could answer with only a nod or a shake of the head.

He was courteous and respectful, and accommodated my father's need to have a tux with a loose collar because of his trach tube.

I'll always be grateful to this kind and sensitive young man.

He treated my father like the gentleman he was. The memory of that incident brought me a bit of comfort when my father died a month after the wedding. I regret that I never properly thanked the young man, nor did I get his name. I hope he sees this — and that other service providers will realize how much respectful treatment means to people with disabilities and their family members.

—MARY R. SWEENEY, ISSAQUAH, WASH.

DEAR MARY: I, too, hope he sees the letter, and that others in the service professions will learn from that fine young man's example.



Kansans give legislature 'D' grade

TOPEKA (AP) — Kansans did not approve of how legislators handled major issues this session, a new poll suggests.

Overall, the people responding in The Kansas Poll gave legislators a D grade. They also gave lawmakers a D for their handling of each of 12 issues, including the state's budget problems.

The poll was organized by the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Kansas, and results were released Thursday. Sponsoring the poll were The Topeka Capital-Journal, CJOnline, KSNT-TV in Topeka, KSNW-TV in Wichita, WIBW AM and FM radio in Topeka, and The Associated Press.

In an analysis, the pollsters said surveying Kansans about their opinions of the Legislature took twice as long as anticipated because of how vocal respondents were.


"They wanted to voice their frustrations, and they were more than happy to comment," said Mary Banwart, an assistant professor of communication studies. The information about attitudes toward the Legislature was released in advance of Tuesday's primary.

The hottest race on the primary ballot is for the Republican gubernatorial nomination, where the state's budget problems are the biggest issue.

Pollsters surveyed 485 Kansans from July 27-30 and said their margin of error was 4.5 percent.

However, only 371 of the respondents were allowed to grade the Legislature, because they said they followed legislative business at least occasionally. Almost 25 percent, or 114 respondents, said they never followed it. politics; making tough decisions; and completing their work in a timely fashion. Legislators spent a record 107 days in session after approving \$252 million in tax increases. The poll analysis said there was a general sentiment against tax increases.


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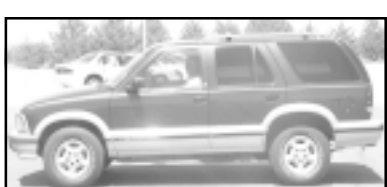
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