

The Renaissance Man

The people with whom we associate in conjunction with our surroundings affect us in many aspects of our life. One prominent individual has had an everlasting affect on my life. He came to me when I was seventeen months old and has been b was seventeen months old. Ever since that day he has been with me, subtly guiding me through all the stages y my side throughout my life. I see his success as a motive to achieve my own ambitions. James Derderian, my father, adopted me, with his wife, Elizabeth, when I of my eighteen years. At the age of fifty-nine, when most people begin to think about retirement, he adopted me. I was the last of three children that he adopted starting when he was fifty-one years old. It is not only because of this that I feel influenced; it is his insatiable appetite for new challenges. His success in life, for me, acts as a guide which is use to lead me through my own life.

Coming to this country at the fragile age of five, not knowing one word of English, he has become a well known figure in his field of work. Armenia, the origin of my family, is where my father was born seventy-seven years ago. His very poor family fled from their town, which was in Turkey, to Everett, Massachusetts in nineteen twenty-eight. They lived several years in this suburb of Boston, until they were able to move to Haverhill to start a chicken farm. My father's journey began the first day of school when he was sent home because he could not ask to go to the bathroom in English. As he slowly learned the new culture he began to become more and more aware of his family's condition.

As a young adult, he realized his family's troubles and strove to make what money he could in order to keep his family together. He would sell eggs and chickens in Haverhill to supply his family with money to survive. With an attitude that allowed him to never say never, he attempted everything.

Once he was on his own he challenged every aspect of life. Throughout his life he entered and succeeded in the business of banking, teaching, flying, hotel management, managing a strip mall, real estate, and woodworking. Over time he found a niche in woodworking. He has continued developing his woodworking business for the past fifty years during which time he has experimented with the said activities. He even was thinking about becoming a doctor until he met my mother and decided to marry.

He is always looking to take on more challenges which often lead him into new areas of work. My father could even be said to be an inventor. The portable voting booth was first designed and built by my father. He also has two patents on windows that he manufacturers. Beside work he keeps himself busy with several hobbies, any one of which could be one good hobby for the average person. Among his hobbies are activities such as gardening, bee keeping, fruit growing, both northern fruit and tropical, landscaping, plumbing, building, cooking, preserving fruit for jelly and jam, photography, and tennis. He also attempted to learn how to play an organ at fifty years of age, and later, at sixty-six, built a car. He is constantly improving upon everything he does. His zest for life may have come from his father, who passed away when he was one hundred and twelve, but most of it stems from within.

I use his journey and spirit for life as a model for my growth and development. His courage and hunger encourages me to tackle many obstacles. His care and guidance help me surmount any problems that I encounter. I hope that one day I can say that I have done what my father did. I say this knowing that I never had such an obstacle as coming to a totally foreign country as a young boy, but I feel our present culture has many different obstacles which his did not. My father is the one individual who has influenced me in such a positive way, that it will forever be with me.

