

# Good guys...

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play with us kids. He tossed baseballs to us, built a huge cage around a tree for the baby squirrels my brothers brought home every spring, made furniture for my dolls and even sat on the floor and played jacks with me.

When the grandkids came along, they all adored him. They professed aggravation (but secretly loved it) when he would sneak food from their plates or cheat playing *Sorry* with them, as he had with us years before. I just wish leukemia hadn't claimed his life before my own two grandsons could know him.

And he passed this heritage on to my brothers, Loyd and Bobby Smith, who still live near Ft. Worth. Both are terrific fathers and grandfathers, as are so many other good men I know. Strong men who work every day to provide for those entrusted to their care. Men who tenderly, perhaps awkwardly, hold their newborns in their big hands, who take their families to church, to ball games, who go fishing or swimming or camping, who build tree houses and grill hot dogs and tolerate all the pets, from dogs and cats to hamsters and

snakes, their kids bring home.

I think of Ted Hires who started the Justice Coalition after he and then his son were robbed and their lives threatened, and he hoped to perhaps spare other fathers and sons the same experience. I talk to Vice cops who frequently must work amid a sordid segment of society and who all say their often-distasteful undercover jobs are part of their objective to ensure the safety of their own children, and all of ours.

## Dad's impact is incalculable

A father's influence on his children is inestimable. Dr. James Dobson, in his book *Bringing Up Boys*, states, "In our society we are living with an epidemic of dads who don't spend quality time with their kids. When we look at the rash of shootings on school campuses today, boys are almost exclusively involved. When we look at campus violence, it's almost always the boys who are doing these things.

"Many experts believe that one of the key causes of all this is the absence of fathers in the lives of their children -

especially the boys. In the absence of paternal leadership and guidance, families are more likely to experience problems. Boys are made - created - to depend on their fathers, to listen to their fathers. That's the way God made them. To take men out of the lives of children, especially boys, bad things usually happen. The secret word is leadership.

"...Dad needs to be more involved. This will cost him time, no question about it. It may cost the family income or mean significant sacrifice and schedule change, but it will be an investment with magnificent returns. Quality time with kids...can only come inside of quantity time."

Dr. Dobson also says, "Fathers have an incalculable impact on their daughters. Most psychologists believe, and I am one of them, that all future romantic relationships to occur in a girl's life will be influenced positively or negatively by the way she perceives and interacts with her dad.

"If he rejects and ignores her, she will spend her life trying to replace him in her heart. If he is warm and nurturing, she will look for a lover to equal him. If he thinks she is beautiful,

worthy, and feminine, she will be inclined to see herself that way. But if he thinks she is unattractive and uninteresting, she is likely to carry self-esteem problems into her adult years.

"I have also observed that a woman's respect for her husband is significantly influenced by the way she perceived her father. If he was overbearing, uncaring or capricious during her developmental years, she may disrespect her husband and question his judgment. But if Dad blended love and leadership in a way that conveyed strength, she will be more likely to live harmoniously with him.

"A good father will leave his imprint on his daughter for the rest of her life."

Unfortunately, the opposite is also true. What a great challenge, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, for dads to influence and mold their children's lives, to determine the kind of adult citizens they will become.

So on this Father's Day, to all you men who love and nurture and protect your family, God bless you for being the man you are. Have a happy Father's Day.

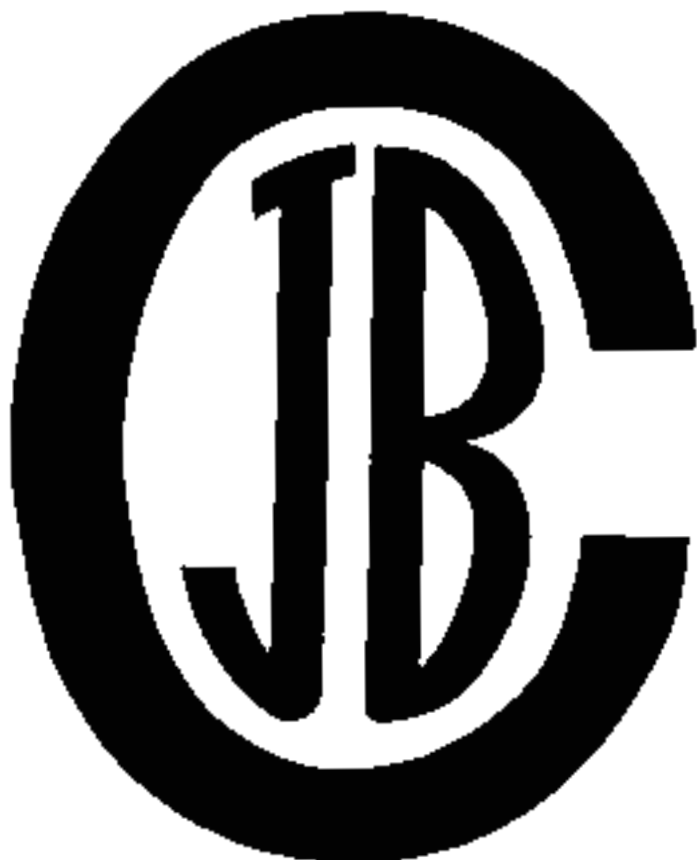
## WHERE YOU CAN FIND THE



- City Hall
- City Hall Annex
- Duval County Courthouse
- Jacksonville Public Libraries
- Police Memorial Building
- Sonny's Real Pit Bar-B-Q
- Office Depot
- The Jacksonville Landing
- Most Major Downtown Buildings
- Jacksonville Area:**  
(select locations)
- Burger King Restaurants
- Larry's Giant Subs
- Gate Food Posts  
(select locations)
- Famous Amos Restaurants
- McDonald's Restaurants
- Wal-Mart  
(select locations)
- And Green Cove Springs:**  
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