

March 8, 1985

reverence for the land and nature instilled in me by my Mother. A mother gives many gifts to her children and I am rich in heirlooms. Those I value most are the least tangible, they are a willingness to accept myself as I am, to value my strengths and not agonize over my weaknesses. Mom's advice always was be yourself, don't just follow the crowd. She gave me confidence based on the knowledge that she didn't want me to make decisions only to please her, but that they should be my own, based on my own good judgement. She wasn't and isn't one to give advice or criticism. Because she expected us to make our own decisions, her answer to the question, what should I do, was, you'll have to decide. Although she didn't usually say in so many words what she implied was she knew I'd make the right decision. Finally, she taught me tolerance, tolerance for those who are different from me, whether it be in religious values, ethnic background, or some other way. Mom's message to her children was always one of what the psychologists call unconditional positive regard, put simply that says, you are my kid, I believe in you and you will do okay. In 1965, when I graduated from high school, my Mom returned to teaching to help her children through college. She continued teaching until she retired in 1981. She and I formed a partnership to run the farm when my Dad died in 1975. One might think that a mother's job should be done when she gets a child to my age but, for all she has done for me, she continues to give. As you all know, it isn't easy being a mother of a politician. Her support of my efforts have made my service in the Legislature easier. She oversees the farm when I'm away, keeps the books, fields the calls and makes runs to the airport. But she maintains her own home and lives a full life of her own. She has, in her retirement, embarked upon a whole new string of interests that include painting, genealogy, gardening, piano and public service. Many of these are life long interests which she now has time to enjoy. Just last week she got her HAM radio license. I guess anyone who has always worked as hard as Mom has isn't going to put her feet up and vegetate. Speaking as one of the infamous baby boomers who is now beginning to believe that she may actually age and face retirement herself some day, I will know better how to continue to lead a happy and productive life through the example my Mother is setting for me today. Even in retirement she is still working, she is still teaching and, as always, she is still my friend. Thanks, Mom.