

# COLUMNS COMMENTARY

## Fatherhood has been worth the wait

By Gregory F. Augustine Pierce  
Syndicated columnist

Like many other male baby boomers, I almost missed becoming a dad. As with so many other things, we boomers thought we could have our children when and whenever we were ready, only to discover that things didn't always work out the way we planned.

After several detours and a couple of major crashes, however, I finally found myself the father of three healthy, beautiful children. I was almost 20 years older than my own parents were when they had me.

People always ask me whether having young children in your 40s is more difficult than having them in your 20s and 30s, and I always answer the same way: "How would I know?"

From observing my siblings and friends, however, I have come to the



### F AITH AND WORK

belief that what older parents lack in energy and patience they make up in wisdom and gratitude. Being a par-

ent is the happiest, holiest, most fulfilling work of my life — all the sweeter for almost having missed it.

When I coach my kids' T-ball team, for example, I understand that if 4-year-old Zach wants to lie down at second base, the world is not going to notice. Or when his 6-year-old sister, Abby, digs a throw out of the dirt at first base without really realizing where the ball is, it's just as good for me as if she had. And when her twin brother, Nate, makes a leaping, over-the-shoulder grab of a line drive, I now can truly appreciate Steve Martin's dance when his son did the same in the movie *Parenthood*.

Certainly, raising kids is difficult. There is nothing harder for me than to put the three of them to bed when they've decided to "get crazy" — especially after I've had a particularly hard day at my job. And I do some-

times resent the fact that their constant demands make it difficult for my wife Kathy and I to find quality time for each other.

But this Father's Day, they will "surprise" me for the fourth year in a row with a family trip to the Kiddyland Amusement Park. Almost every day they bring a new piece of art work home from kindergarten or preschool that I hang with pride in my office. I'm getting to teach them how to ride a bicycle, how to read a book, how to stand up for what they believe. Best of all, I've got three people who hug and kiss me several times a day, call me "dad" without a second thought, and love me as unconditionally as I love them.

"All things come round to him who will but wait," said Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. For me, that includes fatherhood.

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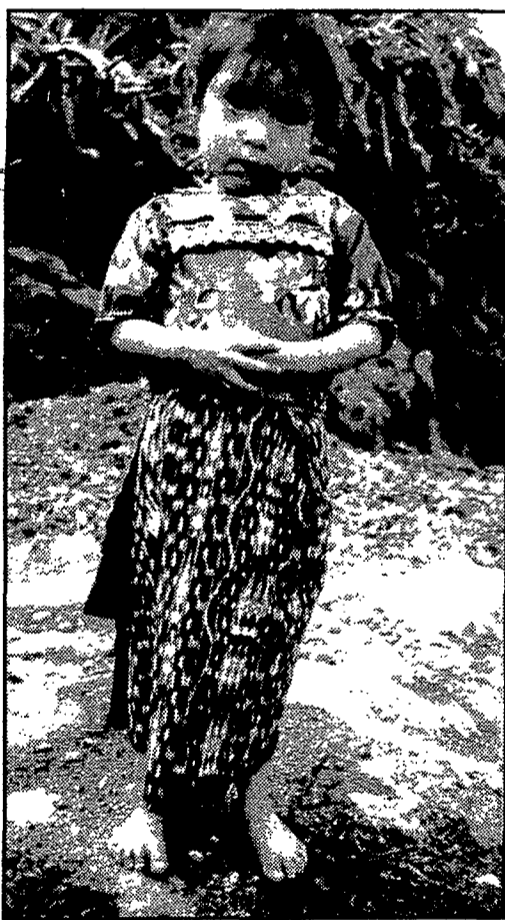
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