

**KINS COMMUNITY COMMENT (442-5744)**

**This is Ron Pierre for Community Comment.**

**I take great pride in being a Grandpa. Being a Grandpa gives me a direct link to what the future may be. Not my future... the future of my family. On a shelf in my family room is a kid's catcher's mitt. I walk by that item many times each day, and when I look at it I can't help smiling! That catcher's mitt takes me back to 1952. I was six years old. My father, a naval reservist, had just returned home from sea duty after being activated during the Korean War. After World War II, my father had stayed in the Navy reserves. He did not expect to be recalled to active duty, but like many other reservists he donned the uniform again and went back to war.**

**My mother worked in an office, so I spent the week days with my grandpa and grandma. My grandpa Tom was my buddy. We would spend the afternoons playing catch in the yard. He would take me to the minor league baseball park and we would watch a young Dodger rookie prospect Johnny Roseboro play baseball. Roseboro was a catcher, and right from the start I knew that I wanted to be a baseball catcher. My grandfather needed no other encouragement to nurture his grandson's knowledge and love for baseball. You see my grandfather was a baseball fanatic. I remember my grandmother trying to get him to do household chores while he was listening to baseball on the radio or watching it on the new black and white TV, but she seldom had success. Baseball was sacred.**

**Back to the catcher's mitt! Christmas 1952 was special for me and I will remember it forever. My Dad was finally home, and he had been released from active duty. As the presents were opened my grandpa gave me a box. I opened it and there was a real catcher's mitt. Not just a toy glove, a genuine leather glove, just like I saw Johnny Roseboro use at the ball park. I would later learn from my mother many years after that Christmas, that my grandmother had given Grandpa Tom all kinds of grief because he had gone overboard on that Christmas present. He didn't care! The glove represented two important things in his life—baseball and his grandson.**

I know now more than ever, why I feel the way I do every time I see my catcher's mitt. Sixty years later, my 1952 experience went full circle. I have had the world's ugliest cold. The cough, sore throat, and sniffles kept me down for several days. My granddaughter, a superb dancer, was performing in a Christmas dance recital. I wanted to see her dance, but the sickness had pinned me down. I told my wife that I didn't think I would be able to make the performance. Somehow, I dragged myself out of bed and went to the show. My granddaughter's performance was spectacular! I was so proud to be Olivia's Grandpa! The day after the performance, Olivia called me and said...."Thanks Grandpa for coming to the performance. I'm really happy you were there." My best Christmas present since 1952.

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