**Let’s Be “Frank”**

Well brother, with the passing of Mother’s Day many have asked me why I haven’t rerun my usual Mother’s day column. After watching my wife and daughter with my grandson, I realized how different generations of mothers are. But with the love and caring those different styles all lead to the same results. So here goes my tribute to all of them but especially remembering my own mom.

I was orphaned close to twenty years ago when my mother passed away. Thirty nine years old was too soon to be left without the guidance and understanding only a mother can give. My mother was a terrible person who in today’s society would have been sent to jail.

When I did something wrong, she wasn’t afraid to hit first and ask questions later. If for some reason it was later found out that I was innocent of the crime, her sense of fairness was to let me know that she would be more lenient on the next offense.

In our home, low grades in school were not accepted. It wasn’t enough to just try. Work without results was just a waste of time. If you studied for four hours and did not get an “A”, then you should have studied for six.

When I told her about the things all the other kids had that I did not, she was not sympathetic. She pointed out the things I had that others did not.

When I complained about working full time and going to high school and later college, she didn’t tell me to lighten up my load, she taught me to manage my time better.

When I used foul language, she never rationalized that it was “the language of the times”. She washed my mouth out with soap and that was the lesser of the penalties for bad language.

She never accepted the old adage that kids would be kids. Times were only changing because the adults were letting them change.

When I misbehaved in school or disrespected my elders, she didn’t tell me how stupid those people were or make a scene at the school because her “baby boy” was being abused. She told me that in life you had to figure out how to overcome hurdles and deal with all types of people especially your superiors.

When it was time for the talk on sex education there were no diagrams or books to read. She simply told me to keep my hands to myself and if she found out I was “doing something wrong”, she would cut off a part of my body that I really enjoyed.

There were no large screen TV’s or gym memberships. If you wanted exercise, run around the block, take out the trash or wash the kitchen floor. Speaking about the trash, we didn’t take it out when we were ready, we took it out when our mother was ready.

Yes, our mother was terrible. She would never cut me slack and never let me get away with anything. She taught me to fend for myself knowing that she was always there to set me on the straight path should I stray. She taught me that good values and morals could not be compromised. She taught me that tough love was a very difficult task (which often hurt her more than me) but in the long run the results would be better. She gave me the guidance to settle down with the best mother and grandmother that my kids and grandson can could ever have.

She has been gone close to twenty years and I still try to do the right thing because I don’t want to disappoint her. Our mother just never got it and I’m so glad she didn’t.

Take care and I’ll see you soon.