

If you knew my Dad, you probably know that he didn't do anything halfway - as in, he did not have a casual relationship with accounting. He took eating, movies and loving his family very seriously, and with him, it was all the way or nothing. Whatever he did he wished to do well, and in turn he was always amazed by what other people could do – break Olympic records, win an Oscar, make a triple play. He didn't think he lived a big life, but in fact he lived quite a life, and I'd like to discuss that – I'd like to share a few things that you may or may not know about what my Dad could and could not do.

* **He could not dance** – he always forgot to move his lower half – but he **could** imitate Patrick Swayze in Dirty Dancing, which embarrassed us but entertained our friends. All of our friends, from grade school to college, loved to hang around the family room at 3211 Wilmette Avenue, just to chat with Murray.

* **He could not ride a horse** but he could *draw* a horse, and this odd, single artistic skill made him proud. He was an Albany Park kid who didn't know a saddle from a hoof, but he drew perfect forelegs, manes and tails on napkins, on post-its, and sometimes, on ledger paper.

* **He could not bat** like his hero, Ernie Banks, but he could bowl a fiercely perfect strike, as he and my brother Darrell both liked to do at the father-and-son tournaments. I couldn't bowl to save my life and just watched - but it was at those tournaments that they both taught me how to keep score.

* **He could not sing** – we actually begged him not to sing – but he liked to tell us how as a lovestruck young man, he'd walk past my mom's apartment building at night and sing up to the windows, a song from My Fair Lady, "On The Street Where You Live."

* **He could not cook** – he couldn't even butter toast - but he could find any Italian hole-in-the-wall, sniff out the best pot-stickers and always, always tell you about the best thing on the menu.

* **He could argue** with his late business partner, Leonard, for hours, but if my sister said she felt like eating bratwursts – in *Wisconsin* – he'd say, "okay. Let's go for a ride."

* he couldn't **find his socks**, but could spot an error in any tax return

* he couldn't **frost a cake**, but remembered the birthday of everyone he'd ever known.

* he couldn't **pick out a shirt**, but he could choose a **dinner** place - while still eating breakfast.

* **He could not do tumbling** – the only class he ever failed – but he could swing a grandchild high up in the air. He could squeeze them and throw them over his shoulder and play on the floor. Becoming Papa to Josie, Elliott, Jennifer and Garrett made him someone different. It made him flexible.

He was like a rock in more ways than one – he could be cautious, questioning and stubborn, but he could adapt, and when he was asked to, more than once, he did. He had so many sides, some of them surprising – he was a big guy who was all tender heart, a man who cried at our weddings and bear-hugged our kids. He was generous, loyal, in some situations helpless and in others supremely competent. But even with all those shades, nobody would ever call dad was a free spirit. He didn't think of himself as a righteous man but as a **responsible** man, moving through life, working hard at family, working hard at working, working hard to be a good friend. What he had the most of was heart, a great big heart, and all he ever really wanted was to tell stories, and share laughs and have a good time, and for everybody else to have a good time, no matter what.

My dad, Murray Joel Pollack, was both a character and a **man of character**. He had a special appetite for life, and I know that at one time or another, it touched each and every one of your lives, as it did each and every day of mine. I think that's how he'd like to be remembered, and as I hear the outpouring around me of love for my Dad, it's easy to say that he will. Of course he did my tax return for me all my life, and if he did yours, too, you'll know that when your return arrives in the mail you receive a cover letter on Reicin Pollack stationery, all business, and signed Murray J Pollack, CPA. I must have been one of the lucky ones, because mine were always signed "Love, Dad."