

What inspired this outpouring of devotion and array of public displays of affection? A single West Virginia mother, Mrs. Anna Reese Jarvis, is at the heart of this story. Mrs. Jarvis was a minister's daughter. She taught Sunday school in the Andrews Methodist Church in Grafton, WV, for many years, while raising her children and caring for her neighbors in the difficult years following the Civil War.

Mrs. Jarvis's daughter, born in 1864 and also named Anna, was a devoted child. She remained close to her family and especially to her mother. Miss Jarvis graduated from the Female Seminary in Wheeling, WV, and taught in Grafton before moving with her family to Philadelphia, PA. When her mother died in Philadelphia in 1905, Miss Jarvis was deeply affected. She felt that children often neglected to appreciate their mothers enough while their mothers are still alive.

With the help of her friends, in 1907 she initiated a letter-writing campaign urging influential ministers, businessmen and congressmen to declare a national Mother's Day, hoping to increase respect for parents and strengthen family bonds. And such was the power of her message that her grassroots campaign took off, resulting in the national display of familial love that we will see this Sunday.

At that first Mother's Day observance in Grafton, Miss Jarvis supplied carnations to the church because they were her mother's favorite flower. White carnations were chosen because they represented sweetness, purity, and endurance of a mother's love. Over the years, red carnations have become the symbol of a living mother. White carnations now signify that, like Miss Jarvis's mother at the time of the first Mother's Day, one's mother has died.

Though not many people wear flowers these days, Mother's Day is a bonanza for the floral industry, just as it is for restaurants, the phone companies, greeting card companies, and jewelers. It is said that more long distance calls are made on Mother's Day than on any other single day of the year. Though Miss Jarvis might decry some of the more commercial aspects of today's Mother's Day celebrations, I think that she, too, would be pleased that through her efforts, so many people do make the effort to pay their respects and show their affection for their mothers.

We have so much to thank our mothers for, when we consider the enormous expenditure of time and effort that it takes to raise a child properly. Aside from the sometimes grueling routine that many mothers face every day just to stay abreast of regular family maintenance, there are the hours she cheerfully spends ensuring that homework is done, that chores are performed, that piano lessons or sports practices or dance classes are attended, or that cookies are baked and presents wrapped. There are also the loving times that a mother spends with her

children: washing hair, reading bedtime stories, saying prayers, comforting away bad dreams, kissing away hurts, encouraging dreams. It is a wonder that mothers find the time to do any of the other creative things they do, from sewing to scrap-booking, painting to pottery, reading to writing the letters that help to knit families together.

My own dear mother died when I was just a baby. I cannot recall the touch of her hand on my cheek, or the sound of her voice saying "I love you." But her angel face still smiles at me from an old photograph, and in her smile I can see the love that she still bears for me as she waits. No mother ever truly leaves you. Anna Jarvis knew that to be true when she conceived the notion of a national Mother's Day. She would not have us regret failing to show our love and appreciation to our mothers while we can.

I offer my thanks to all mothers on this Mother's Day. To my own mother, I say thank you for giving me life, and for thinking of me and my future even as your own short life was coming to a close. And to the great love of my life, Erma, the mother of my beautiful daughters, I say thank you. Thank you for mothering me even as you mothered our children. Your talent at your chosen career, and your devotion to it, continue to show themselves in the generations of our lovely and loving grandchildren and great grandchildren. If Miss Jarvis had not beaten me to it, my wife Erma certainly has provided ample inspiration for a national Mother's Day.

I close with the words of one of my favorite poems, one that I come back to each Mother's Day. It is called "Rock Me To Sleep," and it was written by Elizabeth Akers Allen (1823-1911).

#### ROCK ME TO SLEEP

Backward, turn backward, O time, in your flight,  
Make me a child again just for to-night!  
Mother, come back from the echoless shore,  
Take me again to your heart as of yore;  
Kiss from my forehead the furrows of care,  
Smooth the few silver threads out of my hair;  
Over my slumbers your loving watch keep:  
Rock me to sleep, Mother—rock me to sleep!  
Backward, flow backward, oh, tide of the years!  
I am so weary of toil and of tears—  
Toil without recompense, tears all in vain—  
Take them, and give me my childhood again!  
I have grown weary of dust and decay—  
Weary of flinging my soul-wealth away;  
Weary of sowing for others to reap;  
Rock me to sleep, Mother—rock me to sleep!  
Tired of the hollow, the base, the untrue,  
Mother, O Mother, my heart calls for you!  
Many a summer the grass has grown green,  
Blossomed and faded, our faces between:  
Yet, with strong yearning and passionate pain,  
Long I to-night for your presence again.  
Come from the silence so long and so deep:  
Rock me to sleep, Mother—rock me to sleep!  
Over my heart, in the days that are flown,  
No love like mother-love ever has shone;  
No other worship abides and endures—

Faithful, unselfish, and patient like yours:  
None like a mother can charm away pain  
From the sick soul and the world-weary brain.  
Slumber's soft calms o'er my heavy lids creep;  
Rock me to sleep, Mother—rock me to sleep!  
Come, let your brown hair, just lighted with gold,  
Fall on your shoulders again as of old;  
Let it drop over my forehead to-night,  
Shading my faint eyes away from the light;  
For with its sunny-edged shadows once more  
Haply will throng the sweet visions of yore;  
Lovingly, softly, its bright billows sweep:  
Rock me to sleep, Mother—rock me to sleep!  
Mother, dear Mother, the years have been long  
Since I last listened your lullaby song:  
Sing, then, and unto my soul it shall seem  
Womanhood's years have been only a dream.  
Clasped to your heart in a loving embrace,  
With your light lashes just sweeping my face,  
Never hereafter to wake or to weep;  
Rock me to sleep, Mother—rock me to sleep!

#### HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

TRIBUTE TO STAFF SERGEANT GEORGE S. RENTSCHLER

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I pay tribute today to the patriotism and the courage of SSG George Rentschler of Louisville, KY. SSG Rentschler was killed a month ago on April 7, 2004.

While his family, friends and his country mourn the loss of this man, I offer a few words to praise the inestimable value of his sacrifice. In this time of war, my colleagues, we can all expect to hear reports of the tragic loss of life. It would be unrealistic to expect that we can fight a war and not lose lives. SSG Rentschler knew this. And knowing this he went forth into battle for the love of his country.

To serve your country when you know that it might be the cause of your death, involves sacrifice. It means that you are brave, honorable, patriotic, virtuous. It also means that you are willing to make the final sacrifice should the necessity arise. The men and women serving our country, as SSG George Rentschler did, are heroes who are protecting America to preserve our freedoms in these times of continuing terrorist threat across the world.

The death of SSG Rentschler reveals to the world that this man was a true hero who sacrificed for our country. We have lost a man of courage and generosity. He was role model for all of us and will be missed.

#### ON SECTION 8 RULE CHANGES

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, We have all heard of the war on poverty, but I fear that 40 years after that war began, there is a new war afoot, a war on people in poverty. And the latest assault in this war threatens to leave thousands of people homeless. I am speaking about the Bush administration's plan to make substantial changes in the way our Government helps our poorest citizens secure housing.