

President's Desk

Sandy Rios is President of Concerned Women for America



I remember my first Mother's Day as a mom. No young woman could have been more thrilled than I to assume that role, and it continues to be

one of the greatest joys of my life. I have often written and sung about my sweet daughter, Sasha. But in this month that celebrates motherhood, as I write for the first time as your president, I want to introduce you to my son, Jeremy.

My son and I have always had a unique relationship. I reminded him of that when we said our sad farewells as I left Chicago last October. "When you were little, Jeremy, you used to complain that my music was too loud. Now that you're 21, I'm leaving home." We laughed at the role reversal, but in truth, it was not easy to leave him alone in our family home. I cried as I looked down the long, entry room hallway and remembered him learning to walk in that very place.

A Mom's Memories

I remembered returning, over the

years, after weekends away singing, entering the front door and seeing my little boy, at varying stages, run down that hallway, hugging first my knees, then my waist, and now lifting me. One night when Jeremy was five, I returned home, suitcases in hand, to see him running toward me, shouting, "Mommy,

Mommy! How are you, Mommy?"

"I'm fine, sweetheart, just tired and my back hurts."

"Lie down, Mommy. I'll give you a backrub."

And with that, I lay down, still in my coat on the living room floor, while his little body bent over me, small hands kneading my shoulders.

Then he said,

"Mom! I'll brush your hair!"

And so he did.

When Jeremy was in preschool, I threw away a piece of his art, which he promptly discovered in the trashcan. I wiped it off and apologized, but since there is only so much space on a refrigerator, I trashed it again when he wasn't looking. He found it again, and we repeated the same ritual.

Eventually I felt the only way I could part with the artwork was to take it to the basement. One day ... I was ironing in said basement, when a pair of

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Jeremy Rios.

small feet began descending the stairs, sauntering slowly, as preschoolers often saunter. This one, however, headed straight for the trashcan. Upon his grisly discovery, he paused for a moment, turned red in the face as the veins popped out in his neck, and said, with great indignity, "I wish Sandy Patti was my mother!"

When I found myself single after many years of marriage, it was a 10-year-old Jeremy who helped me lift and carry, and often feed, his disabled older sister, Sasha, so that we could continue to care for her at home.

Middle-School Years

In middle school he referred to me as his "carbon-based, parental dictatorship unit," and I to him as "the fruit of my loins." We took vacations together every summer, loving Glen Miller and Amy Grant on long car trips, and enjoying the historical sights and lessons of the great Northeast.

I watched with pride as Jeremy marched with the Cavaliers, a championship drum and bugle corps. He lugged the contrabass with the discipline of a Marine.

In a break between cross-country travel, I recall the night he was able to come and somberly deliver the words, without explanation, "Mom, I want you

to know that I remember all the things you taught me."

A year and a half ago, as my mother's death from a brain hemorrhage was imminent, I told the doctor I wanted to stay in the room. The rest of the family was too overwhelmed to remain, but as I stood by her bedside, I felt the strong arm of my son, who said, "Mom, I'll stay with you."

This is My Son

And this is the son to whom I announced, standing in my kitchen a year ago, that I might be moving to Washington, D.C., to become the new president of Concerned Women for America. I asked him how he felt about that and, after a slight pause, he said, "Mom, you have to do what God has called you to do."

This is Jeremy: the Greek and Latin major, slightly quirky, very funny, deeply compassionate, but above all, my son.

As hard as it has been on a human level to leave my children, I am thoroughly convinced God has called me to this place. I hope that, as the weeks and months unfold, we will accomplish great things together through CWA—because of another only Son.

For Christ and His Kingdom!

Sandy Rios

You may hear more from Sandy Rios on our daily radio program, Concerned Women Today. To locate a station in your area, visit <http://radio.cwfa.org/stations>, or call 1-800-458-8797.