



Posterity: Letters of Great Americans to Their Children

By Dorie McCullough Lawson

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An elegantly designed, beautifully composed volume of personal letters from famous American men and women that celebrates the American Experience and illuminates the rich history of some of America's most storied families.

Posterity is at once an epistolary chronicle of America and a fascinating glimpse into the hearts and minds of some of history's most admired figures and storied families. Spanning more than three centuries, these letters contain enduring lessons—in life, love, character and compassion—that will surprise and enlighten.

Included here are letters from Thomas Jefferson to his daughter, warning her of the evils of debt; General Patton on D-Day to his son, a cadet at West Point, about what it means to be a good soldier; W.E.B. Du Bois to his daughter about character beneath the color of skin; Oscar Hammerstein about why, after all his success, he doesn't stop working; Woody Guthrie, writing from a New Jersey asylum, to nine-year-old Arlo about universal human frailty; Eleanor Roosevelt chastising her grown son for his Christmas plans; and Groucho Marx as a dog to his twenty-five-year-old son.

Here are renowned Americans in their own words and in their own times, seen as they were seen by their children. Here are our great Americans as mothers and fathers.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Lawson, daughter of Pulitzer Prize-winning historian David McCullough, debuts with this anthology. Along with advice and words of wisdom, these letters offer intimate insights into the lives of 68 acclaimed Americans—actors, artists, explorers, inventors, novelists, playwrights, politicians—including Ansel Adams, Thomas Edison, Sam Houston, Mary Todd Lincoln, Jack London, Clare Boothe Luce, Groucho Marx, John O'Hara, Frederick Law Olmsted, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Laura Ingalls Wilder. The material is gathered thematically into chapters such as "Love," "Loss" and "Struggle," and each correspondent gets a biographical, scene-setting introduction. Lawson views letters as "the color, heart, and personality of history," and McCullough, in his foreword, calls them "missives of love," adding, "Often the authors want only to save their children from making the mistakes they have." Among these colorful and compassionate epistles are delights and surprises. While Alexander Graham Bell copied jokes from newspapers, the Three Stooges' Moe Howard composed poetry for his eight-year-old daughter. Suffering in a New Jersey hospital, Woody Guthrie told nine-year-old Arlo, "Don't whine to god.... Be thankenful [sic] to god." Illustrator N.C. Wyeth cautioned Andrew Wyeth: "There's a real task on our hands, Andy. Modern art critics and their supine followers like the flat and the shallow." Spanning three centuries, this is a meticulously edited collection, enlightening and entertaining. An appendix traces births, death, marriages and children for each author.

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School—While readers may feel quite familiar with the public side of such notables as Ansel Adams, John O'Hara, and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., in *Posterity* they get to see yet another side, that of parent. Lawson has gathered a wonderful collection of letters that are thought provoking and, in some cases, heart wrenching. Two guidelines governed inclusion: the writers had to have made substantial contributions to our country and the letters had to reveal something of value. An introductory paragraph sets the scene and gives readers a brief understanding of the context of the epistle, its tone, and its content. As a whole, this anthology shows the parent-child relationship in all its forms: congratulatory and accusatory, contentious, and amicable. The entries are arranged thematically in chapters such as "Strength of Character," "Good Work," and "Struggle and Loss." In the foreword, historian David McCullough makes the point that it is a shame that people no longer write letters to their children. What a loss it would have been not to be able to read the words of O'Hara to his daughter Wylie: "The greatest pleasure I have in life is the responsibility of being your father. It is a greater pleasure than my work, which is saying a lot because I love my work." Black-and-white photos are included. This is a timeless collection of family thoughts, hopes, and dreams.—Peggy Bercher, Fairfax County Public Library, VA

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Review

"Each letter has a distinct tone, from congratulatory to scolding, which shines a light on one facet of each great American's personality. A one-of-a-kind collection." —*Library Journal*

"Years ago, parents wrote to their children letters of instruction about duty, industry, propriety—a ritual that has largely disappeared from American life, and this book reminds us of why we should be sorry about it."

—*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Sheila Gallagher:

Here thing why this kind of Posterity: Letters of Great Americans to Their Children are different and trustworthy to be yours. First of all reading through a book is good nevertheless it depends in the content of the usb ports which is the content is as delicious as food or not. Posterity: Letters of Great Americans to Their Children giving you information deeper including different ways, you can find any publication out there but there is no book that similar with Posterity: Letters of Great Americans to Their Children. It gives you thrill reading journey, its open up your current eyes about the thing that happened in the world which is might be can be happened around you. You can actually bring everywhere like in playground, café, or even in your method home by train. When you are having difficulties in bringing the imprinted book maybe the form of Posterity: Letters of Great Americans to Their Children in e-book can be your alternate.

Ruth Haddock:

Would you one of the book lovers? If yes, do you ever feeling doubt while you are in the book store? Aim to pick one book that you just dont know the inside because don't ascertain book by its protect may doesn't work the following is difficult job because you are frightened that the inside maybe not while fantastic as in the outside appear likes. Maybe you answer might be Posterity: Letters of Great Americans to Their Children why because the wonderful cover that make you consider about the content will not disappoint you. The inside or content is definitely fantastic as the outside or perhaps cover. Your reading 6th sense will directly direct you to pick up this book.

Billie Gould:

Is it you who having spare time and then spend it whole day by simply watching television programs or just resting on the bed? Do you need something totally new? This Posterity: Letters of Great Americans to Their Children can be the solution, oh how comes? It's a book you know. You are consequently out of date, spending your time by reading in this fresh era is common not a geek activity. So what these books have than the others?

William Henderson:

Within this era which is the greater man or who has ability in doing something more are more treasured than other. Do you want to become certainly one of it? It is just simple approach to have that. What you must do is just spending your time almost no but quite enough to have a look at some books. On the list of books in the top record in your reading list is actually Posterity: Letters of Great Americans to Their Children. This book and that is qualified as The Hungry Hillsides can get you closer in becoming precious person. By looking up and review this reserve you can get many advantages.

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