

## My Mother, My Wife

As I begin to write still another piece that will eventually make up 'My Story,' a disturbing thought occurred to me: I began my life and I am ending my life in the company of two women who are surprisingly similar in many ways.

My mother, Celia Goldstein Schlitt, was a remarkable, intelligent person who had the misfortune to have been denied an education. She was born in Vaslui Romania and was apprenticed to a tailor at the age of 6. She made her way to America at 16, and made a life for herself. She did the best she could, and she was good at what she did. She worked as a finisher of women's coats and suits, and before she was married was an active member of Local 9 of the ILGWU. As I was growing up, I remember her spending a great deal of time reading the paper, "The Day."

She was 39 when I was born, very old for a first child. As the years went by, she had a number of ailments which made life more and more difficult for her. My earliest memories are of my mother having a hip operation, of being in frequent pain caused by gall stones, of having trouble walking and requiring special shoes. During the last decade of her life, a great deal of time was devoted to seeing doctors at the Lincoln Hospital.

My wife, Fran Morrill Schlitt, is a remarkable, intelligent person who had the good fortune to go to Brandeis University. She was born in Auburn Maine, came to Boston with her parents at the age of 10, and went to ? before entering Brandeis. Fran went on to Boston University where she received her MSW and became a highly regarded social worker. She spends a great deal of time these days reading the paper, "The New York Times."

She was 45 when our son David was born, very, very old for a first child. It was a difficult delivery, but Fran recovered quickly and was in good health until diagnosed with lung cancer in 2007.

I am beginning to think that it is a bit uncomfortable (and maybe even Oedipal) comparing one's mother and one's wife. Of course I love them both, in very different ways. But I do see similarities. These days, as Fran is having trouble walking, I see my mother, who also had trouble walking. When I am aware that Fran is in pain, I see my mother who also was in pain.

Opinionated; political; activist; bossy; hard-working; curious; convinced of her good taste; takes pride in whatever she does; likes pretty things; seeker of knowledge;

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