

## WFWP USA: Happy Father's Day 2020!

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# Happy Father's Day!



*We, women, in Women's Federation for World Peace USA are so very grateful for the Fathers in our lives, and would like to give honors on this day to all Fathers in our nation! We celebrate this year's Father's Day by recognizing two fathers, whom we interviewed to share with us about their experience of being a father, their challenges, rewards, and also insights about fatherhood. Both of them are married interracial, and in their own unique way they have been able to create a loving family while also serving the public. Here are their stories.*

**Emiljun (EJ) Rapada** is raising a family of 6 children, is a pastor of his local church, and works and volunteers with numerous peace and service organizations, including the Filipino International Community of America and the Universal Peace Federation.



**EJ, please share about being a father of a large, interracial family.**

It's chaotic! I have 6 kids from 1 year to 12 years old, and young kids especially need a

lot of attention. I am from the Philippines, and my wife is Lebanese-American, so we have different first languages and different cultures. We speak English at home, and I think about how I will have my kids learn my language or my wife's language without schools nearby to teach them.

My culture is more Eastern, and my wife grew up with Western culture, so I am grateful to have the concept of the 4 Realms of Heart, different types of love, for example, love between elder and younger siblings. My kids know that even when their parents are not around, they have their elder siblings.

**Can you tell us one challenge you experience in family life?**

Two cultures in one family can be a challenge. For example, in American culture, it is common to have kids calling grandparents, and even parents, by their first names. In Filipino culture, this is rude. So there are challenges relating to respect, how to teach it is okay to express yourself, but in a respectful way.

**How do you balance your professional life with volunteering and public life, and being a father?**

Well, I am used to it. I grew up as a missionary. I was president of CARP (Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles) student group at college in the Philippines; I have always done school and work with public responsibilities. I don't get very much sleep! I do volunteer activity at night, after 10 pm, when everyone is sleeping. I have many calls to take; I teach online; I minister our church in Elizabeth, NJ.

But at the end of the day, I feel good, I am happy and grateful. That feeling gives me energy to continue. If I am sitting down and just watching TV, I feel dead.

**What aspect of fatherhood are you proud of doing well?**

I am proud of being a father of 6 children. I have friends who don't have children, just a dog or cat. But it is different caring for another person. And each of my kids is different. They have

different habits, attitudes, strengths, weaknesses. And like in customer service, I learn how to customize how I interact with each one. It is rewarding, because I get lots of practice dealing with different types of people, and then I can deal with different people in any organization outside. It makes me a well-rounded person.

Also my kids are doing well in school, which I am happy about. Even with the few hours a day we can spend together at home, they are doing well.

**What aspect does your wife appreciate most?**

I really like to cook. I like cooking for my family. I have even learned to make Lebanese dishes, with recipes from my mother-in-law. Also I never complain, even when I come home tired.



**How do you support your wife and her goals?**

My wife is as active as I am! She chairs our WFWP chapter and often brings the children

along with her, in hopes that they will learn and grow to be good people. She also works full-time and is getting her Bachelor's degree.

**How do you and your wife foster friendship?**

Yes, my wife makes it mandatory, and the kids know this, that we go on dates together, out to dinner, or a movie.

**What advice would you give fathers?**

Love the children. Love the children no matter what. They have strengths and weaknesses, they can get frustrated, just like anyone. Embrace them and give them extra love when they are dealing with a weakness, because at times it can be turned into a strength.

Also it takes a lot of patience. Sometimes I think they are testing me to see how far they can push! I keep in mind: patience. My kids have also said to me, "you have to spend time with me alone," so my wife and I will take one kid at a time with us, going on errands, just to focus on one child, because each one is unique.

My children are like a mirror for me to see and correct my own fallen natures. They help me to grow as a person.

**Would you like to share a special experience you had as a father that touched your heart?**

My kids are really creative with technology; they like to make little music videos on TikTok, and they want my wife and me to be part of it. And two of my kids performed on Broadway with the show Miss Saigon! That made me feel really proud.

**Daryl Clarke** has raised a family of 7 children, has a decades-long career of pastorship and character education for youth, and is a founding member of the American Clergy Leadership Conference.



**Daryl, please share about being a father of a large, interracial family.**

My wife and I are an international and interracial couple. She is white and British, and I am black and American. So there are

ancestral issues there, but we had the mindset that our family could heal the past. And 5 of our 7 children have had the opportunity of having dual citizenship.

When we first started family life in 1987, I was a pastor in Harlem. We had a child about every 14 months, and babies in diapers for 10 years. Life was noisy, and certainly challenging. We moved to Westchester before our last child was born. And we moved quite a bit as the kids were growing up.

**Can you tell us one challenge you experience in family life?**

Being a pastor and being busy all the time is a challenge. After coming home, sometimes I had to go right to my home office and the phone, and I didn't have so much time to spend with family. Sometimes I would bring the kids with me when I went out, and we took vacations together; we went to the beach and to the park.

I grew up in a family with 6 kids, all of us had different fathers. I didn't really have a father figure. I saw my dad once in a while, but we didn't have a relationship. Whenever I needed discipline, my grandmother would call my uncle, and he would come over and give me a spanking.

With my own kids, I had to learn how to be a father. I grew with my children. I learned what it feels like looking at someone who is your father.

#### **What do your wife and children appreciate most about you?**

Well, now that my children are adults, they have said to me, "now we understand why you said that. Now we understand why you did that." They also tell me about times when I said or did something that hurt their feelings. And they tell me I'm a great dad.

#### **How do you support your wife and her goals?**

My wife now works full-time. When the kids were growing up, she was the pastor's wife and cared for the kids. From the time when our youngest was in middle school, she worked for the Universal Peace Federation. She was able to work close to home.

I would bring the kids with me to meetings and workshops, especially when the kids were in middle and high school and I was working with the Free Teens purity and abstinence program. But anything my wife wanted to do, I was supportive. With my kids, too, if they wanted to do something, had some plan, we discussed and I encouraged them to be self-motivated.

#### **How do you and your wife foster friendship?**

We talk together every day; we communicate. We go out to the park, to dinner, to the movies.

And as for vacations, I've always told my family, there's one place I cannot ever take a vacation, and that's Hawaii. "If I ever go to Hawaii, I am telling you, I will not come back!" So what did they do? For my 65th birthday, they tell me they're bringing me to Hawaii. Then of course, the COVID lockdowns happened. But they were smart and got return flight tickets, because when I get to Hawaii, I won't want to leave!

#### **What is the best advice you ever received about being a dad?**

To listen to my children. I was more available to my kids than my father was, but I was not as available to my children as I could have been. The best advice I ever got was to listen to my children, and then give my best advice. It seems to work!

#### **What advice would you give fathers?**

Make the most of the time you have with your children. I was a church leader and my focus was on mission; I chose to go to workshops and conferences instead of my sons' sports games. Maybe I could have done it differently. Make the most of every chance you get with your children.

#### **Would you like to share a special experience you had with your children?**

I played football when I was in school, and I hurt my knee, so I can't run very fast. And my kids figured that out! Playing in the park, they would run fast, run around me, call me "slowpoke", jump on my back. I would give them horsey rides. And driving in the car, I would swerve the car left and right, they had fun with that, it was like a roller coaster ride.

And I taught all my kids to drive, from the time they were 5 years old, I had them sit in my lap and turn the steering wheel in an empty parking lot, when they grew taller, they could reach the pedals. And when they turned 16, I brought them down to the DMV to take their test. Every one of them. That's a tradition in our family.

