



# MY LIFE, MY STORY

## RAMONA



### UNITED STATES ARMY

1993-1997



# Family of Four

## Ramona

We were a family of four. Me, my mom, my dad, and my older brother, Gary. My dad was an Army Ranger and a drill sergeant. My mom was a Boston police officer. I was a parochial school girl, and my mom was my best friend. She went to all of my sports games. Summers were good because mom would take us all to South Carolina. She packed us mostly white clothes. We had \$100 to spend for the summer and were known as “Ms. Mary’s golden grandchildren.” We watched the other kids and tried to play too, without getting our white clothes dirty! That was our “first mission”.

We were a middle class family, homeowners, just the 4 of us. Gary left for the Air Force, in '77 but we sent each other care packages. He passed in 1988. He was my big brother. He had so much energy and he danced like Michael Jackson. But mail kept getting sent to him, and people would ask me about him. I couldn't take it anymore, my mom took in Gary's two children, and I joined the Army, at age 34 in 1994. They said my middle name was “article 15,” since I was always getting into trouble. But I was older. I was a woman, and I knew what I could get away with. A year later, in 1995 my mother died from pancreatic cancer at age 59. While in the Army, when I learned my mom had just 6 months to live, I went AWOL. My mother was the bravest woman I know and I'd risk anything for her.

She died in my arms while I sang to her. She truly was the “Wind Beneath my Wings”.



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I stepped in as my dad struggled to take charge, and got my brother's children off to school and returned to the military as a communications expert.



In 2002, I lost my dad. I lost a member of my family every 7 years. A dream foretold that I would be standing alone: a nightmare for an 8 years old. I later came to understand that this dream was God's way of preparing me. Dreamcatchers do work; not a nightmare since. I wouldn't change a thing in my life. I value tranquility, principles and my character. I don't change for anyone.

My advice to others is to stay true to yourself, come into your own, and walk through life with that character. I love the rain, am proud of my grasp of the literal word, and I live to eat. I'm analytical and I can talk to anyone in any circle. I was lucky; I was blessed. My parents provided me with a good education and rich experiences. My mom, despite working full-time as a police officer, was always there for me, was my girl scout troop leader, and always took time to celebrate the holidays with a smile on her face. I'm stern, unrelenting, and character-based like my dad.

I'm diplomatic, stylish, and flamboyant like my brother. And I'm warm, thoughtful, and passionate like my mom. I am comfortable with myself and I know that God is good; for he allowed my mom, my dad and my brother to pass through MY LIFE.

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