

Omar A. Baker  
October, 2007

*Memoirs of An Angel – Lost, But Never Forgotten*  
*Izdihar A. Baker*

*Our mother, Izdihar A. Baker, was born in Tulkarem in the year 1951. She lived in Tulkarem throughout her adolescence, receiving her high-school diploma from there in 1970. An origin that was not without its share of turmoil and instability, but one that she was always immensely proud of. Our mother then proceeded to graduate from Jordan University in 1974; she worked in Kuwait as a teacher until 1978. She came to the United States that same year and she got married on September 17, 1978.*

*It was in her adolescence and college years that my mom developed a profound and life-long respect for the value of education. A value that she would make it her life's primary purpose to instill in her children. After moving to America my mom continued with her passion for education, now manifesting in her role as teacher. Just as she had excelled as a student, she flourished in her role as educator. That she was transplanted halfway around the world, in a new environment did not hamper my mother, but rather added a new dimension to her. As a young woman, in a young Arab-American community in North Bergen at the time, she grew along with the community that she helped raise. She fostered an ideal that would come to define who she was as a mother, wife, and avid community leader. She developed the keen understanding that her Arab background and her new American home could not only complement one another, but buttress each other in a way so as to form a unique and beautiful identity that would come to define my mother. An identity that as a teacher, mother, and friend, she would embrace and live out proudly.*

*Depending upon whom you ask – it was the best decision the other one ever made, but my brothers and I have and always will be convinced that it was not only the best, but the single most important decision my father EVER made...choosing my mother made him the man he is today; and he himself has come to the realization that without her by his side every step of the way neither he nor this family would have amounted to what we are today.*

*Our mother was such a remarkable woman and anything that I attempt to say in words would inevitably underestimate her impact on all those people she influenced, especially the thing that mattered most to her – FAMILY. She woke up in the morning and went to bed at night like everyone else – but while awake she was entirely consumed with her three sons, or as she likes to put it her four sons, because our relationship with dad was more than your typical father-son relationship – he truly was one of us. I know for a fact that even while asleep – in her dreams she continually prayed for the well being of her sons – she was the most selfless woman I have ever met and will ever know. In other words, she never took a day a minute or even a second off in looking over us, protecting us and loving us – asking for absolutely nothing in return, except for our happiness, appreciation for what we have and knowing that your family is your life.*

*Our mother was so active in all aspects of her community, whether it be the Arab community or the American – her ultimate achievement was bridging the gap between the two; she never forgot where she came from and was so deeply cultured in her Arabic and Muslim heritage but also acknowledged and was so grateful for everything America has given her and her family. Ultimately, she was a full time mother and humanitarian who never shied away from an opportunity to give back, whether it be teaching Arabic to eager students at the local school, being the class mother that all the kids adored, helping dad in his daily duties at the office or devoting herself to a cause ---but at the*

*end of the day she found comfort and true satisfaction in knowing that her brothers, her sisters, her nephews, her nieces, her friends, her husband and her sons could always turn to her for anything and she would find a solution to anything-it was this confidence that we all had in her, the confidence that whatever we needed, how small or how large she would find a way, anyway to be there and provide a solution to any dilemma in the most non-judgmental and most blindly loving manner any human being can.*

*My mom stressed 6 things growing up Education, Education, Education, Family, Family, and Family...*

*It is no secret that my name was given to me by my grandmother -- a woman who also named my mother; the name Izdihar, which literally translates into blossoming -- I can honestly say that she was the most priceless flower, but what made her so special is that she allowed all those around her to bloom without limits. From as early as I can remember whether it be receiving an award in grade school, my acceptance into medical school or doing exceptionally well on an exam -- I was not overly excited because I did well, but more so b/c I knew that the first person I would notify would be my mother and knowing the happiness this granted her further motivated me in my life to excel. My relationship with her was that of the most pure of a mother and her youngest offspring, one where she endlessly spoiled me, not to say she was not strict, but she did have her breaking point --at anytime she would sacrifice tough parenting which she so eloquently mastered for watching her youngest son smile at granting him his request, regardless of what that may be, even if that meant temporarily upsetting dad -- she was able to utter no, maybe once, possible twice but never three times finally succumbing to pleasing her boy. She taught me that in life I may make mistakes, I may infact be wrong -- but that she would always support me in public and private, regardless of the circumstance -- at times I was convinced my mother was trained in the teachings of law*

*because she was my strongest defender; but as I matured, I realized it was her maternal instinct.*

*As a youngster, my brothers would often tease me – this was a daily ritual for the both of them – however, I was not phased because the mere mention to them that I was notifying mom, would frighten them immensely – if this mean's I was a mama's boy, then this is a title that I carried proudly at that time for the sake of my own protection and a title that I will continue to carry proudly for the very same reason.*

*Of Course, Iyad, will always claim mom had a dear place in her heart for him- few would disagree (possibly only myself and Zeyad). She adored him to the point, that she coined more than a dozen nicknames in his honor – all before he was old enough to even speak. Both shared the most beautiful smile, the most genuine laugh and a blind faith in humanity. A conversation they often had which eventually trickled down to both Zeyad and myself would either begin or end with, " Believe in yourself and continue to move forward and remember that no one is better than you – no one." Iyad was by many standards a super-athlete, who preferred breaking high-school records, whether it be soccer, basketball or lacrosse,; rather than breaking open the books – throughout any athletic event, you could not but hear a middle-aged, un-intimidated woman yell "defense," "that's my Iyad" yelling from the bleachers – she continued this for the entire game, the entire season and many more years to come. Whenever he was fortunate to score a goal, or make a three-point basket he would look up towards one person, he always knew was in the crowd, smile and wink – in a way saying mom that was for you, and this filled her up with joy.... also, this connection was further strengthened because it was no secret that his athletic prowess was a gift from her genes and this is a fact that my father would not dare dispute.*

Zeyad, well what can I say, he was her first born, the eldest of her sons and after all, she was UMM ZEYAD, a title she carried with the greatest distinction. Z, as she referred to him was her greatest confidant, her man before he was even a man. She relied on him endlessly to protect his younger brothers, to serve as a model for them and to teach them by actions not by words. This pressure never phased, or at least if it did it never showed – he carried these responsibilities with a quite elegance that she admired and respected. My mom married a doctor, but he was the first doctor that she created and the first man she raised. Zeyad loved my mom, but what distinguished him is how much he respected her. When he decided to go to Georgetown for college, my mother cautiously warned that you may be away, but I will always be watching over you – not to frighten him, but remind him that he could leave her, but she could not ever leave him. Ultimately, my mother was partially mistaken, he couldn't leave her, although offered opportunities at numerous prestigious hospitals across the country he decided to return home, even as an adult, he recognized home is where the heart is, or more accurately, home is where mom is.

Mom and Dad, well this a relationship built on many mutuals; mutual love, mutual respect, mutual admiration and mostly a mutual faith in each other. No matter what, throughout this glorious marriage, my mother exhibited a firm confidence; knowing, ultimate any idea, plan or desire she may have; whether personal or professional, that my father would somehow see it realized; in essence she planned and he created. They were an amazing team; the bond they had was apparent to all; those who know them since their marriage or those who met them for the very first time... Anyone who saw them together, quickly realized that my father hit the jackpot; she was a true beauty who exuded elegance – this is my father rarely referred to her as Izdihar or his wife – but preferred calling her “his queen.” She was royalty to him and he continually reminded his boys that 90% of your happiness and success ultimately depends upon

*whom you chose to be your life partner- best exemplified by his decision to choose her as his wife.*

*Mom loved her brothers and sisters – she was the backbone of her family – she was constantly involved in the daily activities of her siblings whether they lived in the Middle east or miles away in NJ – she insured that all found success in life, the same way she was content that all her siblings and there children found there way and found success – this was one of her greatest accomplishments, although a task she appeared to fulfill effortlessly, it was a combination of persistence, hard work and devotion to the cause she found most important.*

*Our Mother, was they type of woman that would enter a room full of friends or strangers and instantly impact all that surrounded her – she was the center of attention unbeknown to her. She found great fulfillment in hosting friends, being with friends and enjoying the simple joys of life – the success of her friend's children was equal to the success of her children, when her friends got sick she got sick with them- All acknowledge that she is irreplaceable, and everyone that knows her will remember this extraordinary woman for who she was, what she did and how she approached life; a woman devoted to her friends, her family and to God.*

## In Memorium

في ذكرى الأربعين



Izdihar A. Baker

5/6/1951 - 9/8/2007

٢٠٠٧/٩/٨ - ١٩٥١/٥/٦

Please join us to honor the life  
of our mother

نُشَرِّفُكُمْ بِمُنَاسَرَةِ حَضُورِ ذِكْرِ الأَرْبَعِينَ فِي

لُوفَاةِ المَرْحُومَةِ بِأَذْنِ اللّهِ وَالدُّنْيَا

إِزْدِهَارِ أُمِّ بَكْرٍ

In observance of the

Fortieth Day of her passing . إنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون .  
وَلَكُمْ مِنَّا جَمِيعًا ، فَرَدًّا فَرَدًا ، الشُّكْرَ وَالتَّقْدِيرَ .

Saturday, November 10, 2007

Noon - Five o'clock P.M.

The Manor

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RSVP Omar A. Baker, Omar13@gwu.edu

201-818-0999

*We are grateful to have wonderful friends and family such as you. The outpouring of support and love demonstrated throughout this difficult time has been remarkable.*

*God Bless.*

*Dr. H. Baker and Family*

Izdihar A. Baker

