

Reba Boyd Wooden – This I Believe

*Live Your Life So That Your Children Can Tell Their Children You Stood for  
Something Wonderful*

"Live your life so that your children can tell their children you stood for something wonderful" is printed on a plaque on my kitchen wall. This life is the only life we have. We only have one chance to make an impact on this "pale blue dot" and the beings that inhabit it. We are all the product of our genetic inheritance, our family heritage, environmental influences beyond our control, and our own attitudes and actions in response to our individual circumstances. The circumstances into which we are born, our family's influence, and our own actions in relationship to those circumstances determine our destiny and the legacy we leave behind after our death. When I was a child, my family lived with my grandmother, a strong and determined lady, who regretted not being allowed to go to high school because she was a girl. She made sure that both of her daughters got a college education. My father was from a family of 10 children. He and one brother were the only ones who did not go to college. He stayed at home to help his family. Given these circumstances, it is not surprising that my family stressed the importance of education. Because of this I was always encouraged to do well in school and it was a given that I would go to college. Education and learning in general has always been a major focus in my life. After a 37 year career in public education, I continue to learn and to promote educational opportunities for others. Another theme which was stressed in my family, more by example than by words, was helping others. My father seemed to

be the first in the community to be called to help out when others had problems. I observed him answering those calls many times. Somewhere along the line, I learned that a person must have a cause to work for that contributes to the betterment of the world and humanity. I was fortunate to be born with the genetic capacity for learning and born into a family that valued education, learning, and caring for others. From that point on, it was my responsibility to make wise choices and to capitalize on what had been given to me through no effort of my own. I truly hope that my children will be able to tell their children that I stood for something wonderful-education, caring for others, working for a beloved cause and meeting life's challenges by making responsible decisions based on reason and logic.