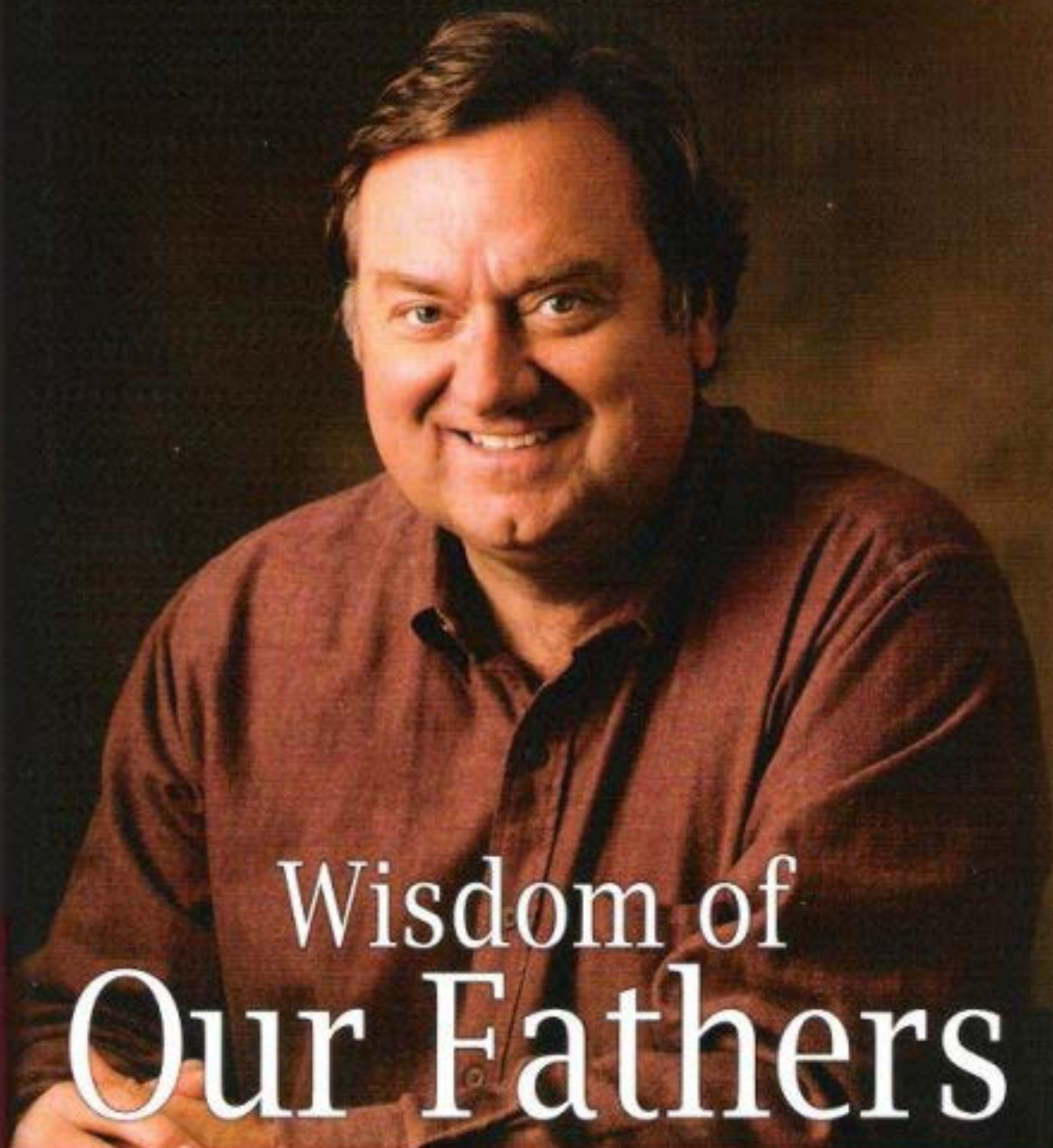


#1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Big Russ & Me*

# Tim Russert



## Wisdom of Our Fathers

Lessons and Letters  
from Daughters and Sons

Wisdom  
of Our  
Fathers

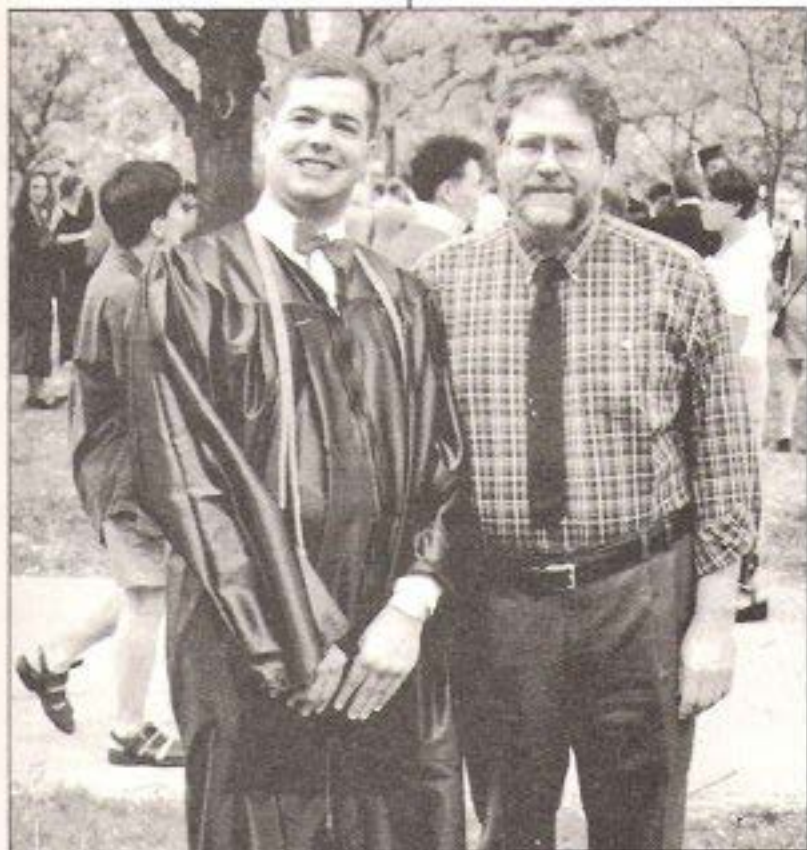
To Vince -

Youn Dan on p 611  
+ 74.

Best always,

Tim

# The Character



*"When I was in college,  
he sat down at my men's  
chorus concert and asked when  
the beer vendor was coming."*

—VINCE GUERRIERI,  
son of Chuck Guerrieri



mother actually took my nickel when I lost a bet to her at the age of five, I am so my father's daughter. Still.

—JUDITH PETTIJOHN MCCONNELL, *Chicago, IL, student, daughter of Charles Elbert Pettijohn, newspaper mailer (1915–1983)*

## THE JOKER

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*He will always think of his dad with a smile—or more often, a good laugh. What a gift!*

My father is deeply ridiculous. He's not above doing the wave when his son is in a spelling bee or is inducted into an honor society. When a nosy aunt inquired if I had a girlfriend, he told her I had several women to satisfy my physical urges but nothing serious. When I was in college, he sat down at my men's chorus concert and asked when the beer vendor was coming. In high school, he was the parent that my friends wanted to come with us on field trips.

Between my father and his father, a man who was known to yell across a crowded store or church when he lost sight of you, I have a very high threshold for embarrassment. I gave up being embarrassed about my father around the end of high school, but I didn't truly appreciate his silliness until his father died. "I can't cry for him," my father said. "I think of the things he did, and I start laughing!"

My father was an altar boy when they still said the mass in Latin. When he held the paten under his friends, he'd slap them on the chin. He'd loosen the bells after mass so the altar boy at the next mass would shake them during the consecration and lose them all over the place.

But beneath the irreverence and the silliness, he wears a Catholic workingman's sense of honor. Scratch a cynic, they say, and you get an idealist. It might not be in this lifetime, he told me, but the guys in the white hats always win.

I was a reader in church in college, and one passage, from the Gospel of Luke, resonated with me. Jesus said, "When you have done all you are ordered to do, say, 'I am a worthless servant who has done no more than his duty.'" My father wears a sense of nobility and an ability to do the right thing, not out of personal gain, fear, or guilt but because it is his duty.

Because he's doing nothing more than his duty, he doesn't accept praise well. When someone told him he had two fine sons, he said, "They were raised by wolves."

A friend of the family, who knows a little about bearing crosses, told my father at one point that he was due a special place in heaven.

His response? "All I was trying to do was get out of a little purgatory."

—VINCE GUERRIERI, *Fremont, OH, journalist,  
son of Chuck Guerrieri, nurse, claims worker (1954)*