

TO MY FRIEND, WENDY HOBDAY HAUGH
. . . who won't let an old woman rest.

DEDICATION

**A cherished book in my personal library since
2001 opens with a dedication that reads:**

**TO MY DAUGHTER, WENDY
Who won't let an old man rest.**

When I secured my signed copy of *Thoughts in Passing*, a collection of poems by R.G. Hobday, “daughter Wendy” was the last person in the world I could imagine not letting an old man rest. Especially not her father, Richard, who was then battling pancreatic cancer.

Wendy Hobday Haugh had breezed into my life just a few years earlier and made a favorable impression as one of the first — and finest — freelance writers to approach me with story ideas for *Saratoga Living* in the days when I was the magazine’s Editor & Publisher.

Her professionalism stood out in everything she did. Queries were irresistible; leads sizzled; middles never fizzled, and endings always left me wishing I’d offered a higher word count. Inevitably I yearned to read more about Wendy’s subjects. Yes, she was *that* good.

If that weren’t an answer to an editor’s prayer, Wendy was consistently congenial, exuding a grace that made it a special joy to be in her presence. Although more reserved than one might expect the mother of three then young sons to be, Wendy also had a refreshingly dry wit that kept me on my toes. While I could be nauseatingly *punny*, Wendy was downright funny.

In recently re-reading both *Thoughts in Passing* and a second volume, *Along the Way*, that Wendy’s father co-authored with her mother, Marjorie Sack Hobday, I found myself reflecting upon how many qualities Wendy had inherited from her mega-talented parents, both of whose cultural contributions include not only portfolios filled with “*words of art*” but bona fide works of art.

As I gently turned the pages of the books again a few years later, my eyes were drawn in a way they had not previously been to the words WenChuck Publishers, Burnt Hills, NY.



Ah, yes! Wendy Hobday Haugh AND her devoted husband, Chuck Haugh, had been the publishers of the books! Although I'd been aware of this fact a decade ago, its importance eluded me at the time – perhaps because at that time I'd not yet experienced the birth of a book of my own.

As a result, I'd not understood that while wearing the hat of publisher of *Thoughts in Passing*, Wendy had had no choice but to be a daughter who would not let an old man rest.

Surely, I mused, it must have been a bittersweet delight, at once poignant and painful, for Wendy to encourage and nudge her dad at a time when she was ever aware of the fragile, fleeting nature of his remaining time on earth.

After selling *Saratoga Living* in 2004, I no longer had the honor of editing Wendy's words of art, but I was delighted to see that her byline continued to accompany fascinating features in that periodical as well as in many others across the greater Capital Region. Wendy's creative efforts also made their way onto the pages of such distinguished national magazines as *Highlights for Children* and *Woman's World* – more than 30 times in the latter.



Wendy Hobday Haugh portraits by Chuck Haugh.



Wendy's parents Marjorie and Richard Hobday in 2001 (left); the writer with husband Chuck Haugh and sons Josh, Zach and Henry in 2015. Family members (including pampered pets) have provided abundant inspiration for Wendy over the years.

In 2013 personal pieces by Wendy were published in four Chicken Soup for the Soul anthologies: *Angels Among Us*, *Inspiration for Writers*, *Devotional Stories for Wives*, and *Think Positive for Kids*. Since then four of Wendy's stories have appeared in two more Chicken Soup for the Soul books: *Be the Best You Can Be* (March 2015) and *My Very Good, Very Bad Cat* (February 2016). Wendy is also a frequent contributor to *WritersWeekly.com*.

I rejoiced each time I saw her name in print and savored her literary creations. I marveled that Wendy not only excelled at crafting non-fiction articles for magazines, but also light-hearted verses for young readers and works of fiction – especially those published in romance and mystery sections.

She also co-authored an in-depth church history book and gave piano lessons to budding musicians in her home. Through it all, Wendy has been a loving wife to Chuck, an incredible mother to their three sons (Henry, Josh and Zach) and, most recently, a doting grandmother.

As remarkable as all of this is, Wendy has also been there for me in myriad ways both personal and professional. In addition to being the equivalent of a labor coach during the gestations and births of my three books in 2006, 2007 and 2009, Wendy would not let the idea I shared for this literary labor of love die.

Even as I moaned after my last book rolled off the presses several years ago that if I ever wrote another, it would be titled *How NOT to Write a Book*, Wendy was there to wipe my sweaty brow as she guided me back to my focal point: *The Prayer Lines Behind the Bylines*.

It was, Wendy insisted, a book that only I could write. But in order to do so, I would need to rediscover and reclaim my voice . . . a voice that had been lost during the decades I had disciplined myself to tell the stories of others in an objective manner. While it's imperative for reporters to pack the 5Ws and How into articles written in the shape of inverted pyramids, it's nigh on impossible for words to flow from the depths of one's heart and soul while so tethered.

I am exceedingly proud to dedicate
The Prayer Lines Behind the Bylines
TO MY FRIEND, WENDY
Who won't let an old woman rest.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ann Haugric".