

Living Forever

By Hap Hansen

It has been said many times that one cannot live forever. I disagree. I believe the things we pass on to our children and grandchildren, our ideas, our attitudes toward others, and our treatment of those less fortunate, are the parts of us that live forever. In addition to the social responsibilities we should all provide to our community, we should also provide social inheritances to our offspring. I believe this social inheritance is the equal of the food, shelter and education we provide to our children. If everything works as it should, our children will pass on this inheritance to their children. And their children will pass it on to their children. Through them, the way we treat people, the way we act, and the character with which we handle adversity, will grow and strengthen throughout the generations. Is it our duty then, to make sure the inheritance we leave our children includes money and other material things? No. An appropriate social inheritance will live on through our children and will last far longer than any other worldly possessions. If you can leave your children a good 'do unto others' philosophy and a commitment to community and social service and sharing, a part of you, in fact, will live forever.

I remember my father, who as a public servant, stretched the rules on numerous occasions to accommodate the working poor. He is remembered fondly by the dozens of people he helped over the years. He has been gone for some time now, but I hope I have expanded that helping legacy I got from him, so I can use it in my life. I hope I have passed that legacy on to my children. And I hope they will pass it on to theirs. We all share a very large responsibility, as parts of us live forever. We may not think about our living legacy as we go through our day-to-day activities, but others will think about it. We will all be remembered. Some of us for short periods of time, some of us for generations.

Isn't it a comforting thought to know that your social inheritances of community service, family character, helping those less fortunate, and your giving attitude will be remembered by future generations who will have known you only by your deeds?

