

Dads Are Heroes—Influential, Inspiring

(NAPSA)—When it comes to the man who was the greatest influence in a woman's life, Dad is No. 1, according to research garnered from Hallmark's online consumer communities. Members of opinion groups said that Dad instilled values, taught lessons and was the most important man in their lives. Overall, they called him a "hero," and characterized him as "strict, but fair."

The role of dad has broadened. Some respondents said their dad told them they could be anything they wanted to be and do anything they wanted to do, giving them a sense of independence.

Many female respondents in the consumer panel said they had hoped to marry a man like their father, and others described their husbands as having many of the characteristics that they most admired in their dads.

Hallmark consumer communities are comprised of approximately 200 people, recruited based on a specific commonality. The groups provide non-projectable, qualitative on-going dialogue with the marketplace.

Panel members consistently are open and willing to share their real feelings with Hallmark, according to Lori Givan, manager of the program.

Open communication is reflected in today's Hallmark cards, as well. An example is the card that says, *Dad, when I look back on my life, memories of you are woven through every chapter...my protector...my teacher...the one whose approval could make my day...You were like this larger-than-life hero who could do anything....*

A card says, *It didn't matter where you led...I always loved to follow.*

Another says, *Thanks, Dad, for giving me a star to steer by...and a place to always come home to.*

Such messages reflect the kinds of thoughts expressed by



An example of a 2002 Hallmark Father's Day card.

the consumer panel toward their fathers or father figures.

The card company's goal is to help people put their feelings into words, according to Aviva Hebbar, a Hallmark marketing manager.

"It isn't always easy for people to find the right words," Hebbar says, "but when people see the words on a card, they recognize the feelings as their own. That's why we constantly are in touch with consumers—so we can understand exactly what they want to say."

As one panel member said of her father, "He was my hero, he is my hero and he always will be my hero."

Another said, "The older I get, the more I realize he was a hero."

Yet another said, "My dad was the biggest influence in my life."

Such comments suggest that today's consumers continue to share the sentiments of the founder of Father's Day, Sonora Smart Dodd, whose father, a widower and Civil War veteran, was both mother and father to his six children for 21 years.