



Nutrition and Dietetics: A Family Business

IN AUGUST, I WROTE ABOUT HOW there soon will be six unique generations in the American consumer marketplace. We are also seeing multiple generations of families in the nutrition and dietetics profession. What makes the children—or siblings—of registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs) interested in following family members into our profession and, in some cases, working side-by-side?

SINCERE INTEREST

Past Academy President Marty Yadrick, MBI, MS, RDN, FAND, director of nutrition informatics at Computrition Inc, says he became aware of our profession through the involvement of his sister, Kathleen Yadrick, PhD, RD, professor emeritus at the University of Southern Mississippi.

“We both have a sincere interest in how nutrition and a healthy lifestyle can help maintain good health and reduce the chance of facing chronic disease,” Marty Yadrick says. “We are both conscious of the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise, while also being realistic and staying balanced.”

“My career has mostly been in academia, and I’ve always told students who are considering nutrition and dietetics that one of the great things about this field is that there are so many different careers one can pursue. Marty’s and my career paths sure illustrate that—they have been very different,” Kathleen Yadrick says.

Catharine Powers, MS, RDN, LD, a partner at Culinary Nutrition Publishing, in the Cleveland, OH, area, calls her mother an inspiration. Mary Charlene Huber, RD (Ret.), was for many years the foodservice director at Polk Center, a Pennsylvania intermediate care facility for people with intellectual disabilities, serving 10,000 meals a day.

For mother and daughter alike, Powers says, “Being an RDN is the perfect combination of science and creativity. My mom really enjoyed her work and shared it with us at home. We saw early on the exciting work that

RDNs do. She says she was very proud to work with such talented professionals.”

UNIQUE LENS

For Joanne Ragalie, MBA, RD, project manager at US Farmers & Ranchers Alliance, in Chesterton, MO, watching her mother Jean Ragalie-Carr, RDN, LD, FAND, president of the Chicago-based National Dairy Council, “bridge the gap between consumers and agriculture” gave her what she calls “the ability to look at dietitians through a very unique lens. Growing up and going on work trips with her, visiting farms and having the opportunity to meet so many amazing farmers, instilled a passion in me and made me want to know and do more,” Ragalie says.

“I was so proud when she came to me in high school and shared her desire to be a dietitian,” Ragalie-Carr says. “I know from experience what amazing opportunities are available in this profession.”

SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Cynthia Piland, MS, RD, LD, is the co-owner with her daughter of Piland-Adams Associates, a LaGrange, TX, firm that offers consulting dietitians to health care organizations. “My goal became to own my own business and offer a supportive environment for dietitians to grow professionally,” Piland says. “Having my own business gave me the opportunity to further the education of young dietitians and provide them with the clinical and foodservices skills to make them successful consultants and, ultimately, better qualified employees.”

Piland’s daughter, Katy Adams, MDA, RD, CSG, LD, CFMP, opted first for a college degree and a career in business, but discovered while helping her mother at work how much she enjoyed interacting with clients. Adams went back to school, became an RD, and earned a master of dietetic administration degree with an emphasis on patient-centered care. “I worked for my



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mother’s company until we decided to go into business together. I feel like I have the best of both worlds: a health care career and achieving personal goals,” Adams says.

Her mother’s reaction to her daughter joining her in nutrition and dietetics? “I was thrilled and proud,” Piland says. “I knew she would make a good leader and I would be able to one day turn my business over to her.”

NOT A SURPRISE

There is research to support the common-sense proposition that parents often influence their children’s career choices. A 2017 *New York Times* analysis of data compiled by the General Social Survey (gss.norc.org) found that, on average, “daughters are 1.8 times as likely to have the same job as their mothers and 1.7 times as likely to have the same job as their fathers.”¹ It does not surprise me that young people would choose to follow their parents and older siblings into a profession that focuses on caring for others and promoting health. Nutrition and dietetics is a wonderful “family business!”

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Reference

1. Bui Q, Cain Miller C. The jobs you’re most likely to inherit from your mother and father. *The New York Times*. November 22, 2017. [nytimes.com/interactive/2017/11/22/upshot/the-jobs-youre-most-likely-to-inherit-from-your-mother-and-father.html?module=inline](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/11/22/upshot/the-jobs-youre-most-likely-to-inherit-from-your-mother-and-father.html?module=inline). Accessed August 27, 2019.