

## Acknowledgments

In 1958, as a taxicab driver in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, I had the good fortune to meet Connie Taylor. In 1960, having received orders to ship out to Korea for a thirteen-month tour of duty in the army, I made the wisest decision of my life: I married Connie. A few days after Christmas 2007, having been married nearly forty-eight years, Mrs. Williams passed away. I have never had so much sorrow or been as lonely.

In my less sorrowful moments, I console myself by saying, "We had a good ride." We lived up to the vow our minister read to us: "To have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness or in health, to love and to cherish 'till death do us part." When we married, neither one of us had much to speak of except determination and a willingness to make the kind of sacrifices that ultimately enabled us to have a good life with luxuries that would have been only a dream in 1960. Topping that, Mrs. Williams blessed me with a lovely daughter, Devyn, who became the apple of both of our eyes.

No one makes the progress that Mrs. Williams and I made without a lot of help. People, more experienced than we, gave us advice along the way and assisted us in financial tight spots. Professors at California State University, Los Angeles, and at UCLA, where I completed my doctorate, went beyond the call of duty to teach me economics. Much of that extra effort came in the form of extensive office hours, gifts of books and articles, and staying late into the evening to help me learn statistical techniques.

Writing columns is a tremendous learning experience. Readers often write saying, "here's an example," "did you ever look at it this way?" or "that's not true because." Thanks to readers of my columns for the many things that I have learned and also to my editor Karen Duyrea at Creators Syndicate, who saved me grief by catching errors before they caused me embarrassment.

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