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Crossing Fifty-One: Not Quite a Memoir

A Story of Facing Midlife, Uncovering Family Secrets, and Finding Resilience

“The generational threads that can bind us together or tear us apart take center stage in this raw and honest midlife reckoning.”

—Deborah Burns, award-winning author of *Saturday's Child*

While researching her family history, prosecutor Debbie Russell stumbled across her respected physician-grandfather's letters during his voluntary commitment to a federal drug treatment facility in 1951, known as a “Narcotic Farm.”

The discovery sets Russell on a journey of self-discovery whose unexpected turns unearth previously unknown information about her father — just as he is losing his battle with Parkinson's disease. Russell collects her experiences along the way for her debut book *Crossing Fifty-One: Not Quite a Memoir* (Koehler Books, June 2023, \$19.95 Print, \$7.99 eBook) in which she courageously examines middle age's internal struggles, while providing a blueprint for redefining oneself beyond the constraints of addiction and dysfunctional family dynamics.

All of us have dysfunction in our families. Using genealogy techniques, skillful storytelling and an insatiable curiosity, Russell's compelling narrative reads like a novel.

“The conflict between my two lineages came to a head when my dad entered hospice in 2016,” Russell says. “*Crossing Fifty-One* weaves together two threads: my own therapeutic experience dealing with anticipatory grief and my paternal grandfather's voluntary trip to rehab. We were both 51-year-old overachievers when we each decided we could benefit from some professional intervention.”

Crossing Fifty-One has already achieved advance praise: "...a powerful saga about mid-life experience and changing family dynamics that not only deserves a prominent place in libraries interested in family psychology, but also in deep discussions among psychology and book clubs interested in topics of healing, recovery, and physical and mental connections between health, illness, and family relationships."

— D. Donovan, Senior Reviewer, Midwest Book Review

About the Author:

Debbie Russell is a lawyer turned writer. She spent 25 years as a County Prosecutor in Minneapolis, litigating numerous high-profile cases and specializing in those involving domestic and child abuse. She took early retirement, giving up a full pension for the freedom and time to pursue writing, restoring her property to native prairie and wetland, and training her two rambunctious retrievers.

For more information and to read her storytelling blog, visit www.Debbie-Russell.com.