

August 11, 2010

Dear Mrs. Paré,

I wanted to write to you and thank you for all of the wonderful recipe books you have published over the years in order to share your love of good food and good cooking.

Like you, I grew up in a small town in Alberta, just south of Lethbridge. My three sisters and I were raised on a farm and like most people in this province with an agricultural background, we were raised on meat and potatoes. My first memories of your cookbooks were when I was a child and my mother brought home a copy of *150 Delicious Squares*. At the time, my oldest sister was starting Home Economics classes in junior high school and was getting interested in cooking. All of my sisters and I were the most interested in helping to cook when there was a spoon or a beater to lick after the mixing had been done. Mom supposed that my sister might like to try her first "solo" kitchen baking with pans of squares that were fun to make and resulted in a tasty treat we could all enjoy. So in the early 1980's, my sister started to bake.

Soon we were requesting favourite recipes over and over. Then we all wanted a turn in the kitchen trying out new recipes for squares. When I leaf through my Mom's copy of *150 Delicious Squares*, there are still the penciled-in notes of the date when we first tried the recipe, which of my sisters or I baked them, and a rating of how much we liked them. My favourite is still Carribean Bars!

As you have printed and sold other titles, my Mom bought more cookbooks. One of the cupboards in her kitchen is stuffed full of Company's Coming cookbooks, and we have loved and enjoyed all the recipes we have used.

As I prepared to leave home for university, I frantically copied recipes I knew would come in handy for meals or for entertaining (however economical it might be on a student's budget!). I still have those recipe cards in my recipe box, each noted at the top as being from Jean Paré!

After I finished university, I took a teaching position in Hinton, AB. During those first few busy months, I found a copy of *150 Delicious Squares* at the local Walmart. I immediately bought it, took it home, and made a pan of brownies. I took most of the pan to school with me to share the next day with my colleagues, but it was comforting to have a familiar book in my own kitchen that had been a source of so much fun and adventure for me and my sisters.

Following that first year of teaching, I moved to Calgary where I continued in the teaching profession. After a couple of years I met and married my husband, and now we are raising our two young boys. In the first few years of our marriage, I bought several of your recipe books so that I could turn out delicious meals for my husband. He didn't mind I was buying so many...he enjoyed what I created from them! I continue to add to that collection every year.

On many afternoons when I'm wondering what I'll make for dinner, I'll pull out a handful of your cookbooks to look for some inspiration of what to make. Our family has some favourites, but as I try more recipes the number of favourites grows too! It is wonderful to have so many recipes with common, easy to find ingredients that taste great and are so delicious. I enjoy cooking and I have found that I can always trust your recipes to turn out the way I was expecting them too (and the way they look in the pictures!).

One of my sisters recently came home with her family for a visit at my parent's house. She was looking through my Mom's collection of your recipe books and commented on how much fun we had as girls trying out your recipes. I know she doesn't have your squares recipe book, so I've bought her a copy and I've sent it to her for her birthday already even though it's not until December. My sisters and I have a habit of sending things early...months even...when we find something we know the other will love. I know she and her children will start trying out recipes and making their own penciled-in comments soon enough!

Last week I read your biography and I was so impressed with the quiet strength that persisted throughout your story. I know that we are each given our own challenges to work through, and I truly believe it is how we handle those challenges that make us who we are. It has caused me to reflect on my own life and how I choose to handle and overcome challenges as they come my way. Thank you for being an example of good.

It's now after five o'clock and I haven't got a clue what to make for dinner. I'm off to consult my *30-Minute Meals* cookbook or *Ground Beef*. They've both been life savers more times than I can count and will continue to be, along with the other 18 titles I own from your collection. Thank you for making my every day family meals as well as special occasions such an enjoyable and delicious time for everyone!

Sincerely,
Susan M