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on the lighter side

Acting career, actuarial childhood

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This conversation with actress Wendy Kilbourne and her father, Fred Kilbourne, FSA, and past president of the Casualty Actuarial Society, is the first in a series of articles on entertainment personalities who are the children of SOA Fellows. Next month, On the Lighter Side reports on movie executive Bill Ryan and his father Allan Ryan.

Subscribers to the left brain/right brain theory of reasoning would have a lot of fun talking to Wendy Kilbourne. Success in Hollywood has been punctuated by the pursuit of a college degree in human development and work with troubled children, an interest that may someday culminate in a law career as an advocate on children's issues.

"I always said I got the best of both sides of the brain," said the actress in a recent phone interview. "You put an actuary (her father, Fred) and an artist (her mother, Jackie Langley) together, and you get a pretty interesting environment when you're growing up."

Wendy, on the phone from Jackson Hole, Wyoming, where she and her family were on a rock climbing holiday, joined her father, speaking from his San Diego office, in a conference call to discuss her acting career and growing up with an actuary father.

Asked if she and her older sister, Laura, knew what their father did for a living when they were children, she quipped, "I don't know when I finally understood. I think it was about a year ago. When I was really little, it was a source of embarrassment. The other kids could say, 'My dad is a street worker or a doctor or lawyer,' and we'd pipe up and say, 'Our dad is an actuary.' And they'd look at you blankly. People don't understand unless you say he's the guy who sets your insurance rates. That doesn't make you very popular. Now, I just tell people he's a mathematician."

Though Fred, who heads The Kilbourne Company, has written several unpublished works, he and his daughter agree it is the maternal side of the Kilbourne clan that harbors the family artistic sensibility.

Wendy's mother, a painter and educator, is the daughter of Noel Langley, a film director and screenwriter, whose credits include the scripts for "The Wizard of Oz" and the

acclaimed 1951 version of "A Christmas Carol." Fred described Langley as "eccentric," and Wendy remembered him as a gifted storyteller.

Whatever influence led to her desire to perform, it was a predilection that was apparent early. Her father claims Wendy was three when she decided on an acting career. "She's been acting since I knew her."

Wendy, however, remembered no particular interest in it while growing up in southern California. "I never cared about being in the high school plays. I left school at 15 and entered community college dead set on an academic career and going into something like law."

While attending college in suburban Los Angeles, however, she got sidetracked into acting. "I had friends who were doing a lot of commercial work and they said, 'Come on, why don't you try this?' So, I started doing commercials."

More substantial roles started coming her way, and acting began to eclipse school, until at 17 she found herself more actress than student. Success on the small screen followed, including many guest appearances; TV movies-of-the-week; the popular Civil War miniseries, "North and South," which also starred her husband, James Read; and a hit dramatic series, "Midnight Caller," in which she played a young woman running a San Francisco radio station.

She worked on the show until she was seven months pregnant with her first child, Jackson, now 4½. At that time, she felt ready to "dive into

The SOA Risk Seekers spent a cold, rainy April Sunday in Chicago running a marathon to raise money for the Special Olympics and came in third in the corporate co-ed division with an official time of 3:56:02. It's said their inspiration to excel came from team anchor Warren Luckner's playing "Chariots of Fire" tapes in the van. Team members were (L-R) Lela Hord, education administrative assistant; Dana Mikula, human resources manager; Warren Luckner, managing director of research; Chelle Brody, director of operations; and Jim Weiss, director of information services.





Wendy Kilbourne, daughter of Fred Kilbourne, enjoys her time with family between acting assignments. Here she is holding half-sister April Kilbourne while husband, actor James Read, holds their son, Jackson Read.



Fred Kilbourne, FSA

Though she intends to return to acting soon, Wendy plans to apply to law school and become an advocate for children. "The thing about acting is that you have so much down time [on the set] that you can spend a lot of time studying," she said.

When Wendy was starting out, Fred said he never had doubts about her ability to succeed in the competitive, some might say cutthroat, world of show business. He illustrates the confidence they both had in her ability to earn a living with a favorite story. At the beginning of her acting career, she borrowed a few thousand dollars from her father. "I said, 'I'll tell you what, instead of paying me back directly, you can pay me 10% of your income for the next five years.' She thought about it and said, 'No thanks, dad, I think I'll just pay you back the money.' Of course, I'd have been way ahead if I'd been able to sell her on that."

Is this an indicator that his daughter inherited his aptitude for math? "Indeed she did. And of course, we all know her secret desire is to be an actuary." Wendy begs to differ. "At least as an actress, I didn't have to take those exams."

full-time motherhood." The birth of daughter Sydney in May 1995 has lengthened her professional hiatus.

She did a few small jobs after Jackson's birth. She remembered a stretch when she and her husband were both cast in a string of murdering lawyer roles. "Yeah, you're usually the killer, aren't you, Wendy?" her father asked cheerfully.

"Do you remember that pilot [for a television series] you were going to do?" he asked. "They were going to have a sleazy insurance company owner, like a Danny DeVito character, and you were going to play the straight arrow brains behind the operation. They said, 'This is someone called an actuary; do you know what that is?'"

"Yeah, that never sold," Wendy said. "I never understood that."

Most of her time off was spent in pursuit of her bachelor's degree, which she will complete in December at Pacific Oaks College, and in volunteer work on the board of a Pasadena home for boys called The Sycamores.

A product support actuary's favorite things

(to the tune of "These are a Few of My Favorite Things")
by Peter R. Jarvis

Redates and reviews and plan to plan changes,
Partial conversions, original ages,
Computer programs, illogical strings.
These are a few of my favorite things.
Increase or decrease—a substitute split,
Standard to non-smoker and aggregate.
Trying to fix programs as the phone rings.
These are a few of my favorite things.
Old money, new money—income tax dodges,
Adots and abars, mortality charges.

Complex requests for faxing.
These are a few of my favorite things.
As the calls come,
And the files fall,
And I'm feeling blue...
I simply remember rotations are due
And then I can say "Adieu!"

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