

Two sons are mother's night and day

by B.J. Higman

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KOTZEBUE — I have the privilege of raising two lovely sons. When they surround me with their presence, I am virtually whole. The boys differ in many ways. Although they are five years apart, they celebrate their birthdays exactly two weeks from each other. Even though both boys are Tauruses, the second sign of the zodiac, Chuck and Michael are my night and day. Although both boys show similarities in mannerism, style and affection, they have strong contrasting personalities.

**Inupiat Paitot
People's Heritage**

OPINION

On the one hand, Chuck, my first son, shows emotion by speaking from his heart, which makes him vulnerable to others. He is highly intelligent, talkative, and blessed with natural talents, but is easily bored with himself when alone.

On the other hand, Michael, my second son, rarely shows his emotions outwardly. He is witty and quick with trivial responses, but at the same time, he is shy. He battles with his studies and appears to be at his best when he is alone with his own company.

Although one can tell the boys are brothers, they still differ in appearance. Chuck is short, muscular, stocky and dark complected with

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Western civilization features. By contrast, Michael is tall and lean with a light complexion and Native features.

Both boys played Little League baseball when younger. Chuck started at 9 years old when the family moved to Southern California. Michael began when he was a "mite" 5 years of age, starting with tee-ball. In spite of the fact that they showed the same style of play, their personalities differed on the field.

Because they were fast runners, both boys were base stealers. Consequently, even though they played on different teams, they were always first at bat. But as Chuck's talents grew, he played second or third base because the aggressiveness of these positions and his own personality went hand in hand.

Michael, however, played outfield where he wouldn't be so visible. He still contributed to his team, but his insistence on playing the outfield demonstrates that he is most comfortable in the background.

Even as siblings, these boys' personalities differed. Chuck seemingly progressed faster than the normal in-

fant. On his first birthday, he spoke in full sentences. He was an insecure, hyperactive child. But his insecurity also played a positive role because his affection toward others demonstrated that he was cuddly and sweet with a charming personality.

On another matter, Chuck was afraid of the dark and would never approve when left in someone else's care. For example, he cried disapprovingly on his first day of kindergarten. To cover his insecurities, he has since learned to dress immaculately and grooms himself to perfection.

Michael, far different, was a happy, quiet child who never made a fuss. He diligently did what was asked of him. On his first day of kindergarten, he asked why some of the children were crying. He had a strong will to grow tall so most nights he would go to bed before bedtime, hoping to grow while he was asleep. He never feared the dark. Michael has secure feelings from within and shows a sense of peace within himself. Unlike Chuck, constant grooming is not high on his list of priorities.

Chuck most definitely captured his dad's undivided attention. He made straight A's in school, played trombone, and learned his musical notes well. He also enjoyed bike racing and high school wrestling and is an avid surfer. Like his dad, he loves crowds and a fast exciting pace.

Far different from his older brother, Michael's preference is to be in the background in a more laid-back atmosphere. Understandably younger, Michael enjoys swimming, bowling, rollerskating or relaxing at home with his mother where they enjoy peace and quiet watching television.

Even though they have strong contrasting personalities, this has complemented them as brothers. For example, despite their differences, they rarely disagree to this day and never argue. The younger, less-outgoing Michael has always allowed Chuck to protect his little brother. When they are together, Michael's laid-back personality seems to have a calming effect for Chuck to come to a happy medium.

Part-time student Blanche Jones Higman wrote this column in a writing class at Kotzebue-based Chukchi College, a branch campus of the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Higman, one of 13 children, spent much of her childhood with her great grandparents at Sisaulik, an Inupiat camp 9 miles from Kotzebue. She has lived and worked across the United States and today works in the accounting department of the Northwest Arctic Borough School District in Kotzebue. Chukchi News and Information Service is a writing project of Chukchi College.