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## Mine: So much of life is contained in such small things. What holds meaning for you?



Nathaniel Grann/TWP

Published: May 14

**By Penny Hope Gilchrist, 55, Ashburn, director of communications, Center for the Advancement of Well-Being, George Mason University**

From the opening of Gino's in 1962 until Dad's birthday 13 years later, this large wooden bowl claimed center stage in the dining room of my father's midtown Philadelphia restaurant.

A born performer, he made Gino's his theater, the salad table his stage. People watched him spin the bowl as he made Caesar salad with a quick-handed showmanship that rivaled that of Liberace, one of the restaurant's celebrity regulars.

Dad never got along with his co-owner, for whom the restaurant was named. Neither would sell out to the other, and they eventually decided to close down. Soon after closing night, the

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bowl turned up cracked in half.

Glued back together but no longer food-safe, it became a repository for Dad's bills and favorite photographs. It sat on his kitchen table for years. Like the bowl, Dad's life after Gino's was full but lacking the same glory.

When he gave me the bowl, I offered to get it fixed so we could create Caesar salads from his secret recipe. "After I'm gone," he said.

Last summer, a woodworker delivered the refinished bowl. Somehow that garlicky scent — redolent of Gino's — wafted from it again. On what would have been Dad's 98th birthday, I placed the bowl in the center of my kitchen table.

"Happy birthday," I said. Then I made a Caesar salad.

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