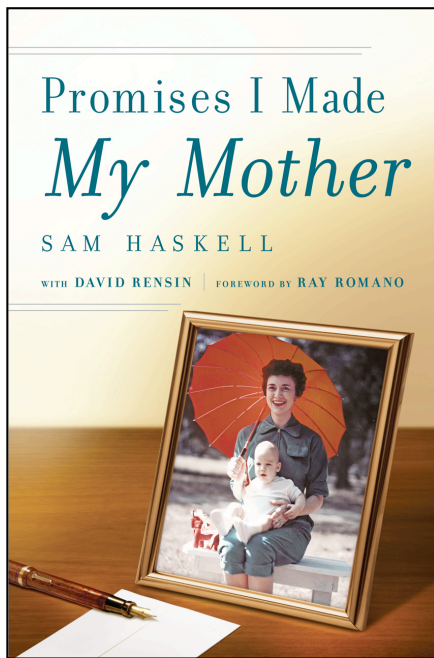


Promises I Made My Mother

By Sam Haskell

With a foreword by Ray Romano



“People find it hard to believe that a guy with [Sam Haskell’s] outlook and approach to life can ever make it in this business, and that’s what amazes me. He did and he still does and I don’t see him ever compromising who he is. ... After reading **[PROMISES I MADE MY MOTHER]**, and learning more about his life, what inspires him, the things he’s accomplished, the way he did it, and the core of who he really is, I felt I needed to call my brothers and tell them something. My list of heroes has changed. I have three now.”

—From Ray Romano’s Foreword

“What would my mother say?” As former Worldwide Head of Television for the William Morris Agency, Sam Haskell asked himself that same question more than once in his long career. Haskell has handled the hottest stars and packaged the highest-rated shows. But he didn’t land those opportunities by acting like the agents we see on *Entourage*. His Mississippi roots—and, above all, his devoted and indomitable mother Mary—instilled in him values of faith, integrity, and honor that made this small-town boy successful beyond his wildest dreams, and still guide him to this day. In **PROMISES I MADE MY MOTHER** (Ballantine Hardcover; April 28, 2009), Haskell reveals how the pledge he made to his mother to live a decent life allowed him to thrive—not only as a husband and father, but in the cut-throat, shark-infested waters of Hollywood.

In amusing, affecting, and frequently warts-and-all anecdotes, Haskell chronicles his upbringing in Amory, Mississippi (pop. 7,000), weaving his mother’s life lessons into the fabric of his engaging story. In

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these pages, you'll discover Haskell as a child, experiencing the power of hope as he waited patiently for the "Cheer Man" (a rep for the detergent company who gave ten dollars to anyone using the brand) to visit his tiny town, as advertised on TV; learning humility after losing an eighth grade "Good Citizenship" award he cockily assumed he'd win; and confronting the complications of human character when a traumatic, near fatal car crash exposed the true nature of his judgmental, unfaithful father.

In Hollywood, Haskell would rely upon honesty, self-reliance, and his mother's teachings of faith to rise swiftly from scoring a gig as a worker in the William Morris mailroom to becoming an agent and then an executive vice president. His capacities for friendship, foresight, and being "thoughtfully political" would allow him to handle client crises like Swoosie Kurtz's deal-breaking insistence on a private bathroom while shooting *Sisters*, to tense negotiations that nearly scuttled the last year of *Everybody Loves Raymond* and the entire existence of *Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*. They also helped him breathe new life into the flagging Miss America pageant—desperately in need of a makeover when he took the reins in 2005.

At last, Mary Haskell's precept that "it takes a good parent to make a good child" would help Haskell lovingly (though not infallibly) raise his own family, and both ease and endure his mother's death from cancer. Ultimately, Haskell achieved success with self-respect, and through his story, we learn how we too can maintain our dignity and integrity when faced with life's challenges. This stirring memoir is a testament to mothers everywhere who instill in their sons the lasting values they need to become devoted fathers.

About the Author

SAM HASKELL, former Executive Vice President and Worldwide Head of Television for William Morris, was named by *TV Week* as one of the 25 Most Innovative and Influential People in Television. Now focused on philanthropy, he lives in Los Angeles with his wife and two children.

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A Ballantine Books Hardcover; April 28, 2009

ISBN: 978-0-345-50655-9; \$24.00; 256 pp.