

Daughter-in-law's open house suddenly closed to mother

Dear Abby: My husband and I have two married sons who move frequently in their work. Recently they both moved to the same city about 2,000 miles from us. As both sons had been asking us to visit them, we thought this would be a good time.

We called our sons before getting our tickets and were told they'd be waiting. Five minutes after I called the younger son, he called back to say his wife had told him that I wasn't welcome in their home.

I was shocked. They've been married for 15 years and I had been in their home many times. Once she even insisted that we stay two weeks when we'd planned to stay only one.

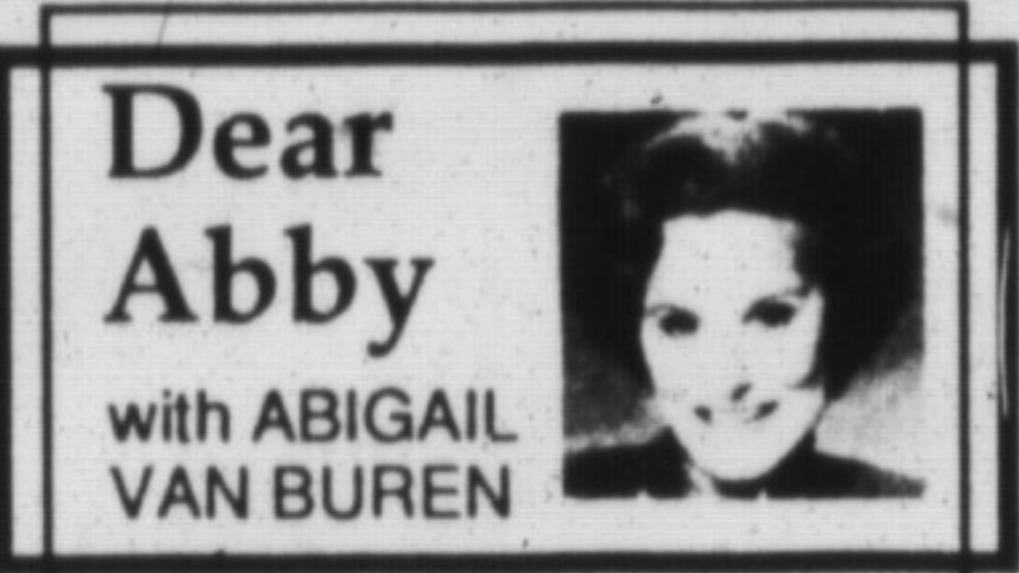
I called and asked her what I had done to her. She said that 12 years ago, when they were visiting us, we had a family picture taken and she hadn't been asked to be in it. Abby, I always thought a family picture included the mother, father and the children they had raised.

At first we decided not to go because we didn't want to cause any trouble between our son and his wife, but the older son insisted we come anyway, so we went.

He and his wife were wonderful, showing us the sights, great meals, etc. Our younger son took two days off work to be with us, brought the grandchildren out, and even took us to see his lovely new home one day when his wife was gone. She's intelligent, college-educated and has good manners.

When we got home, I wrote her a letter, apologizing for excluding her from the family pictures and telling her how proud I had always been of her, and hoped we could put this misunderstanding behind us. Well, my letter was returned marked "refused."

Abby, what could I have done that I didn't do? I feel terrible and don't know what to do.



Heartsick

Dear Heartsick: Consider this: Intelligent, college-educated people with good manners are not immune to physical and mental disorders. Your daughter-in-law's sudden, hostile personality change could be a symptom of some kind of disorder. Tell your son that his wife should be examined physically and psychiatrically. It would be a kindness.

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Dear Abby: I just read the letter from Danny's Mom. It seems her son, Danny, had gone back to college at the age of 36 and, after seven years, he was graduating with honours at the age of 43.

Danny said he owed it all to you because he read a letter in your column from a man who was debating about whether he should return to college for his degree. The man had written, "In seven years, I will be 45 years old." Your reply: "So how old will you be in seven years if you don't go back?"

Well, I can top Danny. After 14 years of working days and going to school nights — taking one or two courses at a time — on June 3, 1990, I will graduate magna cum laude from Elmira College with a degree in psychology.

I expect to have four grandchildren in my audience, and will be celebrating my 57th birthday in August.

Abby, keep right on telling people it's never too late to learn.

Patricia Goodridge

Dear Patricia: Congratulations. If anybody can top you, I'm sure I'll hear about it.

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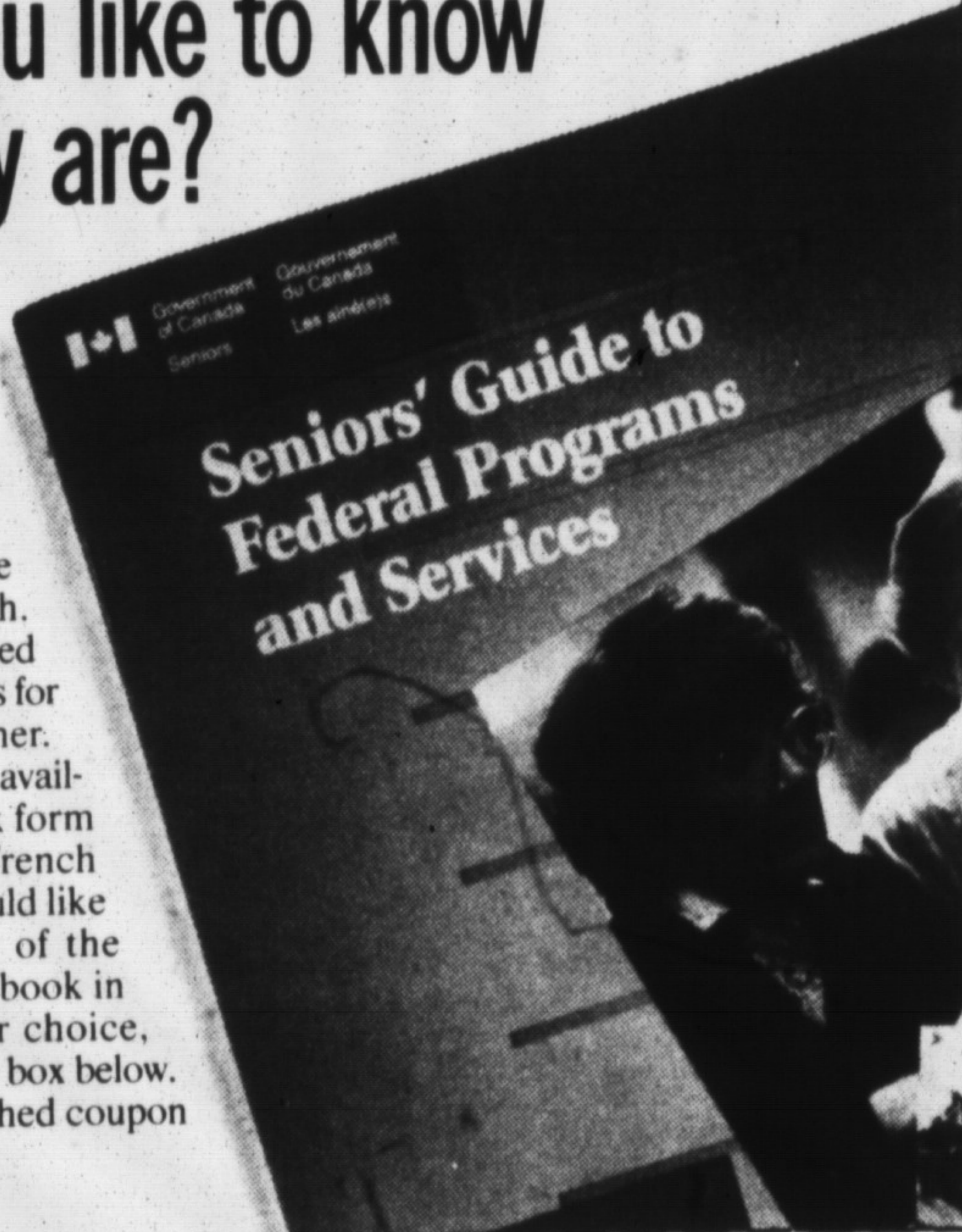
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