



# America's Mom: The Life, Lessons, and Legacy of Ann Landers

*Rick Kogan*

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For two generations of Americans, reading Ann Landers's daily column was as important as eating breakfast and as natural as brushing their teeth. For nearly fifty years an entire nation turned to this quick-witted, worldly-wise counselor for advice on everything from proper dinner etiquette to sex, yet few actually knew the real woman behind the byline.

Award-winning journalist Rick Kogan was Ann Landers's last editor and close friend, and in *America's Mom* he paints an intimate, affectionate, knowing, and deeply honest portrait of a remarkable woman whose real life story rivaled anything that appeared in the millions of letters she received and responded to during her long career.

Iowa-born Eppie Lederer was first hired by the Chicago Sun-Times to take over the daily advice column in 1955 -- and over the next half-century she helped shape the nation's social and sexual landscape. Already a fiercely independent housewife and political activist, she reinvented herself as "Ann Landers," went on to become America's beloved "surrogate mother," and was one of the country's most influential women. The friend and confidante of celebrities, journalists, and politicians, she composed columns that touched the lives of so many -- even as her own life was shaken by dramatic, often heartbreaking events.

Written with the enthusiastic support and cooperation of Ann Landers's colleagues, admirers, and friends, Kogan's unforgettable memoir is a fascinating, full-bodied account of the triumphs, the wisdom, the courage, and the many trials of one of the twentieth century's most enduring icons -- her painful lifelong feud with her identical twin sister, "Dear Abby"; her outspokenness and stubborn refusal to shy away from even the most controversial topics; and the tragic breakup of her own thirty-six-year marriage when her husband abandoned her for another woman, an event that she bravely and openly shared with her millions of sympathetic fans. Here, too, is a wealth of touching, enlightening, and remarkable true stories shared by people from all walks of life who were profoundly affected by the good sense and guidance of Ann Landers. *America's Mom* is a moving tribute to a singular woman who has earned an eternal place in our culture . . . and our hearts.

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#### **Richard Lawrence:**

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