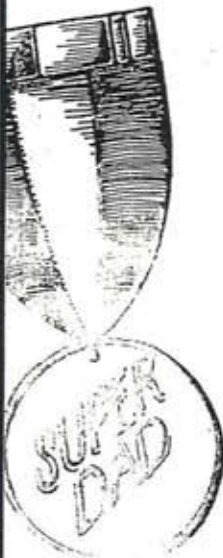


Today's Closing  
N.Y. Stocks

# Orange Coast EDITION DAILY PILOT



VOL. 73, NO. 164, 3 SECTIONS, 38 PAGES ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 1980 N TWENTY-FIVE CENTS



Daily Pilot Graphic

*"You need to get down to their level; you need to be a kid yourself," says the man who broke precedent by taking a 4-year paternity leave from his job. Jerry Cammarata, here with his family, subsequently authored a book on fatherhood.*

## 'Superdad' Has Fun With Kids

By MICHAEL DOUGAN  
Of the Daily Pilot Staff

Jerry Cammarata has made a career out of fatherhood.

It all started eight years ago when Cammarata revolutionized national labor laws by demanding — and getting — paternity leave from his job as a teacher in the New York City school system.

What followed were countless talk shows, a popular book on being a daddy, the loss of his job

due to layoffs and, now, a possible television special based on his life.

All because Cammarata wanted to spend a little more time with his daughters.

**CAMMARATA, A FORMER** teacher and speech pathologist, said he realized that something was wrong one day as he left for work and his daughter asked him to bring home a rat.  
A rat?



Sure, she replied. Didn't he go to the rat races every day like he told her?

"I was running round, working a lot of jobs and making a lot of money," said Cammarata, 32, on a recent visit to Orange County while talking to NBC officials about the proposed TV show.

"I really thought the next couple of days — it really was a rat race. I was making material gain, but I was not doing anything for my family."

So Cammarata asked for four years of paternity leave to play a greater role in the upbringing of his children. The case came before the Federal Equal Employment Opportunities Commission and Cammarata won, establishing a national precedent of which he said few employers or workers are aware.

**HE THINKS MORE** men would take advantage of the ruling, requiring all businesses that offer maternity leave to make a paternity leave of equal time available, if they knew about it. (However, like most maternity leaves, time off for fathers usually is without pay, a hitch for families that can't afford to live on savings or the mother's earnings.)

"There is a revived interest in fathering in general," said Cammarata. "Dads are finding a new way of interpreting their relationship with their kids."

"There's the dad today who takes his son out on the golf course, while he used to leave him home," he added. "The father today is on a new high in America about wanting to be with his kids."

Cammarata thinks the financial objections could be overcome through a plan that would enable a corporation to kick in money each month to a family fund. The money would be used to support parents on their leaves.

**"THE MORE A COMPANY** can do to stabilize the family of

an employee the more productive that employee is going to be," he claimed. "The breakdown of the family has been the result of the industrial revolution."

The concept of paternity leave may be Cammarata's first radical departure from traditional thinking on fatherhood, but it is hardly his last. He also believes in throwing out psychological theory and jargon in favor of lessons learned from the animal world, encouraging fathers and sons to play with dolls and, at least in his own home, allowing young children to make long distance phone calls to complete strangers.

Some of these ideas are put forth in "The Fun Book of Fatherhood," Cammarata's book that has been picked up as an option by Ed Friendly Productions for a 1982 Movie of the Week.

"One of the things I tried to project is not to tell parents how to be parents," he said. "Parents have been 'helped' to death. Professionals have taken the leadership away from parents."

**"THE BOOK JUST** kind of shows that you need to have fun with your kids," added Cammarata. "You need to get down to their level; you need to be a kid yourself."

But this doesn't mean parents should relinquish their roles as the people in charge, he said.

"Kids want to look to parents and see them make decisions, right or wrong. They don't want to hear, 'Well, what do you want to do?'"

As children grow older, they acquire the skills necessary to make decisions, said Cammarata. But, at first, they take comfort in knowing somebody is in charge.

"By using the animals as examples we can teach many of the skills they need," claimed Cammarata. "When a baby bear goes too close to the water, the momma and poppa bear will slap the baby to keep it away."

This illustrates that human parents, too, must sometimes take similar actions to protect the children they love, he said, and it can be explained to kids that way.

Many of Cammarata's concerns involve communication between parent and child. He believes that communication can be enhanced by playing with dolls — and that goes for little boys, too.

"I believe dads and moms should play with dolls and little boys should play with dolls," he said. "You can tell what kids are feeling by the way they play with dolls."

Cammarata also allows his daughters to play with the phone, although there are limitations.

**HE HAS COLLECTED** more than 3,000 telephone books from across the United States. Each evening, he allows his daughters to pick a book, select a name at random and make one three-minute call.

Afterwards, the children look up the city they talked to on the map and learn a bit about it.

"People on the east coast would just slam the phone down immediately, but in the south and on the west coast people were more amenable to conversation," Cammarata reported.

Cammarata was asked how youngsters can be protected from self-destructive habits like drug use, drinking and cigarette smoking when these things are common to their peer group.

"Generally, if negative things in the environment are discussed and put in perspective the kids will not succumb to them," he said.

"If a kid takes pot it's for reducing the tensions of life and if that's the case the parents are not doing something right. I don't think the peer group should be more influencing than the home."

"I really don't think there should be the concept of the generation gap."

Jerry Garrard  
President

Affiliate Offices

Chicago - Houston - Los Angeles - San Francisco  
Frankfurt - London - Rome

Communication Center  
Suite PH  
185 Maryland Avenue  
Staten Island, NY 10305  
(212) 720-6400



# AIM

## AMERICAN IMAGE MAKER®