

An excerpt of BRUNO, by The Iorfido Family...

Chapter One

The Family that Built Bruno

Every life has a beginning. Some begin with a place. Some begin with a dream. Bruno Iorfido's story began with his family.

Long before wrestling tournaments, championship matches, or college arenas, there was a young man named Bruno and a young woman named Valerie who shared a belief in faith, family, hard work, and serving others. Together, they built a life in the rolling hills of northwestern Pennsylvania that would become the foundation upon which three boys would grow into men.

The family farm, built in 1979, was more than a house surrounded by fields. It was a classroom without walls. There, lessons were taught through example rather than instruction. Work was expected. Honesty was assumed. Respect was earned. Faith was practiced. Family came before everything else.

It was within those values that their first son, Bruno Paul Iorfido, entered the world on July 3, 1980. No one could have known then how many lives he would one day touch. His parents certainly did not set out to raise a champion wrestler. Their greatest hope was much simpler: to raise a good man.

Val nurtured her boys with unwavering love, teaching kindness, humility, and compassion through everyday moments. Bruno Sr. led by example, balancing long days at the pharmacy with work on the farm and countless hours volunteering in the community. Together, they created a home where character mattered more than trophies and faith mattered more than recognition.

Soon the family grew with the arrival of Paul, followed several years later by Beau. The three brothers would share adventures, responsibilities, triumphs, disappointments, and an unbreakable bond forged through childhood and strengthened by life's challenges.



*The Iorfido Family
Val, Bruno Sr.
From left to right: Beau, Paul,
Bruno*

Looking back, it is easy to see that Bruno's character was not formed in a single defining moment. It was built one day at a time.

It was built through chores completed without complaint, evenings around the fire pit, Sunday Mass, family dinners, long conversations, and parents who quietly demonstrated that the greatest measure of success was found in serving others.

Before Bruno ever stepped onto a wrestling mat, before coaches recognized his talent or teammates admired his leadership, the most important work had already been done.

A family had built the foundation. Everything that followed would stand upon it.

A Foundation Built on Faith and Hard Work

Every family has defining moments that quietly shape the generations that follow. Long before Bruno Paul Iorfido was born, his father experienced one such moment that would forever influence the way he viewed life.

In the early 1970s, Bruno Sr. was helping with the family beer distribution business, learning the value of responsibility and hard work from an early age. Though still under the legal driving age for a commercial truck, he had already earned the trust of those around him. Customers respected him, and those who worked beside him knew he could be counted on to make sound decisions when circumstances demanded them.

One spring morning, he accompanied another young driver to Dubois, PA to pick up a load of beer kegs. The return trip brought them to a steep hill overlooking town. As they started their descent, the driver became uneasy and asked Bruno Sr. to take the wheel.

Without hesitation, he agreed. Moments later, the brake pedal dropped helplessly to the floor. The heavily loaded truck gained speed with every passing second. There was no stopping it.

At the bottom of the hill sat a flatbed tractor-trailer waiting at a stop sign. The collision was devastating. Bruno Sr.'s teeth pierced through his lower lip and into the hand gripping the steering wheel, pinning him in place inside the mangled cab.

As rescue workers rushed to the scene, a priest from the nearby church walked to the wreckage to administer the Last Rites. At the time, no one believed the young men would survive. Trucks of that era carried their fuel tanks inside the cab behind the seat. If a fire ignited, escape would have been impossible.

The rescue became one of the first uses of the newly introduced "Jaws of Life" in the county. The task was made even more extraordinary by the fact that the truck had crashed through the front porch of a nearby home and came to rest inside the family's living room. Amid the chaos, a mentally challenged young man who lived there calmly walked downstairs, sat on the couch, and turned on the television, seemingly unaware of the unfolding tragedy around him.

Against overwhelming odds, both young men survived.

Looking back, the family often reflected on another remarkable detail. Had the flatbed truck not absorbed the impact, the runaway vehicle would have barreled through a crowded church parking lot during a Lenten service, potentially claiming many more lives.

It was a moment that served as a quiet reminder that providence often reveals itself only in hindsight. Years later, Bruno Sr. carried that same gratitude into every aspect of his life.

Because of this accident, his path crossed with that of a young woman named Valerie Buck.

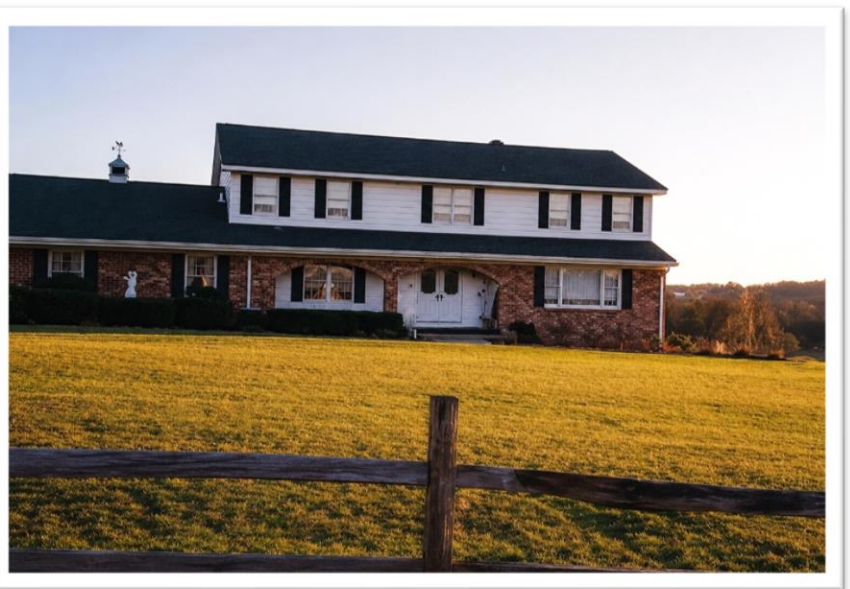
Their relationship was built on shared values rather than grand gestures. Faith anchored their lives, family was their highest priority, and both believed that character was formed through service, sacrifice, and hard work.

They were married on a beautiful June afternoon in 1979, surrounded by family and lifelong friends. Those who attended remembered not only the joy of the ceremony but the warmth of the celebration that followed—a reflection of the life they would build together.

Soon after, they began creating the home they had envisioned.

The family farm, constructed in 1979 amid the rolling hills surrounding Ridgway, Pennsylvania, would become much more than a house. It would become the heart of the Iorfido family.

The farm was alive with activity. Between long days working as a pharmacist at the pharmacy and spending evenings caring for livestock and tending the property, Bruno Sr. somehow found time to eventually coach, volunteer, and serve his community. Val balanced the demands of raising a family with quiet strength and unwavering devotion, creating a home filled with love, structure, and faith.



The Iorfido family homestead located in Ridgway, Pennsylvania.

Neither parent measured success by wealth or recognition. Instead, they hoped to raise children who would be honest, respectful, compassionate, and willing to work for everything they achieved. Without realizing it, they were building something far greater than a home. They were building a legacy.

On July 3, 1980, that legacy took its next step forward with the birth of their first son, Bruno Paul Iorfido.

He was named after his father but given the middle name Paul in recognition of his maternal grandfather to distinguish him, he entered a family already grounded in faith and purpose. Baptized in the Catholic Church at St. Leo's, his spiritual foundation was laid from the very beginning.

Val would later say that there always seemed to be a light about Bruno—an aura, a quiet presence that drew people to him even as a child. Friends, relatives, and strangers alike were naturally comfortable in his company. He possessed a kindness that could not be taught and a sincerity that made others feel important.



The Iorfido Boys
From left to right:
Paul, Bruno, Beau

In the years that followed, brothers Paul and Beau would join the family, completing the tight-knit household that would become inseparable through shared adventures, challenges, and countless weekends spent together.

Their parents never set out to raise champions. They simply wanted to raise good men. They taught by example that faith should be lived, promises should be kept, and people should always come before possessions.

Long before Bruno ever stood atop a wrestling podium, long before he earned All-American honors or inspired generations of young athletes, the most important victories of his life had already been won within the walls of the family home.

The foundation had been poured. Everything else would be built upon it.