

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

This is a work of fiction. A few polio ward scenes originated from tidbits of biographical stories told to me both by my grandmother and mother who are no longer living. The word “cripple” was in use during the period of this novel to refer to “a person unable to walk due to illness or disability,” as was the term “handicapped,” now used sparingly.

I am ever grateful to my grandmother and my father for seeing my mother as a person of many abilities. When she met my father at a dance one Halloween night, he didn't notice she boogied with one unbendable leg until she clicked her leg brace to sit next to him. He discovered her unshakable courage and zest for life. While doctors advised her not to bear children, I am one of three. Until his passing, my father was always seeking or creating adaptable, accessible inventions for her to get around. Even as a widow, my mother drove a car, a scooter, and/or used a wheelchair. Her various wheels to liberty offered degrees of freedom, though she always wished to go farther.

The day my grandmother drove to our house in her very first car was celebrated. Her wheels to liberty marked the start of newfound freedom.