

## The Dean's Underwear

### *Living My American Dream*

Growing up with both an abusive father who was in the military and a strict Catholic upbringing, Don Gnecco's journey to adulthood was not always easy. As a young boy, he and his friends accidentally started a forest fire. Part-time jobs included picking potatoes in northern Maine, working in a warehouse, a bakery, a state hospital for the mentally retarded, and a Jewish summer camp, all of which proved to be good preparation for a lifelong career in education. His struggle to fit in was complicated by multiple moves in adolescence. Just as he began his teaching career, Don's only brother was killed in a tragic automobile accident.

A longstanding passion for music and performing emerged in his forties, after Don's children were nearly grown. A fifty-year career as an educator, school administrator and college professor and dean paralleled his leading roles as husband, father of three, and grandfather of five.

Our educator-turned-songwriter tells his story with child-like wonder and with the belief that miracles, blessings, and synchronicities are in all our lives when we are open to seeing them. This is one man's story of resilience...making it to the mountaintop and living the American dream.