



# Book News

## The University of Arizona Press



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For Immediate Release

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**Peter Likins**, author of *A New American Family*, has had, by most accounts, a successful life. A long academic career has taken him from Stanford to Columbia and Lehigh universities (as professor, dean, provost, and president) and, finally, to the University of Arizona. His personal accomplishments, however, are only the backdrop for the real story - the story of his family whose trials and triumphs hold lessons for many American families in the 21st century.

*A New American Family* is a poignant but ultimately empowering memoir, which traces the lives of Peter Likins, his wife Patricia, and the six children they adopted in the 1960s. With issues such as inter-racial adoption, mental illness, drug addiction, unwed pregnancy, and homosexuality entwined in their lives, the Likins' tale isn't just a family memoir, it's the story of the American experience, a memoir with a message.

"It's message," says Pete "is that America can continue to be a nation whose greatness is rooted in family values, but only if we embrace a more inclusive concept of family. It's an illustration of what that broader, more inclusive family looks like even today, and what the American family will become in the best years of the 21st century."

Circumstances of race, age, and health made all of the Likins' children virtually unadoptable by 1960s standards. Only in 1994, for example, was the Multiethnic Placement Act passed, which finally recognized that adults of all cultures should be working to help all adopted children reach their highest potential. Pat and Pete, however, never strayed from the belief that loyalty and love could build a strong family, whatever the varied makeup of that family. Candid and unflinching, *A New American Family* "is not always a pretty tale and it never a simple narrative, but it is a true story of an American family that speaks to the complexities of contemporary life in our country." It is an inspiring tale of triumph and diversity.

Both Pete and Pat have served as teachers and Pete's long academic career illuminates more than just his personal success. Pete's professional attainments produce a context for his family story, wherein high achievements in educational, athletic, and financial terms coexist with the joys and sorrows of this exceptional family. A frank, open account of the difficulties his family faced, this is a brave story, told with honesty and compassion. *A New American Family* is a wonderful narrative of the genesis of a family and a journey to the deepest parts of a father's heart.

### ***A New American Family: A Love Story*** **Peter Likins**

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