



## **THE SPICY SECRET LIFE OF COLONEL SANDERS**

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OK, four words:

Colonel Sanders' sex life.

If those four words won't keep you reading this column, what does it take?

The real question is: Will they cause you to spend \$25 for a new 376-page book called *The Colonel's Secret* ?

The book is subtitled: *Eleven Herbs and a Spicy Daughter*.

That's because the author is Margaret Sanders, eldest daughter of the late Harland Sanders, originator of Kentucky Fried Chicken.

But the colonel's sex life?

The grandfatherly, white-haired old gent in the TV commercials?

Yep, it's one of those books about an American icon where family skeletons come out in public.

For example, Margaret Sanders writes about her father's mistress, a divorced woman with two children, who Sanders (what a salesman!) actually talked his wife into hiring to "help her with the housework." The book relates:

"It was evident from the beginning that her presence would create turmoil...The peace of our whole family was altered by their affair.

"Mother refused to accept that she alone could not satisfy Father's physical needs, which from the very beginning of their marriage had seemed excessive to her..."

Later, she writes, Sanders divorced his wife and married his mistress - and then took both women to Washington, D.C., with him to attend a presidential inauguration.

(Hey, would this guy have fit into the Clinton administration or what?)

And that was just the beginning. Here, as written by his daughter, is a snapshot of the colonel toward the end of his life:

"Noah Dietrich, the famous associate of the even more famous Howard Hughes, lived across the street from me (in Palm Springs).

"Noah's wife, Mary, the grandmother of Bridget Fonda, brought Noah over to my house...Father was approaching 90 and Noah was 92. They sat with their canes shoved down beside them...swapping tales with loud guffaws.

"Suddenly, during a lull in our conversation, we heard Father say, `Noah, I had sex until my 83rd birthday. How long did you have sex?'

"We ladies gasped, waiting for the answer. To Noah's great fortune and Mary's relief, the doorbell rang..."

Well, well. Maybe there IS some secret ingredient in that fried chicken, after all.

But some readers of the book might disagree with Margaret Sanders' description of herself as the "spicy" daughter.

Perhaps "flaky" would be a better adjective. This is, after all, a woman who searched for the lost continent of Atlantis, tried to add to Einstein's theory of relativity, takes credit for "the revolutionary concept" of take-out fried chicken stores and was married five times.

She is a talented artist. It's her sculpture of her father that overlooks his grave in a Louisville cemetery.

And she's a pretty good storyteller. The book is full of family photos, personal revelations and memorable anecdotes, such as the time Colonel Sanders spotted a hard working table buser in a fried chicken restaurant in Indianapolis and predicted that the kid would be a big success one day.

He was right. The table buser turned out to be Dave Thomas, who later founded Wendy's and, like Sanders, starred in his own ads.

Margaret Sanders, 86, who once lived in Lexington, is scheduled to return next month and autograph her book at Joseph-Beth Booksellers on Oct. 5.

And please. No finger-lickin'-good jokes.