

A Manner of Course

Fine manners are the gifts that keep on giving.

“Once you learn them, no one can take them away from you,” says Bernadette Devonshire Sullivan Watkins, or more formally, Mrs. Henry B. Watkins III. “My Mum used to say, ‘Do not leave the house without them.’”

Watkins — whose mother was a Robert, as in *Robert’s Rules of Order* — has been doing her part since 1993 to teach Neapolitan youth etiquette and dancing through classes by Miss Broadwell’s of Naples, offered by invitation to children in grades 3 through 6.

The school started when she and her family moved from New York and she realized her youngest daughter would not be able to complete her etiquette training. When Watkins invited the New York teacher to Naples, she was told she needed to enroll 60 children.

Despite getting the necessary number, Watkins says the teacher cancelled at the last minute. (How rude!) “But instead of telling him what I thought, I decided to get his help,” she says. Miss Broadwell’s (her husband’s middle name) was created.

Five years ago, the idea of putting together a fine-dining etiquette movie came from a parent. “I’ve been working on it ever since,” Watkins says.

The nearly 40-minute video, *The Fine Art of Formal Dining*, features an introduction by voice-over pro and



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Naples resident Peter Thomas, and course-by-course instruction by Watkins showing adults dining at Palm Cottage and children served in her own stunning dining room. The instruction is basic but elegant, providing tips — “small bites are beautiful” — to keep one from becoming intolerable or vulgar in most social situations.

“Manners have become a lost art,” she says. “It’s really about just being kind. Manners never change.”

Watkins believes at \$39.95, the DVD is a thoughtful gift for young and old, with the bonus that the giver might even receive a thank you note. For additional information, log on to broadwellsetiquette.com.