



Donald Eugene Starwalt

August 11, 1945 - January 6, 2020

Donald Eugene Starwalt 74, died Monday, January 6, 2020, at his home in Edwardsville, IL. Don was born August 11, 1945, in E. St. Louis, IL to the late John and Thelma (Stepp) Starwalt. A graduate of Leesburg, Florida High School he attended Fruitland Park Comm. College. He later received a Bachelor's degree from SIU-E and then an MA in linguistics from the same school. Don was also accepted into the Ph.D. program at the University of Nebraska where he continued his studies in linguistics.

Don was a Renaissance man who because of his varied talents excelled in so many different areas. He will be remembered as an excellent teacher. He taught at SIU-E specializing in English as a Second Language. Students from around the world will remember The Starwalt Method. Each student learned to greet him at the beginning of each class with a heartfelt, "Howdy." He later taught in Kansas City, Mo school district and then in St. Louis at Flow Valley CC & Riverview Middle School.

He was also one of the finest musicians and music producers in the Metro-East area. He was a fine guitar player who also made the banjo sing. The instrument which seemed closest to his soul was the Dobro. He began his musical career in Leesburg, FL playing in a trio of folk musicians, "The Fiesmen." They played up and down the East Coast in the 1960's riding the wave of renewed interest in folk music. When he lived in Kansas City, he gained a new audience on The River Queen, a dinner and excursion paddlewheel boat which steamed up and down the Missouri River. This experience caused him to write a ballad titled "Banjos Aren't for Dinner." Don also played with Pete Seeger and many other Kansas City Blue Grass musicians.

Before and after his time living in both Kansas City and Finland, MN where he played in many ski lodges along the shores of Lake Superior, he returned to Edwardsville, his hometown. Don set up Studio E and produced a series of music CDs for other musicians while also playing music all over the area. He wrote so many songs including "Edwardsville Breakdown," and "Gone to the Islands." For the last few years his band The Jammin Ringtonz have played Happy Hour at the Stagger Inn Again. They packed the house with both old fans and new ones.

Don was also a skilled carpenter and a fine cabinet maker. He had an eye for beauty and quality which made his creations works of art. He was an artist with wood, just as he was

a gifted musician, and a unique and loving teacher.

He is survived by his brother Roy "Butch" Starwalt & wife Debra of Glen Carbon sister, Sharon Andrews & husband David Michael in Blue Springs, MO. Don was preceded in death by a brother, Joseph William Starwalt. A celebration of life will be held at the Stagger Inn in Edwardsville on Sunday, January 26, 2020, at 4:00 p.m.. In lieu of flowers the family request memorials to the American Lung Association or the American Heart Association. Weber & Rodney Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Comments



“ I haven't seen Don for over forty years but knew him well when I lived in Edwardsville in the seventies. I've googled him quite a few times in recent years and was bummed today when I searched for him and found he is gone. I've had the sketch I've included here hung on a wall in my main workroom for years. I sketched it during a performance at, where else, the Stagger. Sure sad to know we'll never talk to each other again. George Blevins



George M Blevins - February 06, 2020 at 03:20 PM



“ Don was a school mate of mine in grammar school and high school (Florida), and I am so sorry that he has passed away. I extend my deepest and sincerest condolences to Butch, Sharon, and the entire Starwalt family for the great loss of this very talented and special person. Myrna Kinlaw White

Myrna K White - January 10, 2020 at 02:50 PM



“ I am saddened by the passing of a wonderful, talented man I called friend. His great sense of humor, his laugh and that going in his eyes are a lasting memory for me.
Play on, dear friend--play on...
My sympathies to all who knew and loved him...

Michelle Duhant

Time heals what reason cannot.

Michelle Duhant - January 10, 2020 at 12:38 PM



“ I have known and loved Don for many many decades. He was one the kindest, funniest, most talented men I have ever known. I am so glad that we were able to reconnect over this last decade of his life. My memories of him will last with me forever. We are going to miss you, Don. You have no idea how much!

Carol Bozeman - January 09, 2020 at 06:48 PM



“ We had so many good times. These pictures are just a small fraction of them. The memories are treasures. Rest In Peace my good friend.



Don Howell III - January 09, 2020 at 06:12 PM



“ Debra Starwalt lit a candle in memory of Donald Eugene Starwalt



Debra Starwalt - January 09, 2020 at 04:55 PM