



Don Drapeau

May 15, 1940 - November 18, 2021

“DID HE HAVE PASSION?”

by

Loved Ones

ACT I

SCENE 1

Spotlight on a bare stage with a podium center stage. Enter History of Theatre teacher DON DRAPEAU from stage right. He is dressed in a dark blue blazer, a button-down dress shirt, striped tie, khaki pants, and penny loafers. He stands behind the podium and addresses the audience.

DON

Greeks didn't write obituaries, they only asked one question after a man died, "Did he have passion?"

A glass of GLENMORANGIE enters from stage right.

GLENMORANGIE

Don always appreciated a sip of me after a fine meal, during great conversations, when he traveled from the Arctic to the Antarctic, and explored

every continent. It was always about the adventure, embracing different people and their culture. Wherever he went, it was magical. He was always willing to try new things. Maybe that's why he would always order the calamari at the hot dog stand; and was shocked when it "wasn't very good." It was about the spiritual experience when dining and exploring new places. That's why he always loved me...or my cousin the wine. He had a passion for food and travel.

Exit stage left. A GREEK CHORUS OF VIRGINIA TECH STUDENTS/FACULTY enters stage right.

STUDENT 1

Don's passion was love, guidance, support, and mentorship. He was my guiding hand. He invested in developing people.

FACULTY 1

He established a reputation for going far beyond what was expected of him with style and class. His wit and sense of humor, his keen intelligence, his generosity, compassion, his organizational ability, and his investment in people made him one of a kind. He supported his colleagues and made sure they knew he appreciated them. He made people's lives better; his vivid love of others made the world a better place.

FACULTY 2

He led the Department of Theatre Arts at Virginia Tech for over thirty years; and served on various committees. He was also President of the National Association of Schools of Theatre, President of the Southeastern Theatre Conference, and President of the Virginia Theatre Association—to name a few. He was an active consultant and adjudicator for countless area high schools and colleges. Even in his retirement, he contributed his leadership skills to the community, including work with the Blacksburg Master Chorale,

leadership of the Lyric Council, and Community Foundation for the Arts.

FACULTY 3

His many national awards included a Kennedy Center Medallion, a Virginia Theatre Association Distinguished Career Award, and the Southeastern Theatre Conference Award for Outstanding Service to Theatre. Toward the end of his distinguished career, he was inducted into the prestigious College Fellows of the American Theatre. One of his greatest honors was his involvement with the development and creation of the Moss Arts Center, which brings innovative, significant, and diverse performance arts, to the Blacksburg community.

Exit CHORUS stage left. Enter FAMILY stage right.

FAMILY

Don loved his family. He would drop everything for them: though he may have been late once...or all the time. He loved sharing his passions with them, whether that be a family adventure at the beach, dragging the children around London to see a plaque where the Globe Theatre used to be, or drinking scotch and playing pool with the Son-In-Laws. He was never afraid to be silly and perform circus tricks with the grandkids, prank many with a Queen of Hearts card trick, and talk in a Donald Duck voice. When asked, he was always “ducky.”

Family included friends - his list went on and on. He engaged with whomever he was with, and you always felt special and loved in his presence. He was always a hands-on man with a natural creative ability to craft, build, and design. He would never hesitate to help construct a gigantic theatrical set or help family/friends in need with a minor house project.

But his ultimate passion was Libby. They met at High Point College and have been dancing through life together ever since. Don adored his wife. She was the rock at home, and he knew he couldn't follow his passions without her.

Ladies and Gentleman, Don Drapeau!

DON bows to the audience.

WIFE

...but he wasn't perfect...

Lights fade as curtain closes.

(END OF SHOW)

ABOUT THE SHOW:

Donald A. Drapeau was born on May 15, 1940 in Ansonia, Connecticut. He graduated from High Point College in 1961 as a Delta Sig, and attended Grad School at the University of Connecticut, where he was the first person to graduate from the graduate program in theatre. He moved back to High Point as faculty for that department, and moved to Blacksburg in 1967 to help form the Theatre Department at Virginia Tech with Tony Distler.

SUPPORTING CAST:

CLARENCE AND LOUISE...Parents

LIBBY...Wife

DANA AND DANIELLE...Daughters

CONNAR, HAYDEN, AND MARK...Grandchildren

KEN (deceased) AND THOMAS...Son in Laws

CLAIRE...Older Sister

DONNA, GARY, AND WAYNE...Niece/Nephews

CHORUS...Many friends and Students

CONTRIBUTIONS CAN BE MADE TO:

The Donald A. Drapeau Endowment Fund at Virginia Tech #885914

The Lyric Theatre of Blacksburg

The Moss Arts Center

The Community Foundation - Arts Alliance Group

Cast Party to be announced at a later date.

Tribute Wall

TJ

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Todd Jeffries - January 05, 2022 at 09:23 PM



“ I just heard through ATHE of Don's passing. His generosity went well past VT, as everyone knows. Don was my mentor at one of the first ATHE Leadership Institutes. I was a relatively new faculty member here in South Carolina, sent to the Institute by my Dean, who knew I had leadership ambitions. I was suffering from a huge case of imposter syndrome. Don's mentorship consisted mostly of him asking me to talk about myself and how I approached various aspects of my career. I don't think anyone had ever asked me to talk about myself so much without a personal agenda. His questions made me think about the ways I position myself in relation to all those around me at work - students, fellow faculty, administrators, staff - and the questions alone were enough to help me analyze how I wanted to approach my work. Don was the first to tell me that I could be a leader in any context by "leading from within." I learned that a leader is someone who leads by example, encourages those around them, and pays attention. As a mentor in the Leadership Institute myself now, every year I try to help others see themselves the way that Don helped me see myself.

Susan Kattwinkel - December 20, 2021 at 11:33 AM



“ *My condolences to Don's family. May you have beautiful memories to comfort you.*

*Michele Deramo
VT colleague*

Michele Deramo - December 15, 2021 at 04:58 PM

BB

“ *Don Drapeau was an outstanding national theatre leader. A dear friend, he was a founding board member of ATHE, the Association of Theatre in Higher Education. Active in ATHE, the College of Fellows of the American Theatre and many theatres and theatre organizations in the Southeast, he was the chair of theatre and long time faculty member at Virginia Tech, which you can read about in the Obituary written by his family. A true friend to many, a beloved theatre teacher and practitioner, he loved and cared for his family and also his friends in the theatre. He shall be sorely missed. I send love and condolences to his family and numerous friends and former students around the country. Beverley Byers-Pevitts*



Beverley Byers-Pevitts - December 10, 2021 at 04:30 PM

LW

“ As one of the founding Board members of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education, I worked closely with Don and 6 other wonderful people for over a year to create this organization, still going strong 35 years later. Don was a voice of reason in our sometimes contentious discussions, provided much fun, and always found great places to eat. Though it was long ago, my memories of that year are still vivid. Don was such a significant part of that tight group, hugely respected and much loved. There's a Don-sized hole in the world now, and that is very sad. Sending deepest condolences to all his family.
Lila Wolff Wilkinson

Lila Wilkinson - December 08, 2021 at 03:07 PM

CS

“ *Claire Sloss lit a candle in memory of Don Drapeau*



Claire Sloss - December 01, 2021 at 07:04 PM

RK

“ Don was an amazing person. I can't begin imagine the number of people's lives he touched including my own.

After my freshman year, I had the chance to travel with him during the may-mester trip to Greece and Italy. During my senior stage management study with him, Don imparted so many important lessons about how to work with people that I still try to employ today.

I've never know someone with the kindness, respect, and generosity that he shared with everyone from students to faculty to complete strangers.

Thank you, Don, for everything you brought to this world.

Ryan Kirk '03



Ryan Kirk - December 01, 2021 at 11:49 AM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Don Drapeau.



November 30, 2021 at 10:05 PM

KH

“ Three memories (of many):

Summer Orientation, I was an undeclared major and I ran into Tim Booth (who I had done a Governor's School with in high school) and who says, "I am meeting with Mr. Drapeau," (because we didn't know yet that he was "Don"), "come with me." I walk from Squires to PAB, sit in Don's office, and an hour later come out a signed Theatre Major. Thank you Don for giving me the gift of amazing memories and continuing friendships.

Don and Libby's famous graduation cocktail party- you heard about it, you couldn't wait until it was your turn to go, and if you were really lucky you got to bartend as an underclassman. I loved that night.

2014 VA Tech Reunion. I sat down for a bit to talk to Don at the dinner. He said that every summer when they went to the beach in NC, he always took a card that had my info on it, because he knew that I had moved there-and that he always thought he'd look me up. We never connected there, but for some reason his telling me that story that night just made me incredibly happy and made me feel incredibly special-in the amazing way he was able to make everyone around him feel.

Kristina Kiracofe Harwood -'90



Kristina Kiracofe Harwood - November 29, 2021 at 05:43 PM

ES

“One must wait until evening to see how splendid the day has been.”

Sophocles, Antigone.

Since 1972, Don has been a colleague and friend. His contributions to the Arts at VT cannot be numbered—from the founding of the Department of Performing Arts & Communications in the early 1970s through the development of the Lyric and the Moss Arts Center, plus his contributions in so many other university and civic organizations.

Libby, my thoughts are you with you in your loss.

Edd Sewell

Edd Sewell - November 29, 2021 at 05:19 PM

KS

“Don covered all the bases for the qualities of being a great human being. He was a teacher, mentor, friend, artist, husband, father, and most of all a very kind and generous man. His passion was to live a great life and enjoy every minute of it!!!”

Ken and Pam Stofferahn

Ken Stofferahn - November 29, 2021 at 03:21 PM

JC

“I had the at once raucous and refined privilege in the mid-1970s of playing poker with Don Drapeau and Tony Distler at the Distler manse. There were no poker players there, not even one, but you'd ante up just to see who'd out-entertain the others while a hand was in play. Don usually won and nobody ever counted the loose change anyway. No doubt he and Tony have a game together again already.”

Jeff Clare

Charlotte NC

Jeff Clare - November 28, 2021 at 06:04 PM

WF

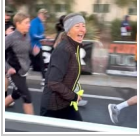
“ From the first note of "Misty," which Don Drapeau sang to my sister, Libby, after being "pinned," I knew that he would become my brother-in-law! I was certain after she convinced me to write a letter of permission to High Point College for her to go on spring break with him, without our mother (Ruby) ever knowing! He became a most loved member of our family with many fond memories such as shoveling our way out of the snow on Eheart Street to get to Kannapolis for Christmas. Lending a hand to put together a kitchen set from Santa for his niece, Ashley, turned into an "all-nighter" event with the help of a little scotch. Don was almost always ready to eat his meal as the rest of the family was finishing up, and he was skilled at crafting his turkey, dressing, and cranberry sandwich with the leftovers! Most of all, I will never forget his greeting of "Onda" with a big hug and kiss! We will miss you, Uncle Don, and we hope that you and Ruby are enjoying some coconut cake and singing beautiful songs together in heaven. Love, Wanda Freeland

Wanda Freeland - November 28, 2021 at 02:29 PM



“ *'Pickle Man' (a term of endearment coined by 2 year old Terry) - you were part of my journey to become a Hokie, something I didn't fully appreciate until years later. In the decades that I've known you, you have championed the space I was in at whatever moment that was. You and Libby. In the haze of my grad school days, what stands out is how you helped all of us understand the value and importance of Ensemble in whatever we do - contributing together with a common goal to create something really special. That each of us had a role to play. To appreciate all the other roles that contribute to the greater whole. That none of us is as good as all of us. Imagine my surprise in another workplace setting when being introduced to a 'new way' of getting work done together - collaboratively as a team. Well goodness, that is how it was done at TA-UT. You made us all better wherever we landed past our degrees. Thank you D.A.D. What a wonderful run of show.*

Laura Wedin '84 - November 28, 2021 at 09:47 AM



“ *Don was so generous with his students. I entered the Arts Management program right out of undergrad. My writing skills were not up to snuff, so Dan worked with me before the sun came up and his regular work day started. He did this for a year. It wasn't a class he was teaching, it was just his unstinting generosity with his students.*

Through his tutelage and lots of early morning discussions we discovered that Don and my mother went to High School together in Ansonia. It really is a small world. Don will always have my gratitude and appreciation for all he did for me.

My deepest condolences and sympathies to all he leaves behind and more specifically to his family who he cherished.

Eileen Rubelmann

Eileen Rubelmann - November 27, 2021 at 08:59 PM

DF

“ *Debbie Glossbrenner Francis lit a candle in memory of Don Drapeau*



Debbie Glossbrenner Francis - November 27, 2021 at 06:20 PM

LO

“ D.A.D. It's the first thing I remember seeing on my TA-UT VPI & SU acceptance letter in 1982, that signature. Too many great memories to count, but I remember him as the captain of a wonderful family cruise ship. As my advisor Don said, seeing my ambition to major in theatre and teach English and drama, "You know, it costs the same to take 19 credits as it does for 12, and I think you can handle 19." And every quarter I was a student, I took at least 16 but almost always 18 credits and often a one-hour credit lab in some fabulous area of technical theater. And I could handle it. When Don taught History of Theatre, Richard Rauscher, Chris Kelly, and I used to "decorate" room 204 by quarterly "theme," our triumph being "City Donny-I-See-Ya," followed by a spring quarter that took our professor on adventures that began by him (and the class) following a note, where he'd find his lectern at, say, the Chapel, or on a hill near Gillie's. Don always showed up as if nothing out of the ordinary had occurred. Life was theater, theater was life, and he loved it. And we loved him. Love and condolences to Libby and family.
Lisa O'Hara, Class of '86



Lisa O'Hara - November 27, 2021 at 01:10 PM

SS

“ What a remarkable guy; a visionary who helped bring our University to new levels in theatre arts!

Sharon Scott - November 27, 2021 at 12:16 PM

JH

“ Over the 51 years of our friendship, dear Don (and Lib) came to my rescue countless times in ways great and small. Always cheerful, kind, generous, and funny, he brought light to our lives.

Jean Haskell - November 27, 2021 at 11:04 AM

JW

“ Jack And Wanda lit a candle in memory of Don Drapeau



Jack and Wanda - November 27, 2021 at 11:02 AM

MS

“ Don was a DAD to me in my first job at VT, when I was 26. I made a lot of mistakes as a first-time teacher (and probably for too long afterwards), and Don was so patient with me. He taught me a lot about myself -- life lessons, really. He modelled how to live a glorious life -- how to love and be loved by family and friends. How to enjoy life, to live every day fully. Theatre, for Don, was always a HUGE part of that pleasure. I recall coming into his office one day, overwhelmed by all I was doing and had to do. He pointed at the phone on his desk and asked "What color is that phone"? A bit discombobulated, I answered, "Black?!?" And he replied, "Yes. The point is -- it's not red. We don't have to call Moscow. We're not responsible for the nuclear codes. We do plays here. Relax." Beyond becoming my mentor for a job I thought I'd never have (Chair), he was such a talented designer (Snow Pressings -- stunning), and I still recommend his book *Hi-Concept/Low Tech* to all of my directing students in the Theatre Education program. He was such a good man, a family man, honest and true, fun and fun-loving, and he showed us all what life could be if we all practiced radical kindness in the world. The Union Lamp burns forever in your memory, Don. I'm so grateful to have known you.

Maureen Shea

Maureen Shea - November 27, 2021 at 10:50 AM

WS

“ Actually did meet Don and Libby at a "cast party" in April, 1970, at the Distler Farm. That wonderful moment and friendship lasted 51 years. A shared life of fun, travel, single-malt scotch, fine food and love. So many out there have been touched by Don's magic. I cherished our profound friendship. Wayne Speer-



Wayne Speer - November 27, 2021 at 07:19 AM

CW

“ He was a wonderful man. Memories that will never leave me... as a costume designer I always wanted to “switch up” his daily khaki pants, blue button down and blazer. Loved his monogrammed briefcase with DAD on it. And to all that graduated in the 90’s, having our own graduation in the theatre, him handing us our diplomas and his speech. “ House to half...”. We will miss you! ❤️

Cathy Woerner - November 26, 2021 at 11:24 PM

DK

“ He had an enormous impact on the world, one person at a time. I count myself fortunate to have known him and worked with him. He can be described many ways, but there was only one Don, and his passion and love of theatre and life inspired me and I know many others. My condolences to you, Libby, and your family. Such a beautiful man. --
Deb Kinghorn



Deb Kinghorn - November 26, 2021 at 09:37 PM

DJ

“ There may have been somewhere in the world a wiser, kinder, gentler, more compassionate loving man than Don Drapeau, but I never met him. He did so much for me and I miss him deeply.

David Johnson
Friend
Colleague
Fellow Traveller
Lesson Taker

David Johnson - November 26, 2021 at 08:35 PM

TF

“ Don was my roommate at HPC in 1961. One night he told me there was a girl that didn't have a date for a play cast party. He felt sorry for the girl and asked me to be her date. After much discussion, I agreed. I have been living with that girl for the past 59 years.
THANK YOU DON !

Tom Ferguson

Tom Ferguson - November 26, 2021 at 08:08 PM

WS

“ Wayne Sloss lit a candle in memory of Don Drapeau



Wayne Sloss - November 26, 2021 at 07:59 PM

JK

“ The best memory I have of Don is that he was a true gentleman. I enjoyed our years together at High Point in the fraternity together. We are offering prayers for Libby and all of his family

Jerry Koontz

Jerry Koontz - November 26, 2021 at 06:11 PM

JB

“ Great, talented , friend and Fraternity brother. I am sure that he brought some great moments to folks with his skills and teaching. Prayers for Libby and the family. he will be missed by many.

JIM BOYLES - November 26, 2021 at 05:33 PM

MW

“ *It's the day after Thanksgiving. Can we sing Christmas carols now?*



Mary Winfrey - November 26, 2021 at 05:30 PM

KD

“ *I'll always remember the theater trip to Greece, Italy, and Switzerland. The one thing that stands out to me was Don and Libby's love. They acted like two people newly in love. Always walking hand and hand and even hiking hands while relaxing on lounge chairs 😊 It was a relationship I hoped I could have, even after decades of marriage. He shared his passion for travel, history, food, and culture with us all on this trip. And the trip, as well as my entire college experience was enriched by him. He gave me some advice right before graduation that is always on my mind. Sending love and condolences to your family 🌸*

Karin (Cheves) Davis - November 26, 2021 at 05:25 PM

AM

“ *Ashley Freeland Miller lit a candle in memory of Don Drapeau*



Ashley Freeland Miller - November 26, 2021 at 03:57 PM

BC

“ He was the true definition of a gentleman and a scholar—or perhaps more accurately a riotously funny and loving and wise gentleman and a scholar. Who else would ensure there was time for a football pool at faculty meetings? Say “If we console ourselves in the theater by saying relax it isn’t brain surgery, do you think brain surgeons say relax it isn’t theater? Arrange a surprise party for Tony Distler and time it so that he was caught wrapped in a bath towel? Truly one of the kindest and most generous of people I have ever met—and watching how he lit up whenever Lib was in the room always took my breath away a bit. Thinking of the entire family in this moment.

ben cameron - November 26, 2021 at 03:10 PM



“ What a wonderful and kind man. Thanks for everything. And to Don's family, thanks for letting your Dad be our DAD for so long.

Jennifer Ray - November 26, 2021 at 03:05 PM

DB

“ Duane Becker lit a candle in memory of Don Drapeau



Duane Becker - November 26, 2021 at 02:21 PM

DD

“ Donna Dunagan lit a candle in memory of Don Drapeau



Donna Dunagan - November 26, 2021 at 01:17 PM

LG

“ Don treated his students the way he imagined a parent would want them to be treated. His manner with us was firm, cajoling, respectful and friendly. The key lesson under all the instruction in every subject that he taught was the universality of theatre in all cultures, all periods, all places—humans always told stories. To do so, they used all the art forms. Don believed in the power of theatre to make each of us better at what we did, no matter what that turned out to be.

He taught me that every job and task in the creation of theatre was as vital to its success as any other. He respected all the parts played — whether stagehand, usher, director, designer, character actor or star — and he made sure we all tried our skills in each role.

Don was the sweetest, kindest person. He had a deep and abiding sense of the human comedy and he always knew when to offer an encouraging word to get one of us or another over a rough patch. It was easy to assign him the nickname “D.A.D.”

Don’s family was also our family at school. We share the heartbreak of Libby, Dana and Danielle and offer our humble gratitude to them for the gift of Don’s love. We mourn his passing with them while we celebrate the great gift of his life.

Leila Gordon - November 26, 2021 at 12:00 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Don Drapeau.*



November 26, 2021 at 11:48 AM



“ *Don was a good man. He always made an entrance and an exit. He dressed the part and we are thankful to have spent sometime on this stage with him. Much love! Rob & Scott*



Rob Warren - November 26, 2021 at 11:46 AM

KS

“ *PERFORMANCE CRITIC: This life was well done and “Did He Have Passion” is one of the best scripts of the year!*

Not all knew of Don’s many honors and contributions, but they were considerable and made a difference on this life stage.

What these critics loved most about the main character-Don-was his inclusion of all. He knew how to celebrate life and made the most of every moment with anyone around him. We loved his love for VT and shared his love for theatre! The main stage will not be the same without him.

Well done, Don. Well done!

Kathy, Jerry, Camden and Cooper Speight

Kathy Speight - November 26, 2021 at 10:51 AM

HB

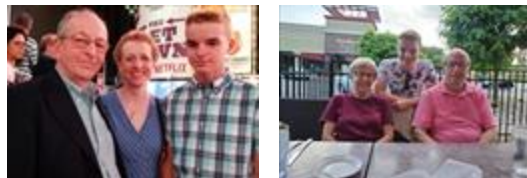
“ 3 files added to the album *Memories Album*



Hayden Brown - November 26, 2021 at 10:45 AM

LD

“ 2 files added to the album *Memories Album*



Libby Drapeau - November 26, 2021 at 10:40 AM

LD

“ *Libby Drapeau lit a candle in memory of Don Drapeau*



Libby Drapeau - November 26, 2021 at 10:39 AM



Libby, I am heartbroken to hear of Don's passing. Always a joy to be around.

Debi McCoy - November 26, 2021 at 06:16 PM

HB

“ *Hayden Brown lit a candle in memory of Don Drapeau*



Hayden Brown - November 26, 2021 at 10:38 AM