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A Celebration of Life!

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Biography



*Donald DeVries
Shipley*

OUR FRIEND DON...

Today we celebrate the life of Donald DeVries Shipley — a Connecticut Yankee who chose to make the City of Huntington Beach his home. He will be remembered as a very unique individual whose brilliance and zeal were balanced by a genuine caring for others.

Don was born in Stamford, Connecticut on October 26, 1913, to Stanley and Florence Shipley. His father was a chemist and a field botanist. His mother was a 1904 graduate of Radcliffe University and was a classmate of Helen Keller. Don had two brothers — Norman and Angus.

Don's biological interests were evident at an early age and he was encouraged by his parents as well as his grandmother Mary Livingstone MacMillan. He attended Rice Elementary School and Stamford High School and he always gave credit to two teachers (one at each school) for the encouragement they gave him.

Don graduated from the University of Connecticut in 1939. He assisted in studies of various animals in order to pay some of his college costs. A graduate fellowship made it possible for him to enter the graduate school of Virginia Polytechnic Institute at Blacksburg, Virginia, where he received his M.S. degree. He was then given an appointment in the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

For four years — from 1942 to 1946 — Don served as a Medical Laboratory officer in the Sanitary Corps of the U.S. Army. While in the service, Don saw the coast of southern Calif., including the Bolsa Chica Wetlands, and made his first visit to Huntington Beach. Upon his discharge from the service, he was again employed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

From 1948 to 1951, Don was Assistant Professor of Biology at Lynchburg College and in 1951 he entered the graduate program at Cornell University and earned his Ph.D. degree in 1953.

In 1953, Don joined the Biology Dept. of Calif. State Univ. at Long Beach and was a professor there until his retirement in 1976. He encouraged many young people during his tenure. Don was involved in many campus activities including service as advisor to the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity for 18 years. "Conservation of our Natural Resources" and "Man and the Environment" were well attended. It was a known fact that you had to pay strict attention in order not to miss a wealth of information as well as some humor. Don had a rare gift for phraseology and a quick wit.

In 1954, Don purchased his home on Main Street in Huntington Beach and invited his wheelchair-bound mother, who suffered from multiple sclerosis, to live with him. Don loved his mother very much and made certain that she continued to enjoy life. Although he had a very busy schedule, he took his mother on outings and invited people to his home so she could participate in some stimulating conversation. He also entertained her with his accomplished piano playing.

In 1957, Don received the coveted Merit Award by the Calif. Conservation Council for his contributions to Conservation Education.

In 1962, Don was appointed to a citizen's advisory committee to study the Recreation, Park, Library, and Cultural needs of the City of Huntington Beach. He

considered this very important. The committee report written by Don was presented to City Council. The master planning and development of parks, strong recreation programming, and the construction of a new central library are just a few of the recommendations later approved by City Council.

In 1963, Don was appointed to the H.B. Recreation and Parks Commission. He served only one year because in 1964 he was elected to the H.B. City Council. His platform was "Save the Trees." He served three four-year terms and was Mayor during four of those years. He never accepted any contributions to finance his campaigns, but paid for them out of his own pocket! His honesty and integrity were never questioned.

In 1966, Don was honored to be the recipient of the first Man of the Year Award in Huntington Beach for distinguished achievement and leadership.

In Jan., 1969, a People for Parks Committee was formed with Don acting as liaison to the City Council. Through the efforts of many dedicated individuals, a six million dollar park bond was approved by the voters on November 5, 1968. Don's dream of a central park in Huntington Beach was on the way to becoming a reality. Huntington Central Park was officially dedicated on June 15, 1974, and the Nature Center was named in his honor.

Don continued to work diligently to improve the quality of life for all residents. The dedication of Huntington Central Library on April 5, 1975, saw another of Don's dreams come true.

When Don's term on the Council ended in 1976, he did not seek reelection. He was pleased with the great strides which had been taken during his time on the Council and stated that he would continue to be concerned about "our great city."

With less time constraints, Don was able to travel extensively. He had a love of ships and trains, a sincere desire to meet the peoples throughout the world, and a continued quest for knowledge.

He took countless slides and shared his experiences with many groups and individuals. He also wrote a travel column for a local newspaper. In his travels on the S.S. Rotterdam, he made many friends among the passengers and enjoyed a warm relationship with the crew. In 1980, Don sponsored Rudy, one of the Indonesian crew members, so that he could get an education in order to better himself. He has lived in Don's home and was treated like a son.

In 1981, Don was appointed to the H.B. Library Board and he continued to lend his expertise in that area. He strongly supported the addition of a children's wing. The matter came before the City Council while he was in the hospital. Inasmuch as he was too ill to attend, he dictated a letter which was read by a former mayor. The approval by the Council brightened his day. Although Don will not be here for the dedication of the children's library, a memorial fund has been set up in his name.

Don was very family oriented. He made it a point to keep in contact with his brothers and their families, visiting them whenever possible. His brother Norman, wife Nancy and children Nancy, Norman, and Becky lived in Marietta, Georgia, and his brother Angus, wife Polly, and children Donald, Elizabeth, and Susan lived in Los Altos, California. He was vitally interested in each family member.

Don was raised in the First Congregational Church of Stamford, Connecticut, and it made a lasting impression upon him. On March 29, 1972, he became a member of the

First Christian Church in Huntington Beach and served faithfully as an usher. He had a true love of people and his compassionate nature was evident in his concern for the welfare of others. You could always count on him to visit friends who were ill whether they were in the hospital or at home.

Don had a deep reverence for the Lord's handiwork. He marvelled at the beauties of nature and frequently viewed a sunrise or a sunset from the H.B. Pier. He also spent countless hours in the Bolsa Chica marsh viewing the many species of birds which migrate there.

Don made a lasting impression on all who knew him and he will be greatly missed. He touched the lives of many while he lived and he has improved the quality of life for untold individuals for decades to come. We truly celebrate the life of Dr. Donald DeVries Shipley!

'As for us, our life is like grass. We grow and flourish like a wild flower; then the wind blows on it, and it is gone —no one sees it again. But for those who honor the Lord, His love lasts forever, and His goodness endures for all generations of those who are true to His covenant and who faithfully obey His commands.'

Psalms 103:15-18



Committed To Service

Don Shipley unselfishly gave of his time and effort on behalf of others on a regular basis. He assisted groups as well as individuals. A few of his involvements are listed below.

- A founding trustee of the Orange County-San Diego County Nature Conservancy.
- A member of the Conservation Comm. of the Sierra Club, Angeles Chapter.
- A member of the Conservation Committee of the So. Calif. Academy of Science.
- Director of the Association of Outdoor Education.
- Elected an Associate of the American Ornithologists Union.
- An active member of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity.
- A member of Phi Kappa Phi, National Honorary Scholastic Society.
- Director of West Orange County Water Board.
- Founder and first President of Huntington Beach Community Concert Association.
- Director of Orange County Sanitation District.
- Chairman of Pacifica District Eagle Scout Review.
- Director of West Orange County United Way Board.
- Chairman of Santa Ana River Study Committee.
- Advisor to Freshman Class at Calif. State Univ. at Long Beach.
- Faculty Advisor to Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity.
- Advisor to Biology and Sailing Clubs at Calif. State Univ. at L.B.
- Gave hundreds of talks before groups on Conservation and Wildlife subjects.
- Walked untold miles distributing tens of thousands of brochures and flyers door-to-door on behalf of candidates and worthwhile causes.
- Shared his enthusiasm for the Bolsa Chica Wetlands as well as his expertise in the identification of birds with innumerable visitors.
- A founder of the grassroots environmental group Huntington Beach Tomorrow.

Service to His Great City

Don's service to the City of Huntington Beach was unlimited. Dates of his service and some of the projects supported are indicated below.

1962 Was appointed to Committee to study the Recreation, Parks, Library and Cultural needs of the City of H.B.

1963-64 Member of Recreation and Parks Commission

1964-76 Member of City Council

1964-66 Elected Mayor of Huntington Beach. Gave first State of the City address.

1966 Elected Mayor Pro Tem of Huntington Beach.

1967 Elected Mayor of Huntington Beach.

1970 Elected Mayor of Huntington Beach.

1981-Present Member of H.B. Library Board.

Officiated at the ground breaking of Golden West College and gave their first commencement address.

Officiated at many important groundbreakings including the Huntington Beach Central Library, the Huntington Center Mall, Seacliff Country Club and Golf Course, and Edison High School.

Advocated and supported a strong parks system.

Strongly supported the purchase and development of Huntington Central Park.

Strongly supported the construction of a central library.

Strongly supported the retention of the Bolsa Chica Wetlands.

Supported the restoration of the Newland House.

Strongly supported the addition of a Children's Library wing.

Brilliant and Dedicated

Summers during high school, worked in Trailside Museum Program in Harriman Park Interstate. Served as camp counselor.

1941 Appointment in U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service as a Jr. Biologist.

1941 Appointment in U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to serve on the scientific staff of U.S. Alaska Fur Seal Investigation. This 3-year expedition ended in 1942 due to entry of the U.S. in World War II.

1942-46 Served as a Medical Laboratory Officer in U.S. Army Medical Department.

1946 Served as Marine Biologist for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Assigned to Milford, Connecticut, Fishery Biology Laboratory.

1948-51 Assistant Professor at Lynchburg College, Lynchburg, Virginia. Taught Conservation and Ornithology.

1951 Director of Virginia Junior Academy of Science.

1953-76 Professor of Biology at Calif. State Univ. at Long Beach.

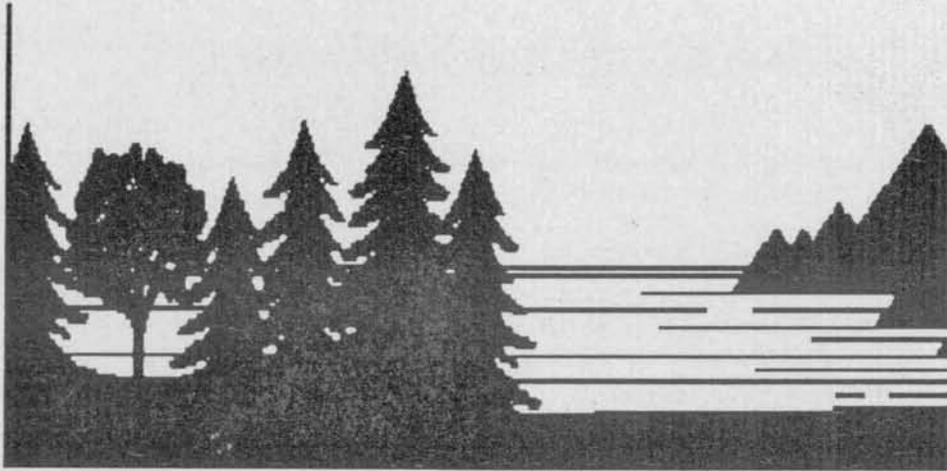
Summers

1954-60 Director of Idyllwild School of Conservation and Natural Science. This school was operated jointly by the University of So. Calif. and Calif. State Univ. at L.B.

1961 Director of the School of Conservation and Natural Science at the Univ. of Calif. at Santa Barbara.

'Die when I may, I want it said of me by those who knew me best, that I always plucked a thistle and planted a flower where I thought a flower would grow.'

Abraham Lincoln



His Words Linger On

An excerpt from a speech given by Don not only expresses his thoughts concerning the Bolsa Chica marsh, but also demonstrates a rare talent for making a point.

'We sleepwalk through our environment. Most of us are totally unaware of how little of our natural environment now remains in coastal southern California. Money and powerful interests cannot see or tolerate the idea of a natural marsh. They consider such to be a notion of 'hair-brained environmentalists.' I submit that man may need some natural areas in his human environment much more than does our depleted wildlife. I do not accept the philosophy 'If you cannot buy it, develop it, eat it, blow it up, drain it, or put it into orbit, it has no value.'



DONALD D. SHIPLEY MEMORIAL FUND

Huntington Beach Library
7111 Talbert Avenue
Huntington Beach, CA 92648

Make checks payable to Huntington Beach Library
All donations will go toward new children's wing.