



David Ryan Donaldson

April 29, 1954 - January 3, 2022

David Ryan Donaldson passed away peacefully at his home in Fayetteville, AR, on January 3, 2022.

A creative at heart, Ryan's life reflected family-hewn values and ideals. Influenced by the early art lessons his mother encouraged him in, his in-person experience of MLK's "I Have a Dream" speech on the Washington Mall at nine years old, his father's love of camping in nature, and his grandmother's delicious cooking, all formed the amazing person he would become.

Born in Memphis, TN, Ryan grew up in Jonesboro, AR and spent his mid-adult years in Seattle, WA, calling Fayetteville his home for the past 20 years. Ryan graduated from Jonesboro High School in 1972 and attended Arkansas State University for three years before leaving for a short stint at Krueger Printing Press in Jonesboro, helping produce many nationally scaled publications until 1978. Ryan's instinctive desire for new opportunities, experiences, and worldviews took him to Seattle, where he continued to work as a color specialist and production coordinator at various large print shops and cultivated his love of community through the arts.

Ryan enjoyed self-expression through his lifelong love of the arts, manifesting a prolific body of work in all his favorite mediums: pencil drawing; watercolor and gouache painting; glass blowing, fusing, slumping and lampworked glass beads; wood carving; photography; and mixed media compositions. Ryan's love for travel, learning, and art led him to spend time and make friends in Jamacia, Buzios, Brazil, and Murano, Italy.

A supporter of local food producers, the Fayetteville Farmers' Market, and the Ozark Slow Food organization. He was quietly generous with all his friends and family through funding, support and time. He often helped friends by subsidizing groceries, utility, or medical bills as needed, even helping with study for licensing exams, and above all else, enjoyed the art of sharing his curiosity, love of art, music, and his oversized listening ears. His loyalty, kindness, advice, quirky sense of humor and willingness to help whenever he

could were his gifts to this world.

Ryan was preceded in death by his mother, Martha Billie Donaldson, father, Thomas Henry Donaldson Jr., Grandfather, Thomas Henry Donaldson Sr., and Grandmother Marie Donaldson. He is survived by his brother Blake Donaldson, Great Aunt Mary Ann White (Herman), niece Mary Martha Donaldson (Taylor St. John) and nephew Max Donaldson (Mackenzie). Ryan also leaves behind a close group of friends who will all miss him fiercely. There will never be another like him.

A celebration of Ryan's life will be scheduled for some time this April.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks you to consider donating to the Northwest Arkansas Food Bank: <https://www.nwafoodbank.org/>

Tribute Wall



“ Ryan,
You were a wonderful and caring Neighbor, so giving of your time and yourself. You mowed our lawn when Tiny was in the hospital, and our ditch for a long time, you were afraid we would fall. You picked Tiny up off the floor when he fell, after his stroke, and helped me get him off the mower after he mowed. You will be missed by many.
Glennis Shackelford

Glennis Turner-Shackelford - January 16 at 02:31 PM

RG

“ Ryan, if I could thank you for what you were in my life, I would thank you for our time spent in high school when I felt that you were someone that I wanted to remain friends with. We went to different colleges, then we worked at Krueger in Jonesboro, you in the pre-press work as you would continue with periodically rest of your life, and me in the bindery. Later after NYC, I was in Jonesboro/Memphis and you offered me the option of coming to Seattle and staying with you. I departed Jonesboro at 8:08 on the Eighth Day of August in 1988. I was there for a year and we had a good time hanging out in that beautiful area. You introduced me to some of the coolest people. The 90s were Atlanta for me but we would still meet in Arkansas. Since your moving to Fayetteville, I have enjoyed our twice a year visits.
I will always remember repeatedly standing in awe in front of one of the large number of your watercolors. These were pieces that I could tell had so much focus carefully brushed onto the page, dream stuff, and we would talk about it until late in the night.
Then glass, thanks for showing me how you worked the glass in the fire, it had a lot in common with watercolor, again light is everything.
I really enjoyed our journey with the Macintosh. Since 1988 our self-teaching was at a similar pace, so we could show each other tricks and cool things that we had done. I want to thank you for forever expanding my concept and awareness of music, foreign and domestic. Your acts of meaningful generosity were often insightful to me, as I may not have seen the opportunities that you did. Fifty years is long time to have a friend. I am truly going to miss you, like Wayne told me when I left Jonesboro, “I’ll miss you like a tooth.”



Random Gott - January 15 at 07:15 PM