



Mr. Douglas "Doug" Dornan

September 19, 1945 - January 25, 2020

Douglas (Doug) Dornan, 74, passed away peacefully in Pittsfield, Massachusetts on Jan. 25, 2020. He was born on September 19, 1945 in Glens Falls, New York.

Doug earned his Bachelor's degree at Niagara University, where he was president of the student council. He then earned a Master's degree in Social Work from Columbia University, where he was very active in the anti-Vietnam war protests, eventually occupying university administration buildings.

His career took many turns but the common thread is that he sought to consistently make a difference for those who were vulnerable and often unheard. He was an early advocate for the civil rights for those with disabilities, demanding that each person be treated with respect and dignity. He worked as a community organizer in Coney Island and the South Bronx areas of New York City in the 1970s. In the 1980s he served as the Executive Director of the AIDS Resource Center fighting homelessness among men living with AIDS and was pivotal in founding the first supportive housing for AIDS patients in the nation. In the 1990s he served as the Executive Director of the New York State Conference of Mental Hygiene Directors where he led a campaign that generated landmark legislation earmarking funds from the closing of state psychiatric institutions to fund the large-scale expansion of county and local mental health services across the state. As a research scientist for the New York State Department of Mental Health, he focused on the factors influencing mental health recovery.

Doug brought the same passion and zest to his life outside of work. He was an avid Yankees fan and a loyal, though frequently disappointed, Knicks fan. He loved thoroughbred horse racing and was ever-optimistic and surprisingly successful with his occasional horse-betting. Spending a day at the Saratoga Springs race track was one of his favorite summer pastimes. He loved folk, jazz, and blues music and welcomed any opportunity to sing. Woodie Guthrie was especially dear to him. He was trained as a carpenter and had a deep appreciation of fine woodworking. He was well-read and intellectually curious, with deep knowledge of current events and politics.

Doug's life story is one of bravery and dignity often in the face of tremendous adversity. As a survivor of child abuse, buffeted among multiple foster homes, he worked from age 10 as a paid farm hand to earn room and board. He put himself through college. He lived his entire adult life with mental illness that both fueled his brilliance and professional accomplishments but also fractured many relationships in his life. In spite of his challenges, he touched the lives of many who cared for him very deeply.

He is survived by his daughter, Devon Winey, son-in-law, Jeff Winey, and grand-daughters Emma and Abigail Winey, of Melrose, MA. He is also survived by many siblings including Joyce (David) Wilbourn of MA, Barbara Merriman of NY, Claudette Leach of FL, and Terry (Gene) Thibault of FL, Bonnie Brown of Flint MI, and Greg Brown of CA. He is predeceased siblings Deanna Herrod of AL, Beverly Graham of CA. and Patricia Sargent of FL.

A private memorial service will be held at a later date. Nothing would make Doug happier than to see a change in our current political environment. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Movement Voter Project, an organization supporting grassroots organizing in swing states in the 2020 election, <https://movement.vote/funds/big-5-battleground-fund>.

Comments



“ Doug was a beloved friend and mentor. His brilliant political mind and creative activism was a spark in our lives as we fought against the Viet Nam War and our fierce struggle to close Willowbrook State School in Staten Island and organize a paradigmatic hospital workers union across local, state and federal jurisdictions connected to the US Public Health Hospital in Staten Island. His hand was in the raising of our twins when they were born and as a pivotal member of the Frantz Fanon Collective. There are some souls whose loving lives transform everything around them. Doug was such a force. devotedly, bill bronston,MD

william bronston - February 04, 2020 at 04:00 PM



“ Linda lit a candle in memory of Mr. Douglas "Doug" Dornan



linda - January 31, 2020 at 09:43 PM



“ So very sorry to hear of Doug's passing. I meet Doug @ Springside NH as my Mom is also a resident there. He was always very polite. I didn't discuss baseball with him, as I am a Red Sox fan. My best memory of Doug is in music where Marty had given Doug a black hat just like the one he wears. & Marty would always dedicate Doug's favorite song to him - Somewhere over the Rainbow. & Doug would sing along. Whenever I hear that song in the future, I'll think of him . RIP my friend.

Susan Koldys - January 31, 2020 at 09:42 PM



“ I was there when Doug started as a foster child on the farm, we were really, really close. I remember him being an avid reader, he went to bed reading a book every night. We remained close through high school but unfortunately lost touch when he went to college. My memories of Doug are such happy memories. Irvin LeBarron

irvin lebarron - January 29, 2020 at 01:02 PM