



Mr. Daniel O'Connell

August 24, 1949 - March 13, 2021

Mr. Daniel “Dan” O’Connell, 71, of Pittsfield, passed away on Saturday, March 13, 2021. Born in Springfield, MA, on August 24, 1949, the son of Daniel and A. Mildred Moylan O’Connell, he graduated from St. Joseph High School and later earned his master’s degree in painting from the University of Iowa.

Dan was a vibrant artistic force in Pittsfield, creating public works of art and helping elevate our community into “Brooklyn of the Berkshires.” The murals you see around our city are a tribute to his love and appreciation of his lifelong home. His service to our community extended beyond aesthetics, as he developed artistic programs for seniors; served as a leader on, among others, the Pittsfield Mayor’s First Night Commission, the Massachusetts Governor’s Task Force on Community Education, the Public Cable Television Commission, the Boys’ and Girls’ Club of Pittsfield, and Artscape; and founded the Black Cultural Center in 1992. His joyful advocacy brought music, theater, visual art, and creative accessibility to everyone he could reach, and he was committed to reaching everyone he could.

Generous of his gifts, time, and humor, Dan was active with Meals on Wheels and an informal entertainer to all those around him. Uncle Danny, or UD, was beloved by all of his nieces and nephews, and he loved them even more in return, through his quiet, good-humored, and constant support.

Daniel is survived by his two sisters, Mary Gregory (Fort Pierce, FL) and Ann Kavanagh (Staatsburg, NY), as well as his devoted and beloved Afghan, Moylan (a Very Good Girl). He will be missed by his nephew, nieces, grand

nieces and nephews, cousins and many friends.

Dan was quoted in a 2017 iBerkshires.com article: “Art is about trust. It’s about the ambiance you create in the space. It’s a safe haven, whether you’re throwing a pot, or working in the darkroom at night, playing the piano or painting in a studio.” His family and community are grateful for all the safe space and beauty he brought to our lives.

Funeral Notice:

Funeral services for Mr. Daniel “Dan” M. O’Connell will be private. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to “mural restoration of his work” in care of the Dwyer Funeral Home, 776 North Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201 Donations CANNOT be made online, but may be made through the Dwyer Funeral Home.

Tribute Wall

JA

“ I just learned painfully of Dan O's passing on March 13. His sister Mary was kind enough to send me a sweet note from FL. The last time we talked, Dan O' and I, he was in the hospital, recovering he said from COVID, expecting to be released in a couple of weeks. I'd been worried for months not being able to reach him by e-mail, phone or snail mail. He never missed my birthday or Christmas. It was so unlike him. I always called him Dan O' and he called me Jacki O' even though my last name did not begin with the letter "O!" When we first met and dated, he really thought my last name was similar to his. But I'd just use that to kid around with him (a reference to Jaqueline O'nassis). When he knew the truth, he still referred to me as Jacki O'. He was cute like that. His last words to me were about us, how he missed me, Moylan missed me (as Boo-Boo had previously before passing away) and how he loved me. We had a long, loving relationship, sparked with disagreement as any Irishman and Scottish girl would have. We always came back to the middle and never gave up. He was a passionate man in his art and his feelings. Loving an Irish artist is never easy. There were many rocky paths among our rose garden. But he never wavered. He believed wholeheartedly in one day as did I. God had plans for us and didn't bring us together for nothing. Sadly, those plans now rest between God and Dan O' in a place where his art and the world around him is one continuously vivid exhibition of art. He'll love that. Being able to spend all the time in the world on his art without any of the physical limitations this world here imposed on him. I will miss his laugh, the twinkle in his eyes, the low tone of his voice and his wonderful bear hugs! I teased him he was my Irish Bear. He always will be, too. Thank you Dan O' for leaving this world so much better for what you shared with us who knew you well. I'm sorry for myself that we won't have those walks around the lake anymore. But you'll be at peace with so much inspiration and artistic company up there. And so many stories and laughter to share with your new company. Until we meet again, May God keep you in the palm of His hand.
Love, Jacki O.

Jacki - April 11, 2021 at 03:15 PM

DC

“ Dan was a classmate of mine at St. Joseph High School and a teammate on the football team as well. In the times that I have seen him since he was never without a smile and a light hearted laugh. He was a unique person and he will be greatly missed. I offer my most sincere sympathy to his family.

David Charbonneau - March 25, 2021 at 10:47 AM

MP

“ I first met Dan on North Street in the middle of a blizzard. I decided to put on my cross country skis and ski down North Street in the late hours with a Noreaster in full force...probably 1987. I saw a figure coming from the other direction on skis and it was Dan. We met in front of England Bros, right in the middle of North Street...chatted for a bit, and laughed at how silly the whole experience was. We remained close friends for a number of year. I regret having lost touch with Dan over the last 20 years...due to having left the area. But I have always admired Dan for his efforts to make Pittsfield a better place through art. He was way ahead of his time in his thinking that Pittsfield could offer its citizens so much through art...and that art could bring together diverse groups of the community. I remember his messy studio on lower North Street...his art openings at the Leichenstein Center, and the fierce passion that he exhibited to get his mural projects funded and implemented. Dan loved Pittsfield, and Pittsfield is a better place for his vision, innovation, and hard work....he will be missed.

Mark Pasquini

MARK PASQUINI - March 24, 2021 at 10:38 PM

JO

“ Dan was one of the first people I met when I moved to the Berkshires and his generosity made me feel I was in the right place. He helped me put on a concert at the Lichtenstein Center on Valentine's Day and his kindness in doing so is still remembered. My condolences to the O'Connell family. JoAnne Spies

JoAnne - March 23, 2021 at 11:28 PM

JC

“ The O'Connell family,
Dan was a good friend and classmate at St. Joe, many fond memories. We had many laughs. His murals are wonderful, we are very fortunate to be able to view them! I will be thinking of Dan every time I do! My thoughts and prayers for the O'Connell family.
Jack Clark

jack clark - March 23, 2021 at 10:13 AM

AK

“ Danny,
Emma and I will never forget you and the lovely Miss Moy.
Love,
Arlene

Arlene Kiesler - March 23, 2021 at 10:05 AM

PG

“ To Dan's Family,
Please accept our deepest prayers and condolences. Dan was a well known figure in Pittsfield. His artwork throughout the city has been appreciated by many. You can't help but think go Dan when you go by his work. We were on many committees, including First Night, for many years. Condolences.

Patrick & Marie Gormalley - March 23, 2021 at 09:05 AM

LS

“ *Ann & Mary...
I'm so sad to hear about Danny. We went to school together and graduated from St. Joe's. I remember you all from days at Clapp Park. Please accept my condolences...he is in my prayers. Lynne Shea*

Lynne Shea - March 21, 2021 at 01:03 PM

Jl

“ *Dan has done so much for me over the years. From his first Artisans next to the YMCA to the Litchenstein building, Dan could get the job done. The murals he created are inspirational.*

JimHorsford - March 21, 2021 at 08:08 AM