



Donald Anderson

April 6, 1919 - June 7, 2020

Donald B. Anderson, an oil and gas exploration executive, painter, and patron of the arts, died of natural causes peacefully at his home in Roswell on Sunday evening. He was 101 years old. Please take a moment and share a fond memory or thought with Don's family at www.andersonbethany.com.

Don Anderson was born on April 6, 1919, in Chicago, Illinois, the youngest son of Hugo and Hilda Anderson. After graduating from Purdue University with a degree in mechanical engineering, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy during World War II, rising to the rank of Lieutenant Commander of supply ships in the Caribbean and Pacific. After the war, Anderson came to New Mexico to work with his brother, Robert O. Anderson, on oil exploration with Malco Oil and Gas. He moved to Roswell in 1946 with his wife, Patricia Gaylord Anderson; there, they had three children, including his daughter Sarah Anderson, who survives him.

In 1963, Anderson established Anderson Oil Company, one of several ventures through which he undertook oil exploration in Alaska, Wyoming, and elsewhere. In between oil exploration, Anderson and his family explored the world on extensive travels around the globe, sailing in the Pacific, going on safari in Africa with Jane Goodall, or flying across Soviet Russia with his family, somewhat to the bemusement of locals who assumed they must be dignitaries, since foreign tourism was then unknown in Russia.

Don desired to live in a community with more artists, which led him to found the Roswell Artist-in-Residence program in 1967, a year-long grant that has so far offered more than 253 artists room to live and work in its 53 years of existence. His practice of buying works from artists on the grant led to an art collection so large that he ultimately created the Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art on East College Boulevard to display it.

Another local monument to his creative interests is The Henge, the massive sprayed-concrete structure that sits behind his home near Berrendo Road in northeastern Roswell. Designed by the artist Herb Goldman, the Henge is a three-story edifice that leads from underground rooms painted with murals to walkways and staircases leading up to doors

out to viewpoints at the very top of the building.

Although he tended to reject the name recognition and social status that accrue to art patrons, he amassed a number of significant awards, including the Governor's Award for Achievement in the Arts, New Mexico in 1984; The Skowhegan School Governors' Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Arts in 1990; and the National Governor's Association Award for Distinguished Service to the Arts in 2006.

Don never cared much about the monetary value of the works he collected; he delighted, instead, in the creative spirits that produced them. Himself self-taught as a painter, he gradually produced larger and larger canvases, and his work was displayed in a number of group and one-man shows around the country, including a brief stint of gallery representation in New York City. He ultimately decided that he preferred to paint for his own enjoyment, and stopped selling his work, except on special occasions. Many of his paintings are displayed in the Anderson Museum.

Pat Anderson died in 1978. In 1980, Anderson married Sally Midgette Anderson, the widow of an artist who had been on the Roswell grant a decade earlier. She survives him.

In addition to his wife and daughter (married to Ken Farnsworth), Anderson is survived by two stepchildren: Anne Midgette (Greg Sandow) and Dameron Midgette (Deb Midgette); five grandchildren, four stepgrandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

He was predeceased by his two sons: Donald Anderson Jr. and Joseph Anderson; and by his siblings: Hugo Anderson, Robert O. Anderson, and Helen Anderson-Cooney.

A memorial service for Don will be held at the Anderson Museum at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to the Roswell Artist in Residence Program, 409 East College Boulevard, Roswell, NM.

Don's tribute was beautifully written in his honor by his loving family.

Comments



“ Sally-I am so sorry-he was an amazing man and has left an amazing legacy....my sense of him when I visited you (with Becky shortly after Don, Jrs death) is that, although he was a man of few words, he was a shrewd judge of character. You came to our home on a visit to Becky's place once he was quite lively in what turned out to be a deep conversation....you could see his creativity in The Henge and the amazing design of your home which so beautifully showed so much wonderful art....he was an amazing man! am so sorry for your loss-Kris Wayne (a friend of Becky and Don's)

Kris Wayne - June 22 at 10:00 PM



“ ...R.I.P. Donald Anderson
Born: April 6, 1919 Died: June 7, 2020...yo'...Don wanted only for artists to explore their 'muse'...and live to be 100...he created in millions of ways...and for me ...'few' alias Fred a 'folk artist'...only a book and a movie of his life...could...illustrate this...true... legion of art in Roswell, New Mexico...and so it goes...sadly...the 'love campaign' will continue with Don's spirit alive and creating forevermore...xoxo

Helen Walters - June 09 at 05:43 PM



“ Sally, I send you my heartfelt condolences. Even though we don't see each other too often, I think about you often. May God give you the strength to go on without Don. You have always been such a strong person and I know that you will continue everything that you and Don started here in this town that will never forget how generous and kind you all have been.

Bernice Martinez - June 23 at 11:50 AM