



## Donald Eckert

August 30, 1949 - January 6, 2021

Donald James Eckert, age 71 of Dublin, passed away on January 6, 2021 at Kemper House in Worthington, Ohio where he had resided for most of 2020. He "fought the good fight" against Alzheimer's Disease and Cystic Fibrosis.

He was born on August 30, 1949 in Akron, Ohio and was the son of Dr. Joseph J. and Mary "Kay" Bouton Eckert. Both of his parents worked in the medical field; their career choices may have contributed to Don's interest in science. A proud member of the Akron Firestone HS Class of '67 he excelled in math and chemistry. A National Merit Scholarship finalist, he was in the top 1% of high school students nationwide. He enjoyed creating science fiction stories, participating in track and in the Latin Club. At that time, he was a member of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Akron.

He earned his B.S. in Psychology at Michigan State University and was active in the Tau Delta Phi social fraternity. He then pursued a Master's Degree in Psychology at the Ohio State University, partially funded by a National Institute of Health grant. Taking time to earn money for future graduate school, he worked at Ace Rubber in Akron, providing him an opportunity for reflection regarding his future. His love of the outdoors, coupled with his chemistry background led him to earn a Ph.D in Agronomy at OSU. He remained there for about 35 years first working with the Cooperative Extension Service throughout most of Ohio's 88 counties and progressing to teaching, research and administration. Initial focus was on soil fertility and no-till farming. He loved the interactions with students, advising the Agronomy Club and developing some solid relationships. His sense of humor served him well throughout his work life; work took him to most of the continental U.S., Europe, Africa and Australia. He was the Associate Chairman of the Agronomy Department and when it was absorbed into the School of Natural Resources, he served as their Assistant Director until his retirement.

He treasured his friends from graduate school: Jim Adams, Edd Gatliff and Marty Schmidt. He and Jim loved fishing and Frisch's Big Boy outings for many years and often took in baseball games. He cherished a life long friendship with Joel Kent of Worthington, bonding in the 4th grade in Akron. Fishing, fly tying, trains, travel, and gardening occupied his retirement. Many happy times were spent with dear friends Wendy and Tony Manfredi

of Lakewood, especially at Cleveland Indians baseball games. Particularly enjoyable was the time spent at the Ohio Wildlife Center nearby. His volunteer duties included caring for the raptors, helping the children at day camp and outreach with animal ambassadors. At Halloween events, he dressed up as a fox, which all ages enjoyed!

He was predeceased by his parents and a sister-in-law, Sharon Nall of Mayfield Hts, Ohio. He leaves behind his loving wife of 42 years, Holly Shumway Eckert, his brother Rick Eckert (wife Michelle) of Colorado Springs, CO, his brother Bill of Louisville, KY and special cousins Judy Marshall of FL and Chris and Dan Hurley of Gahanna, Ohio. His many rescue pets were much loved and will meet him at the Rainbow Bridge.

A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date with inurnment at the Rose Hill Cemetery in Akron, Ohio.

If desired, donations may be made to the Ohio Wildlife Center, 6131 Cook Road, Powell Ohio 43065 [www.ohiowildlifecenter.org](http://www.ohiowildlifecenter.org) or the Alzheimer's Association, 1379 Dublin Rd, Columbus, OH 43215.

Holly extends her appreciation to the caregivers at Kemper House of Worthington who enhanced his last year of life.

# Comments

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“ Don was a kind soul and always a good friend of my father, Jim Adams. I remember him accompanying us to baseball games, fishing trips, and even family holiday parties. Don was always kind to me and had an interesting sense of humor. He will be missed and I pray for Holly and the rest of his family and friends. Rest in peace, Don.

**Danny Adams** - February 18 at 05:19 PM

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“ Holly, we don't know each other but Jerry Bigham passed on the information of Don's passing and I am incorporating it into the Winter 2021 issue of the Association of Ohio Pedologists Newsletter so that the notice of his passing will reach even more of Ohio's Soil Scientists who may not know.

My memories of Don are of his great kindness and encouragement to all of the soils students. As a very old, non-traditional PhD Soil Science student who kept wondering why on earth I had been talked into going back to school, again, Don was one of the people that would stop me in the halls and tell me how proud he was of me for sticking out the years it took me to complete that PhD. Since I was working full time and raising my family, time for classes and study was always at a premium but he was definitely on my cheering team. He even talked OARDC into giving me a small grant so we could present our "cracks in dirt" research at a Midwest Ground Water Conference in Madison, Wisconsin one year, a trip that turned into a short "second honeymoon" for my husband Ed and myself. I'm sure he never knew how welcome that break was in our much too busy lives..

I was so sorry to learn of the reason for his passing. That is a hard way to go. Having cared for my husband Ed for 10 years as he slowly declined from Parkinson's I have an inkling of what you and the family went through. I am so thankful that we have a place like Kemper House here in Worthington to help us as our Baby Boomers age. Dementia is not an uncommon complication of the passing of our generation. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. Keep hold of the good memories and let the hard times go, they are passed.

**Julie Weatherington-Rice** - February 02 at 05:17 PM

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“ What I remember most about Don was his smile. He and Holly have been pet clients of mine for maybe 20 years. Each time he came into the office he had a big smile on his face and his gentle demeanor was felt by all who interacted with him. He loved his animals. His presence will be missed.  
Holly, my heartfelt sympathy's for your loss.



**Dawn Bookmyer** - January 30 at 04:28 PM

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“ Holly,  
My heart goes out to you and the family, I am so sorry to hear of Don's passing. As a neighbor on Moreland Drive, it was always a delight to spend time with you and Don. Seeing his enjoyment of the birds and bats at nightfall was a regular ritual! His appreciation for the natural world inspired me as a junior faculty member in Landscape Architecture, particularly on hearing of his stories of work in so many parts of the world.

You are in my heart and prayers. Hope we can someday reconnect. .

Always, Deborah Georg

**Deborah Georg** - January 22 at 02:41 PM

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“ Jo Ann and I send our condolences to Holly and the remainder of Don's family. We are so sorry for his loss and for the difficulties he endured in recent years. Don was my colleague for 35 years at OSU. His enthusiasm and wit were ever on display, even when times or situations were difficult. He was always up for a new challenge, and I suppose that is why he successfully engaged in Extension, research, teaching, and administration over the years. Most of us could only do one or two of those things well. There are a lot of stories to be told, and I hope there is an opportunity to do so at some point in the future. For now, please know that our thoughts and prayers are with you all. Jo Ann and Jerry Bigham

**Jerry Bigham** - January 14 at 10:36 AM

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“ Holly, Heather and I send our sincere condolences to you and the family. As a Professor in the Agronomy Department, I enjoyed working with Don. He was always very helpful and had a great sense of humor. We travelled to the Dominion Republic together on a project, and Don's ability to make people feel at ease and great sense of humor made the trip a very pleasant and enjoyable one.

Trevor and Heather Arscott



**Trevor Arscott** - January 13 at 06:56 PM

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“ Holly, I send you my heartfelt condolences. You and I only met a couple of times at a couple of OSU social functions after Don and I retired and you heard (and hopefully laughed at!) a small sampling of our mutually witnessed stories. I was on the faculty of the School of Natural Resources in the 1990s when Don was Assistant Director. He and I had several "interesting" common experiences, that Don, in his creative and imaginative way, always turned into VERY funny ones. These stories arose from our going together to Hungary on a no-till team, to being students at Michigan State at the same time (around 1970) when we took courses from the same philosophy professors, and from being on the School faculty. What a genuine smile! What a way to pick up others' spirits with his "unique" ability to tell stories with his one-of-a kind sense of humor and chuckle! What a wide range of interests and productive research, teaching, and private-life ventures! We laughed at our often retold stories a lot when I would drop by his office back in the 1990s and needed, and always got, a "pick up" from my friend and colleague. Robert Vertrees

**Robert Vertrees** - January 12 at 04:12 PM

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“ Enjoyed working with Don for many years in Kottman Hall. Enjoyed his sense of humor.  
Too early to go.

**Steve Nameth** - January 12 at 03:50 PM

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“ My condolences are sent to Holly. Don was in Wooster at the time I was hired into the OSU Agronomy Department. It seemed like most other faculty were so much older than me, except for Don. He contributed much to the soil science and natural resources at The Ohio State University.

**Warren Dick** - January 12 at 03:22 PM

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“ I am so sorry to hear of Don's passing. I had the pleasure of working with Don at OSU/SENR and recall that when I was invited back for a 2nd interview back in 2006 it was Don and Jerry that interviewed me. Right off the bat I knew that I would love working with Don as he was cracking jokes and put me right at ease. I thought, what a wonderful aura this man has. And I enjoyed working with him for many years and he always kept me chuckling until he retired. He will be missed. My most heartfelt sympathies to Holly and Don's family.

**Olivia Ameredes** - January 12 at 12:48 PM

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“ Don was a great colleague and mentor to me when I joined the Department of Agronomy at OSU in 1985. He helped me understand and navigate departmental politics that exist in all university environments. However, my fondest memories of Don were the monthly departmental poker meetings that a number of us participated in as well as the Walleye fishing trips on Lake Erie.

He was a great colleague and he will be missed.

Sam Traina

**Sam Traina** - January 12 at 12:41 PM

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“ We are so sorry and send our prayers to Holly and all those who knew Don. We always enjoyed his company and sense of humor. He will be missed by so many and was a good friend to all.

**Sallie Danneberger.** - January 11 at 11:30 PM

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“ I am so sad to hear of Don's passing. I have fond memories of him as our colleague - his delightful sense of irreverence and his kindness and gentleness - chatting in the hallways with a cup of coffee. My deepest sympathies to Holly and Don's family and friends.  
Emmy Regnier

Emilie Regnier - January 11 at 09:18 AM

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“ Our thoughts are with Holly and the family at this difficult time. Don was a caring, compassionate and always entertaining education volunteer at Ohio Wildlife Center and helped bring our animal stories to life for thousands of children. He will be missed, but we know his teachings live on through all of us who had the opportunity to learn from him.  
Kelly Dufour - Ohio Wildlife Center staff and former Natural Resources student

Kelly Dufour - January 10 at 11:07 AM

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“ We are sorry to lose a good human being in this way. We'll all miss Don. I loved his calm demeanor and sense of humor. Our sympathies go with Holly and all of Don's friends and family.

Steve St. Martin - January 10 at 08:34 AM

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“ Don was one of the warmest, wittiest people we have known. We shared many special times with him and Holly, like jazz concerts at the zoo on beautiful summer nights. Our hearts go out to Holly not only for her loss, but for the horrible circumstances that she and Don had to bear on account of the coronavirus. Mary Ann and Kevin Duffy

Mary Ann Duffy - January 10 at 06:25 AM

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“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Rutherford Funeral Homes - January 09 at 08:30 PM