

Don Graybill
(- August 26, 2008)

The following statement has been released by Creative Associates.

We are deeply saddened by the news of Don Graybill's passing on August 26, 2008. Don was in Jakarta serving Save the Children as Chief of Party of USAID's Indonesia Decentralized Basic Education III project and had only recently been joined by his family. He was 55. For many of us, Don was not only a colleague but also a friend, mentor, and teacher. He provided a wonderful example of commitment and professionalism for those of us who worked with him, and his sense of humor and joyous demeanor will be sorely missed.



Don's career took him to countries around the world, working for Creative Associates, Save the Children, and the Institute for Training and Development among other agencies. He was also on the adjunct faculty at American University. Don received his PhD from the Center for International Education at the University of Massachusetts. Prior to his position with Save the Children, Don was a Senior Associate with the Education, Mobilization & Communication (EMC) Division at Creative Associates as well as the Project Director of the Basic Education & Policy Support Activity (BEPS), an Indefinite Quantity Contract with USAID/EGAT's Office of Education. Under Don's leadership, BEPS implemented numerous educational initiatives activities including policy assessments, multi-year projects in Zambia, the Philippines, and Central America and Child Labor activities in West Africa and the Americas.

Don leaves behind a loving family-wife Magdalena and sons Bryan (13) and Ben (10). Creative knows and loves Don's family. As a gesture of appreciation for all that Don has contributed to Creative Associates and the international education field, Creative Learning, a 501(c) 3 non-profit institution, has established the Don Graybill Memorial Fund and is accepting donations through November 1st to collect funds for his family. A receipt will be provided for tax purposes.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Don Graybill and his family.

[The Don Graybill Memorial Fund](#) How to make a donation:

- Via check made out to Creative Learning with Don Graybill Memorial Fund written in the Memo line and mailed to 5301 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Suite 700 Washington, DC 20015 attn: Carola Mandelbaum - CarolaM@creativelearning.org

- Via credit card by phone at 202-772-2106 or at Creative Learning's office in Suite 550

Memory Book

We are compiling a memory book for Don's family.

If you would like to contribute your personal reflection, memories, or pictures please e-mail: graybill.memorial@gmail.com, by Friday, November 7, 2008. If you have already sent in your personal reflections to Gail Snetro-Plewman, Chloe O'Gara, or the UMASS website be assured that these will be included in the Memorial Book.

Messages from friends of Don Graybill

I am trembling as I let the news of Don's death sink in and cannot imagine how Magda and the boys are dealing with this colossal loss. Don was a huge figure in my life, having pointed the way to Amherst for me from Quito, Ecuador. He is largely responsible for my cross-pollination of the unforgettable and hugely rich CIE - ITD experience (those of you who've done it know what I mean). This past year, just before he went to Indonesia, Don and I spoke a couple of times at length about retooling our careers and exploring new ways to contribute to social transformation. We shared stories and insights from the trenches of social justice work, community development, non-formal education, and violence prevention. I am already searching for the notes from those conversations, which were quintessential Don....full of wisdom, self-reflection, wit, and warmth. What a huge loss for his family, for us, and for the forces of change in the world. For those who knew and loved him around the world, I extend my arms in condolence.

Mishy Lesser – Boston mishylessor@gmail.com

Since having been informed of Don's untimely and regrettable passing in Indonesia, I've gone through waves of weeping. Words cannot fully express my feelings. But I remember one of the oddest experiences I had with Don in Arizona.

I call the event our "Jack-In-the-Box" nightmare. It was around 1985 and Don and I were in Arizona setting up ITD's first "Western training outpost." ITD would run numerous USAID training programs from Arizona and folks like Don, **Manolo Sanchez**, **Kathy Searle** and **Mario Acevedo** were the usual rotating trainers who travelled there. I, the native Arizonan, was the local anchor who handled all logistics

and toured folks around Arizona.

In preparation for our first training program -- 40 Mayan community leaders from Guatemala -- Don and I were the only ITD folks in Arizona responsible for pulling all logistics together in very short order. It was the middle of an exceptionally humid Arizona summer and not a time when one wants to spend a lot of time running errands.

We stopped at a fast food spot -- Jack-In-the-Box to grab a quick lunch and make last minute arrangements. We had a pile of food in front of us to share -- tacos, fries, burgers, drinks. I was relaxed thinking I had nailed down most everything until Don started jotting down a "Things Left To Do" list. Five pages later he started reading back to me litany style all that had been left undone. My eyes got super wide - shocked at the level of detail in his list - how could anyone think of so many little things left to do, I wondered. He looked at me through his rimless glasses as if to say "How could you not think these things are important to get done before the group arrives?" I started freaking out realizing we had only 24 hrs before the group arrived.

Picture this -- we looked like two Keystone Cops -- I jumped way out of my seat, told him to hurry up, gathered up all of the uneaten food ready to trash it all -- told him we had NO time to eat (hard for him to take) and we'd need to work through the night to get all of his list done. We left Jack-In-the-Box in a flash with our lunch uneaten. He was sorry he had brought it up. We spent the rest of that hot and muggy afternoon criss-crossing busy streets and ticking off tasks from his unnecessarily long list. I didn't let us eat until 12 midnight.

Jennie Campos - Arizona jencampos@aol.com

Karla and I were shocked to receive your email here at home in Connecticut. We cried; I slept fitfully last night thinking about Don Graybill. It is truly hard to believe he has passed on, even though several other people have also contacted us with the news.

His sense of humor and optimism and hard work always stick in my mind. We always traded emails addressed to "Donster" and "Seanster" during the whole time we worked together at Creative Associates, and these several years thereafter, and email subject titles became humorous book titles or phrases containing his name ("Comes the Don", Don Breaks Over Marblehead"). Now the book title above, "And Quiet Flows the Don," seems appropriate, for Don now flows quietly around us in spirit, but still lifting others' spirits in memory. Our hearts and thoughts and love

go out to Magda, Bryan, and Benjamin.

Don and I have traded emails fairly regularly over the years, especially during his time in Indonesia, a country I know well. His emails were always complimentary and gracious, and full of news on the challenges that faced him in Indonesia. One of those emails came to me just two days before his passing (August 25) and his thoughts on the complexity of Indonesia and not being sure "what the Fates have in store for me" ring sadly now. Here are the last few sentences of that email:

DONSTER TO SEANSTER August 25, 2008

"I am in project overload, so what else is new? We are downgrading from one path to another, retraction back to a smaller scope. Feeling a bit overwhelmed with not a enough time to make friends, or to spend with family. I can do what I can, and no more. Not sure what the Fates have in store for me. Indonesia is, as you deftly put it, 'complex'."

Cheers from afar, Don

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To Don, who taught me much, we hope you hear our "cheers from afar". We are with you and you are with us. Don once forwarded to some of us the attached verse, Indra's Net, from the Rig Veda

There is an endless net of threads throughout the universe.
At every crossing of the threads there is an individual
And every individual is a crystal bead.
And every crystal bead reflects not only the light
from every other crystal in the net but also every other reflection
throughout the universe.

To Don: your crystal bead shines on and reflects in all of us.

With Cheers, and Tears,

Sean Tate - Connecticut SeanATate@aol.com

Thanks for letting us know about this sad news indeed. I am still in shock about the news. Don was special person and friend for a lot of us, so his passing comes as very unexpected news. I will try to send my condolences to Magda Graybill, but I don't know if my message will reach her. Let us know if there are further news about how

to reach the family in Indonesia or Texas/USA.

Manolo Sanchez - Managua, Nicaragua manolosanch@hotmail.com

Don's death is a sad event and great loss. Working with Don, I admired the complete attention he gave to sensitive issues. He went out of his way to be fair, to share his own concerns and feelings, to understand those of everyone involved, and to protect those under his responsibility from injustice. He was also so kind and friendly, and he brightened the day with many laughs as we worked. My sincere condolences to all those who loved him.

Jeanne Moulton - Palo Alto jeanne.moulton@gmail.com

I just heard about Don's passing late last night. As you know Don and I co-taught courses in international ed at American U for almost ten years until he left for Austin and Jakarta, and we worked at Save for many years before that. I can't believe what has happened. And I am concerned about Magda and the boys. Margaret M, Chloe OGara and I will be thinking about a memorial service for Don in DC at a decent interval after the family returns and hope Save, Creative, CIE and AU can all be represented.

Congrats on the 40th and hope this moves into a being a good year, energized by the 'release' of some of Don's amazing energy.

Michael Gibbons - USA mjgibbons@starpower.net

I am very sorry to hear about Don's passing. My heart goes to his family, relatives and friends. May the Almighty God find a place for him in eternal peace and happiness. My condolences to the CIE family. Lots of greetings and best wishes from Morogoro Tanzania.

Hilda Kokuhirwa Sinkonde – Tanzania osodo@aol.com

I am sorry to pass along the news that Don Graybill died yesterday in Indonesia. I have not details yet on what was the cause. I had lunch with him three weeks ago in Jakarta. He seemed fine to me. He was really well regarded by all Indonesia. I can begin to say how sad this makes me.

Steve Anzalone - USA SAnzalone@edc.org

I knew Don at the Center in 1980 to 1982. He was so much fun -- a great positive force, full of insights, ideas, energy. We had a blast in the "Nonformal Education Techniques" course, in which a number of us made puppets out of socks, milk jugs, etc. (Don's was a little sock person named "Taco.")

Because our work went in different directions, I never worked with him in the field, but I'm sure that he brought the same positive and creative energy to all that he did. My wife, Olga (who was also a friend of Don) and I are -- like everyone -- shocked at the news of his passing and sad for the family he left behind. The consolation: a life about as well lived as anyone could hope and a great legacy and example to help the rest of us keep moving ahead with the work we do.

Paul Jurmo - USA pjurmo@comcast.net

When I heard of Don's death it took my breath away. Here at Creative Associates, we have shared our sadness at Don's passing and now have had time to also share some memories. Snippets of our remembrances paint a picture of a warm and very caring man who was so full of life ... his booming voice, his ready laugh, his love of the Red Socks, his openness and willingness to share, his deep caring about his work, his kindness, and his excellence as a teacher. Don always found time for a colleague or friend in need. Some staff lovingly described him a big softy. He wanting to be the best dad that he could possibly be. We miss him.

Larry Lai - USA LarryL@caii.com