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Tribute Wall

PJ

“ I should have pointed out that Doug's teaching for the adult school was in the Napa County Jail. Many an incarcerated person was steered toward a better path by Doug's knowledgeable guidance.

Paula Amen Judah-Schmitt - May 17, 2020 at 05:48 PM

SP

I saw what Paula said about Doug all true.i played in Minimum wage with Doug and Paula and Dan Bent,and John Miller,it was a fun time in my life.Loved them all,Steve Poisson 401-253-4397

Steve poisson - August 07, 2023 at 11:41 AM

SP

Love to hear from you,paula

Steve poisson - August 07, 2023 at 11:52 AM

PS

“ It's taken a while for me to post a proper tribute to my beloved friend Doug Strobel, "a pal and a confidante" for 45 years. I'm supposed to be a writer, but the words and feelings got jammed up in my throat--caged by sorrow and anger.

I first laid eyes on Doug at a music event in a Benicia warehouse. There he was, strolling through the space, charming the crowd with his music and his smile. New to music at that time, I was in awe of his confidence and his musicianship. We met formally in 1975 through my sister, Lynda Amen, when I began singing with her and Kathy Somerville, eventually forming the trio--"Back in Town." Doug was a supporter of all musicians, but an especially strong supporter of women (rare in the Seventies). He was our biggest fan, hyped our gigs, helped us with equipment, all with no strings attached.

For years, Doug was the impresario of live music in Solano County. He put together events and formed bands in Vallejo and Benicia, playing nights while teaching guitar at the Academy of Music days. He had a successful career as a solo artist as well. In the late 70s, I joined his band, "Minimum Wage." We rehearsed at Doug's storefront pad on Wallace Avenue and had a regular gig at the Horse & Cow bar. Those years, Doug hosted an annual Christmas potluck where musicians would gather at Wallace to jam, share food, and sing "The Twelve Days of Christmas."

Doug was a voracious consumer of knowledge, devouring books at warp speed, constantly expanding his areas of expertise. He had an infallible memory and could speak with authority on countless topics. His broad knowledge led to a second career for Doug. In the 80s, he earned an Adult Education credential and was hired to be my co-teacher in the jail. When I left for college, Doug took over the program. Doug's unfailing support after my daughter's death helped keep me from sinking into oblivion. And when I was on crutches for months after surgery, he would bring me food and wash my dishes. He even DID MY IRONING!

After his diagnosis, we were in constant communication and had our final phone conversation a few days before his passing. Doug called, burning to recount his days on Sereno Drive. He spilled out a detailed biography of the neighborhood, moving up and down the street, describing every house; every family; their pets; his first playmates; first babysitter; the basketball net his dad put up in the back yard. With that stunning phone call, he memorialized his childhood. After starting chemo, Doug's voice began to intermittently disappear without warning. We planned to sing together again at the in-home concert Misner & Smith were preparing for him and Jody. I drove to Vallejo to rehearse, and we decided on two favorite duets: "Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain" and "Slip Slidin' Away". What a joy to blend our voices in harmony again. However, a few days before the concert, Doug became unable to sing.

The highlight of Doug's life was his marriage to Jody. He loved being a husband and devoted family man. He loved the home they made together. The term "stepfather" never entered his vocabulary. He was a fully committed to Father to Trent, Eric, and Myka, cherishing them just as he cherished their mother. Such a brutal loss they have suffered!

I loved Doug with all my heart. He was more than a friend--he was a brother--my witty, outspoken comrade--a truth-teller and brilliant colleague. He was my critic and my ally, a buoy and a beacon through hard times. I will miss our musical collaborations, our discussions of literature and history. I will miss his laugh (another kind of music) and the way he defended the underdog and lectured litterers. I will miss his embrace of poetry and unique use of language.

His absence impoverishes us all.

I cannot fathom the depth of grief felt by the Strobel and Sponsler families, especially Jody, his kids, and his grandkids. My heart goes out to you, his most dear ones.

Paula Amen-Judah Schmitt - May 14, 2020 at 04:03 PM

MR

“ I had the good fortune to find a kindred spirit in Doug when my family settled in Vallejo after living overseas for four years. Although I felt a bit out-of-place with my peers, it was easy to connect with Doug, whose curiosity, and openness to all that was new I could relate to...and what was new at the time was The Beatles and a revolution in music that we witnessed in awe. I wouldn't trade those years for anything, and could see how it was transforming Doug. He made it clear to his buddies he would become a musician and never faltered in his dedication and enthusiasm towards that goal. We were companions throughout those formative years and shared many of the experiences Doug was fond of recalling later in our lives. I always felt the Doug was an extraordinary guy, certainly for his love and involvement in music, but also for his egalitarian friendliness, his loyalty to his friends and his infectious enthusiasm for life. Doug was an important influence on my life. Our lives took different directions as adults but we were always glad to see each other when our paths crossed.

Mike Reed - April 30, 2020 at 03:33 PM

LC

“ Doug was such a wonderful human being. He had a profound impact on my life, as he was the first person, let alone male, who really encouraged me to go after music. A huge memory of Doug was that he put me and my friend on the microphone for the first time at the place on Wallace St. in Vallejo. He told us we should sing and play in public and as a result, we did just that, and are still playing together 40 years later. He was generous with his time, a real supporter of women as humans, and a champion for the underdog. Incredibly talented but always humble and willing to teach people things. What a terrible loss for the planet. Doug was one of the good guys who have positive influences on many people. He will be hugely missed.

Lynda Amen Castell-Blanch - April 30, 2020 at 01:39 AM

PA

“ I will always have a wonderful memory of Doug singing at our son's wedding here in the gardens on Mt. Veeder. He was such a talent. My heart aches for his family's loss. My heart also aches for my dearest friend, Paula's, loss. He will leave such a loving legacy. RIP dear Doug.

Peggy Aaron - April 29, 2020 at 08:01 PM

JK

“ Joe & Carol Klingensmith lit a candle in memory of Douglas J. Strobel



Joe & Carol Klingensmith - April 29, 2020 at 01:27 PM

JK

“*Doug was our son's (Doug Marcos) first music teacher on the guitar. He really was a great mentor and teacher. I will always remember his great personality and his smile. So sorry for you Jody. You and Doug were blessed to have so many wonderful years together and I hope those memories help you through this tough time. Carol & Joe Klingensmith.*

Joe & Carol Klingensmith - April 29, 2020 at 01:26 PM

MS

“*I'm so very sorry for your loss. Hugs, Prayers, and, much love ❤️ coming your way 🙏*



maryanne Schmidt-Gibb - April 29, 2020 at 03:05 AM

BG

“*I will always have fun memories of Doug back in 1976 when I first met him. He loved playing music and I loved going to hear him. I'll treasure his crazy, silliness forever. My love to his family. So thankful we got to share a few more memories this past year. Rest sweet man.*
Barbara Gillies

Barbara Rombold Gillies - April 29, 2020 at 01:21 AM

PW

“ Dear Jodie, Eric, Trent and my sweet Myka.
My life is much fuller having had the privilege to know Doug. I'll miss his daily walks through the neighborhood and the waking to my newspaper on my porch. He had a gentleness about him that stood out and a love for each of you and his furry friends. Mr Bo Jangles no doubt greeted him at his arrival. His musical talents we're so beautifully enjoyed. Being able to hear his stories and hear his musical friends play for him was so tender. Spending the summer listening to him at Luccas was the best.
Love each of you....Doug is at rest and breathing in the beauty of all he sees. PAX
Patty Williams

Patricia Williams - April 29, 2020 at 01:16 AM

DA

“ Doug leaves behind his effortless swag of life, ease of style, knowledge beyond anyone in most everything, countless books read, love of music from folk to rock, he loved his life, friends, and family passionately. I will miss his free spirit, his always welcoming "Hi" with a huge, warm smile, metaphors, jokes, and tinkering in the yard and garage. I will miss Doug singing and creating music as magically as he did. His heart was huge and generous. We may have lost a great and respectable man but the heavens were awarded a great beacon of light to forever shine.

Dana - April 29, 2020 at 12:00 AM