



## Donald Baumgartner

August 16, 1933 - March 7, 2020

Don Baumgartner (August 16, 1933) passed away on March 7, 2020 in Corvallis, surrounded by his family, after a long battle with Alzheimer's dementia.

Don will be remembered for his fierce independence, his discipline and work ethic, his intelligence, his love of family, and babies - he really liked babies. A scientist by training, he was a renaissance man with myriad interests. He loved singing love songs and signing at church, was a graceful dancer, especially with a grandbaby on his toes, and a phenomenal, albeit messy cook. In the early 1970s, Don pioneered recycling and composting before it was in vogue – forcing his children to collect, sort, and deliver materials to the local recycling center and composting biodegradable materials in their backyard.

He was always very active and competitive. In his youth he earned “golden gloves” awards for boxing and was a champion “barrel jumper” in ice skating. Later in life he embraced running and finished several road races, including marathons. Until arthritis and age overcame him, he played to win, whether hardball (he played into his 60's), basketball, softball (where he played in the Sr. World Series) and tennis.

Don was preceded in death by his first wife of 52 years, Therese (Terry) Rita

O'Connell; mother, Catherine Maher; father, Harold Baumgartner; his brother Joseph James Baumgartner; his five O'Connell sisters-in-law and their respective spouses. He is survived by his loving wife Kay Dostal; sons Donald Jr, (Pendleton), Robert (Susan) (Tigard), James (Ann) (Portland), Tom (Portland) and by daughters, Beth Marie Oliver (Tony) (Falls City) and Julie Ann Brandis (John) (Corvallis), by five grandsons (Parker, Jeb, Ben, Will and Dan), three granddaughters (Kate, Natalie and Audrey), a great-granddaughter (Ari), and by his brother-in-law, Dan O'Connell (Jane).

Don had a varied, well-traveled, and successful academic and professional career as an environmental engineer well-before that phrase was ever used. He earned engineering degrees from University of Illinois (BS), MIT (MS), and from Oregon State (Ph.D.). Along the way, he and Terry had six children and the family lived in Washington D.C., Boston, Cincinnati (twice), Fairbanks, Corvallis, Newport and Tucson.

Don went to work for the EPA, where he served as the Chief of Coastal Pollution Research for the PNW branch at laboratories in Corvallis and Newport. Don won awards for his relentless efforts to control pollution in US waters, including the EPA Bronze Medal in 1975 for his work on Lake Superior; the EPA Silver Medal in 1983 for his work on ocean discharge regulations; the EPA Special Achievement Award, twice, in 1986 and 1987; and in 1989 the EPA Gold Medal for Distinguished Service. Don retired from the EPA in 1989 and continued his professional and academic journey at the University of Arizona's Environmental Research Laboratory, where he served as its director until he retired in 2003.

Don and Terry remained in Arizona following his retirement from U of A and took epic adventures to Greece, Italy and Paris and they joyfully welcomed their grandchildren. When breast cancer weakened her, he personally cared for her every need until her death in 2006.

His spirit was lifted when he connected with a life-long family friend. In 2008 he married Kay Dostal. Don and Kay had great fun – they traveled, rode bikes and enjoyed their time together. As illness overtook Don, Kay was his tireless, loving, supporting partner and companion for the rest of his life. Kay provided extraordinary care and comfort to Don as the ravages of dementia stole more of him every day. Even in the fog of Alzheimer's, his eyes would twinkle and his face would light up when he saw Kay. The family is eternally grateful for Kay.

Don's time in Alaska ignited a life-long passion for hunting, fishing, camping and all things outdoors, which defined much of the Baumgartner family for years to come. A 1959 camping and fishing trip Don took on the NakNek river near King Salmon, Alaska came full circle 40 years later when son Tom asked Don to partner in the ownership of a fishing lodge on that river. Don was hooked, accepted, and to this day Tom still runs the lodge, where son Don Jr. also guides, and several family members have visited there to continue the family's travel and outdoor legacy.

Don believed he could fix most things, and regardless, tried to fix everything, often using found objects or materials scavenged from obsolete equipment. This resulted in an array of household items with mismatched pieces, bolted-on appendages, and frying pans, lunch pails or carving knives with handles made from driftwood, rope or other items. His workshop was a never-ending portfolio of projects in various stages of completion.

As a result of the coronavirus, and recognizing Don's interest in public health, no memorial service is currently scheduled. Those who wish to be informed if a service is schedule may request information from [JulieAnnBrandis@gmail.com](mailto:JulieAnnBrandis@gmail.com). Remembrances or notes may be sent to the

family c/o 521 NW 35th St. Corvallis, OR 97330.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to: University of Arizona Cancer Center/Therese R Baumgartner Cancer Clinic Nurses Fund, Banner Health Foundation, 3838 N. Campbell Avenue., P.O. Box 245219, Tucson, AZ 85719.