



NEWS RELEASE

Fredericksburg Center for the Creative Arts
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Contact:**Release Date: November 7, 2011**

Open Noon-4 p.m. Wednesday-Monday
11 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Saturday**Closed** Tuesday

In Memorial

The family of John Holmfeld (**June 3, 1930 - October 27, 2011**) requests that memorials and expressions of sympathy be in the form of donations to the FCCA Building Fund at FCCA, **813 Sophia Street, Fredericksburg, VA 22401**.

Testimonial for John Holmfeld

By Joe Di Bella

Too infrequently do individuals of candor, discernment, fine-tuned intellect and gentle nature come into our lives. But then, because of this rarity, those individuals impact us and challenge us in ways that make them memorable above so many others. John was one of those rare ones.

I met John several years ago when he came on board as a member of the University Galleries Advisory Council. He represented the Fredericksburg art community in this capacity. From the start he was a contributor who generated and exchanged ideas. He consistently spoke of concerns to unite the art community and provide maximum opportunities for the exposure and dialogue of art. He was passionate but not in a theatrical way. You could see in his eyes the intense mental processes at work before he spoke. Often when I chaired GAC meetings I noticed that look on John's face. It was a "loud" look, shall I say, even though he had yet to utter a word. I knew something special was brewing. So I would turn to him and say, "now, John, what do you think about this?" And John had the answer with important observations and suggestions attached. Let's say John often spoke with annotations. He was, after all, a writer.

It was a well-known fact that John was a skilled, professional writer who exercised the highest standards of grammatical structure and clear syntax. I would say that he would quietly, but noticeably, bristle if he read something that, in his opinion, did not match his standards. Now, I say this with no negative connotation. We depended on John's astute judgment and precision in matters of reports and minutes during our meetings. Of course, John would gladly offer his comments but we never had these in advance of our meetings because John was not one to engage in distance communication, that is, email.

I think I have some insight into this choice. I think John was a hands-on, face-to-face kind of person and was committed to the art of direct, persuasive communication. To him email was a vicarious means of connection and it lacked the personal.

Pragmatic, rational, insightful, opinionated, John at the same time was compassionate and temperate. His broad smile often ended long and learned discussions on a full array of topics. That smile also would precede his greeting of a friend. In both circumstances John took pleasure in the worth of the individual. He made each one of us feel important to him. I found that was a very special quality that he possessed and freely exercised. But of course we all found great worth in him as friend, advocate, mentor, and example of a generous and active life.

John Holmfeld

By Kathryn Willis

John Holmfeld.

How dazzled we were, in our little arts community, when you arrived and announced that this was the place where you wanted to live.

You connected with the best of our arts world, and showed by your interest and discernment that this was not an idle or superfluous decision.

You bought Paula Rose. You bought Cathy Herndon. You bought Dee McClesky. You bought Jack Darling.

You were at the openings. You were at the University. You were, well, where a person who appreciated the arts and who had a dedication to this area would be, at any given Friday.

Unobtrusive and understated, there you were. Humble, self-effacing, ever polite. And very, very private.

It was only little by little that we discovered your fiery brilliance, your immense knowledge, your commitment to science, your investment in scholarship, your deep understanding about what federal investment in medical research could mean for millions whose lives are the better for your passion.

We learned of your European heritage, of your early scholarly success, of your international connections.

Some of us were allowed to peek at the labyrinthine compendium of esoteric volumes that constituted your best friends, lined up at the ready for your inquiring insight.

We caught glimpses of your presence at committees whose purpose is to set policy for weighty matters. We heard tell of your testimony, your attendance at conferences the subject of which was beyond our ken.

And yet, on the other side of this scholarly mind, there is the gentleman, the self-effacing, kind friend, the person who enjoyed immensely the company of intelligent, interesting, and yes, ordinary folks.

Your pleasant, sweet laughter; your welcoming, open greetings; your willing acceptance of the new and the fresh. Your disarming pleasure of the company of interesting women. Your integration with family groups, with gatherings of warm friends, with celebrations and milestones. Your non-judgmental, open-minded consideration of all comers.

Your stubborn insistence of fighting the inevitable winter sniffles with warm tea and rest, when the rest of us headed straight to the pharmacy. Your joy in simple pleasures, your contentment with essentials.

These are the qualities that I best remember of you, and which recommend you in my recollection as one of the gifts of my life.

Please know that your presence in all our lives has been a rare gift, and the kind of treasure that is all the more valuable because it is not material.

We wish you well, John Holmfeld, and are grateful for all that you have given us. Bless you in all the planes of your existence.

With friendship and love,

Kathryn Willis