Donald Henderson (October 3, 1938 – February 1, 2017)

Donald Henderson, husband, father, grandfather, professor, scientist, mentor, and friend, died peacefully after a long illness on February 1, 2017.

From the floor of a steel mill as a blacksmith’s apprentice to an academic career in hearing science, Don met with success and fulfillment that he could not have imagined as a kid in Hamilton, Ontario. He attended Western Washington University where he lettered in his first football game, presided over “Moose’s Manor,” and negotiated scholarships for his buddies from his hometown so they could all go to college together. After a brief stint in the Canadian Football League playing for the BC Lions, Don decided that academia was a better long-term calling and he earned his Ph.D. from the University of Texas. During his 46 years of teaching and research at the Central Institute for the Deaf at Washington University, Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse, the University of Texas at Dallas, and the University at Buffalo, he held leadership positions at each institution, including as the Director of the Callier Center for Communication Disorders and as the Chair of the Department of Communicative Disorders and Sciences at UB. He was a co-founder of the Center for Hearing and Deafness at UB. Always curious and a constant student, he published over 200 articles, including twelve edited books, and delivered presentations all over the world, achieving national and international distinction in his field. Don’s professional legacy will continue in the many doctoral students he supervised who have gone on to be productive clinicians, researchers and professors.

Don was an avid traveler, a heck of a cook, a kind-hearted friend, an arts enthusiast, a guiding mentor, and always had great advice at the ready. He and Terri always knew that they were lucky to have found each other, and together, they lived a beautiful and interesting life.

He is survived by his loving wife of thirty-nine years, Terri; daughter Dana (Paul Sakata); sons Aaron (Jocelyn), and Lee (Angela); granddaughters Sasha and the expected Charlie; sister/cousin June Wilson and many loving relatives and lifelong friends. He greatly enriched all of our lives, and we will miss him dearly. Heartfelt thanks to the staff of the Visiting Nurses Association for the excellent care they took of him.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to a scholarship program that will be developed in his name through the Association for Research in Otolaryngology. A private family ceremony has been held; a celebration of his life is being planned for at a later date.