

It is with deep regret that we record the death of Professor Donald (Warren) Rude on 4 March 2023 at the age of eighty-six. The community of Conrad scholars is much diminished by the loss of our valued American friend and colleague, who was a devoted supporter of the Joseph Conrad Society (UK) and a regular speaker at its conferences. His contribution to Conrad studies was significant: with David Leon Higdon, Don helped to establish the journal *Conradiana* during its early formative years; acted as Director of Graduate Studies at Texas Tech University, where he mentored numerous young Conrad scholars; and also helped to curate the rich holdings of Conrad manuscripts and first editions at Texas Tech's library. More generally, Conrad scholars and students will always be indebted to Don's own scholarly research – his lifelong archival work, which laid the basis for a comprehensive bibliographic record of Conrad's manuscripts and typescripts. The following obituary of our departed friend and colleague was first published in the *Roanoke Times* (March 19, 2023), and on the Legacy.com website.

## **Donald Rude**

**December 1, 1936 – March 4, 2023**

Donald Warren Rude loved his family and friends, Shakespeare, opera, and anything that bloomed, especially irises, throughout his life until his death March 4, 2023.

His father read Lamb's *Tales of Shakespeare* to him when he was 6, and his mother read to him constantly. He bought his first opera recording at age 12, which he paid for by selling flower seeds door to door. He enjoyed opera performances throughout the United States and Europe-New York, Santa Fe, London, and more. At 12, he also planted his first iris rhizome and had about 400 different varieties in his Blacksburg garden. He served a term as president of the Region 4 Iris Society and was a certified judge of irises.

For most of his distinguished career, Don served as a professor of English at Texas Tech University, where he taught Shakespeare and other authors, served as Director of Graduate Studies in English, and directed a number of dissertations. He edited the international journal *Conradiana* for 12 years. Don joined the faculty at Virginia Tech in 2004. He shared his love for Shakespeare beyond the university classroom through the courses he taught for seniors at the Blacksburg Community Center, a 17-year commitment faithfully upheld through Fall 2022.

Don met his wife of 54 years, Carolyn, when they were graduate students at the University of Illinois. They shared a love of music, travel, teaching, and their children. Their older son, Benjamin, was killed in a skiing accident in 1987. Grief

from that loss prompted an outpouring of poetry writing, some published in various journals and in a self-published collection, *Legacy*. Their precious younger son, Jonathan, is husband to Leah Lambert, and father to Sydney, Avery, and Ryan. Don shared a love of mystery novels with Leah and loved to read to or watch classic movies with the children.

Friends and family described Don as generous in mentoring, kind, and able to uplift the spirits of a room. They remarked on his sense of humor and commitment to social justice. They praised his teaching and scholarship and were awed by his deep knowledge of opera and irises.

Don was born on December 1, 1936, to Robert Maurice Rude and Nellie Jackson Rude in Great Bend, Kansas. He is a graduate of Wichita State University (B.A., M.A.), where he edited both the yearbook and the newspaper, and the University of Illinois (Ph.D.). He is survived by Carolyn; Jonathan and his family; his sister, Roberta, with whom he shared his love of Shakespeare, theatre, and gardening; his sister-in-law, Martha Sue Moll and brother-in-law, Charles Kettell and their families; and by cousins and their families.

Don was generous in supporting educational and community groups. Scholarships in his name and in Benjamin's are endowed at Texas Tech University; funds in his name are also endowed at the Moss Arts Center and at the Community Foundation of the New River Valley. He was also a contributor to the endowment fund of the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech. Memorial contributions to any of these funds would be welcome. Or plant a flower, take a walk, listen to some favorite music, or read a book, and reflect on the life of a gentle man who loved beauty.