

Donald R. Henry
1921 - 1994
PROFESSOR OF THEATRE, EMERITUS

B.A., Iowa State Teachers College; M.A., University of Washington; Ph. D.,
University of Wisconsin, 1964
California State University, Fullerton From September 1, 1966 To January 5, 1988
Birth: February 16, 1921; Death: October 22, 1994

Dr. Donald Raymond Henry was a member of the faculty of California State University, Fullerton for over twenty years. During that time he taught in the Department of Theatre (later the Department of Theatre and Dance) and served as the Associate Dean of the School of the Arts. He was a master teacher, a gifted administrator, and a devoted practitioner of the theatre arts. He is remembered for his kindness, good humor, his generosity of spirit, his wise counsel and mentorship, and his dedication to the educational mission of his department and university.

Don was born in Mitchell, South Dakota, in 1921, the son of Ralph C. and Stella G. (Stage) Henry. While still a child, his family moved to Waterloo, Iowa. Don attended school there and graduated from West High School in 1939.

He then entered Iowa State Teachers College to pursue his B.A. degree. His education was interrupted by his decision to enlist in the U.S. Navy during World War II. Don entered the Navy in May, 1942, and spent the next four years in the South Pacific. He received an honorable discharge as a Lieutenant in 1946. Along with his distinguished career in the service, Don also happened to be among the group of sailors whose photograph was used on a U.S. postage stamp. He is among the dozen or so sailors pictured on the 1945 commemorative stamp honoring the achievements of the U.S. Navy during World War II.

In March of 1946, Don married Thelma Pederson in Seattle, Washington, and returned to Iowa State Teachers College to complete his degree. He graduated with his teaching credential in 1947 and subsequently taught at several high schools in Iowa, Oregon and Washington. He received his M.A. from the University of Washington in 1953 and began his university teaching career at Oregon State University in 1955. He taught at Oregon State University for nine years, during which time he pursued his course of study for the Ph.D. Don received his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin in 1964. He then taught at the University of Florida for two years before joining the faculty at California State University, Fullerton.

During the twenty-two years that Don taught at California State University, Fullerton, he was one of the major contributors to the tradition of excellence that has characterized the theatre training program of the university. Coming as he did just a few years after the founding of the institution, he was one of the chief players in the decision-making process about the character and direction of the program, its curriculum, and the kind of faculty it would choose to hire to fulfill its mission. He took particular pride in the fact that he created the theatre education and theatre for children programs of the department. He also directed musicals and plays regularly

for the department's production program (including *Cabaret*, *Carousel* and *Sweet Charity*). Don is remembered for his particular fondness for both the American musical and the works of Noel Coward. His knowledge in both these areas of interest was virtually encyclopedic, and his enthusiasm for them was infectious. At the time of his retirement, he generously donated to the department's resource library his extensive collection of books, recordings, and videotapes in both of these areas of study and enjoyment.

Along with his love of teaching, Don is also remembered for his great passions for cooking and travel. His colleagues remember, in particular, the desserts he would prepare for department gatherings. His cheesecake recipe became legendary among his colleagues and was virtually a department tradition at the first faculty-staff party each fall. Don was also an avid traveler. In particular, he had a great fondness for England and traveled there for a vacation nearly every year.

Throughout his life, Don maintained an exceptionally active role in regional and national organizations. Among his many activities, he was a member of the Beta Chapter of Alpha Chi Epsilon Fraternity at I.S.T.C., Theta Alpha Phi National Dramatic Fraternity, National Collegiate Players Fraternity at the University of Wisconsin, Kappa Alpha Order Westminster College in Fulton, Mo., and National Patron of the Phi Beta National Professional Fraternity of Music and Speech.

Subsequently to his retirement from California State University, Fullerton, in 1988, Don moved to Corvallis, Oregon. It was a place for which he had particular affection. He continued to pursue his love of cooking and travel. He was also a devotee of Oregon State University Beaver football games. In fact, it was on the eve of attending a Beaver football game that he passed away on October 22, 1994. His passing was mourned by his many colleagues, friends and students. He was survived by his son, Robert D. Henry, of Dover, Delaware, his brother, Allan L. Henry, of Seattle, Washington, two grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, six nieces and a nephew.

A measure of the affection and regard with which he is held can be found in the following poem that was read at his memorial service at Corvallis. It was written by Elissa Keller, the daughter of one of Don's close colleagues and friends, Alvin J. Keller.

Dearest Dr. Henry,
Forever in our hearts
Brother, Friend, Director,
You gave me my first part

In '66, We met you,
Fulfilling life's long role
As today we gather for you,
It's for you, The bells do toll

So, Now onward is the journey
Of another place and time
The next time when we see you,

It's for us that they do chime

Life is like a Carousel,
And death a Cabaret
For, When you get off the
Merry-Go-Round
There's another role to play

You, Are not so far away,
Today you feel us near
So, To Uncle Don,
To Dr. Henry,
To You!
We All Do Cheer!

Submitted by
Joseph H. Arnold, Jr.
Professor of Theatre

Alvin J. Keller
Professor of Theatre, Emeritus
August 10, 1995