



Donald Eugene French

October 1, 1953 - May 3, 2017

Donald Eugene French passed away at his home May 3, 2017, surrounded by family and friends. Born in Clearfield, Pa., Don was raised in Bowie, Md. He had a strong interest in geology, graphic arts and printing. Like his father before him, Don entered the printing industry and became proficient in all phases of printing. As the industry changed, he transitioned to printing operations support. Employed by PressTek Corporation through 2016, his clients in Md., Va. and N.C. thought highly of Don's wealth of knowledge. Don began fly fishing as a boy in the Pa. mountains and grew into a knowledgeable bass fisherman. In the 1980's Don started French's Better Baits, which made innovative spinning lures for bass and crappie. His love of fishing led him to live on the Chickahominy River where he was a respected fishing expert, conservation advocate and valued friend in the community. An ardent voice for common sense politics and policy, Don loved to debate the issues and frequently wrote Letters to the Editor. Over the past five years, Richmond Times Dispatch named him Correspondent of the Day many times. Although he was invited to attend their annual celebrations to select the Correspondent of the Year, his health did not permit him to attend. Don is survived by his wife, June French of Lanexa, Va.; mother, Judy French of Shepardstown, W.Va.; brother, James French of College Park, Md.; and many friends in the Lanexa community. Don's remembrance gathering details will be provided here, at a later date.

Tribute Wall

BM

“ To the French family: Don was my friend and business associate. He always took the time for me anytime I called. I respected him as a super person always willing to help anyone anytime, I truly miss him , not many like Don today. Thank God I got to know him. Bill Meyers / G.E. Richards Co

Bill Meyers - May 18, 2017 at 07:00 PM

DB

“ Don was a great person and an excellent technician. I had the pleasure of working with him during my time at Presstek and he had established a very loyal customer base because of his service skills and great personality.

He will truly be missed and always remembered as a great friend and technician.

Sincerely,

David Ball

G.E.Richards

David Ball - May 18, 2017 at 06:47 PM

ET

“ Dear June and family, my thoughts and prayers are with you at this time of heartache.

Don was one of the most intellectual people I have ever known. His wealth of knowledge was on just about any issue. At Presstek so many of us would call Don for his skills, his experiences or his thoughts on issues ranging from A to Z. Don was also respected and loved by every account that he serviced. His recommendations to customers were taken as a sermon because of his integrity and wisdom.

Don, Corky, Todd and I were changing press cylinders in Virginia a couple years ago, every morning I would watch and listen to a mocking bird in the parking lot. There are none where I live and I was so intrigued by how many birds it could imitate. Every morning Don would stand next to me and ask me to call him. His phone would just ring and ring and he wouldn't answer it.

I thought he was checking our phone service and signal strength. Then one morning I was listening to that mockingbird go through his list of imitating bird calls with Don and the last thing that bird mimicked was Don's phone ringing. Don laughed and walked away knowing all along that bird would eventually imitate his phone ringing. That was just so brilliant and cool of an idea, but that was just Don. Don's friendship and personality will be dearly missed by me and so many others.

May God comfort you and your family in this time of sadness.

Eli Thomas (Presstek)

Eli Thomas - May 18, 2017 at 10:03 AM



“ *Fields of Europe for Spring was purchased for the family of Donald Eugene French.*



May 16, 2017 at 11:22 AM



“ *One of his many fish on the Chick Rest In Peace my brother*



Edward Lederman - May 12, 2017 at 03:07 PM

JF

“ Everyone,

We are scheduling a Remembrance Gathering to remember Don on May 20 at 1:00 pm. There will be food a and an opportunity to speak to the group with a story about Don and speak to others who knew him.

Here are some directions:

Set your GPS to 715 Riverside Drive, Lanexa VA 23089 (Riverside Camp on the left)

The next building on the left (blue) is Chickahominy Shores Civic Association, you have arrived. (not on google maps)

*Thanks,
June*

June French - May 11, 2017 at 11:43 AM

MJ

“ This from Mike and Sandy Johncox, of Riverside Camp & Marina:
June and family our heartfelt condolences on the passing of Don.

It was a pleasure having his friendship the past 35 plus years after he stumbled into our fishing campground after getting blown off the waters at his original destination. He caught two 5 lb. bass that trip and made the Chickahominy River a ritual for his annual birthday outing every year first week of October until you moved here.

I remember once the guy who developed the Lumaflex fishing skirt gave me one. I gave it to Don and he said "What the heck am i supposed to do with this" ? Well we know the answer, Don figured it out and they adorned his French's Better baits since.

Don was quite the voice of political debate on the deck especially with my dad. They loved to egg on the other i think. But all in all we were friends. Back in early 80s we have a letter Don wrote us after one of his vacations down here fishing thanking my dad Walt and myself for a great weekend. It is customers like Don that have made our work here a blessing.

"Fair weather and Following Seas" is not just a Navy saying but a watermans prayer too and very appropriate for you Don until we meet again..

*Mike & Sandy Johncox
Riverside Camp
Lanexa, Va.*

Mike Johncox - May 09, 2017 at 11:09 AM

BH

“ I met Don when he came to work for Presstek ... Don was definitely one of the good guys. One of the most nicest, kind, respectful, & patient person that I have ever worked with. His knowledge was beyond comprehension I often asked him, with that brain why in the hell are you working at Presstek !!?

He assisted, helped, & guided me out of many jams out in the field.

Most of the time I was his assistant on many jobs.

Don will surely be missed.

Co-Worker ... Brian T. Howerton

Brian Howerton - May 09, 2017 at 08:42 AM

BH

“ 2 files added to the album New Album Name



BRIAN T HOWERTON - May 09, 2017 at 08:08 AM

MS

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Mark Shockley - May 08, 2017 at 07:39 PM

ES

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Eileen Stewart - May 07, 2017 at 07:55 PM

AT

“ My two cats and I had the pleasure to be Don and June’s full-time neighbors for only a short period of time in 2009, but I couldn’t have asked for better folks to be around. Don was kind-hearted, generous, knowledgeable, good-humored, a great conversationalist—a real mensch. I respected the deep concern he had for his community—fellow citizens and cats alike—and I’m sad to hear of his passing. Thinking of you, June, much love to you.

Anne Townsend - May 07, 2017 at 02:47 AM

JB

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Jay Baskette - May 06, 2017 at 11:40 AM

JB

Don enjoying his avocation on the Chickahominy.

Jay Baskette - May 06, 2017 at 11:41 AM

JT

“ We are all sad at the passing of our neighbor, Don. He was the world's greatest neighbor, always willing to help anytime we needed it, and just a wonderful friend to have. Our thoughts and prayers to June and the rest of the family. He will be sorely missed.

John and Kay Townsend

John Townsend - May 06, 2017 at 11:33 AM

PB

“ I first met Don when I was 20 years old while I was attending Old Dominion University. He and some friends had driven down from Maryland to visit Jay, whom I had just started dating. That began my friendship with Don which has lasted over 40 years. During those years I had the privilege of receiving Don's kindness, generosity, and unfathomable knowledge. There was not a subject you could mention that he didn't know about or would educate you on the matter further. I cannot explain in words the void he leaves in our lives but I know we have been blessed to have known him the time we did have together. My sincerest condolences to you June and his family,

Love, Pat Baskette



pat baskette - May 06, 2017 at 10:17 AM

JF

“ Thank you for visiting our site. In lieu of flowers, perhaps you would prefer to donate to the New Kent Humane Society. Two members of our cat family were adopted from there and have added so much to our lives. I am posting a picture of our cat family using Don as their mattress. <http://newkenthumane.org/donate/>”



June French - May 05, 2017 at 02:51 PM

JB

I have known Don for most of 50 years, becoming fast friends during an ice skating outing in January 1968 in Bowie MD. Don had an early interest in science and graphic arts. He played drums in several rock bands through high school, appearing at high school dances, weddings, and local clubs. A man of his times, Don was against the Vietnam War and engaged in printing protests materials. Towards the end of his senior year Don was caught for producing anti-war material on the school press, and suspended for the remaining term, receiving his diploma in the mail. Like his father, Don entered the printing trade to employ his graphic design talents, becoming a sought after production stripper in the local trade. During the late '70s, Don started to pursue his lifelong avocation to bass fishing, and spent most of his leisure hours fishing with local bass club friends. Always an experimenter and innovator, Don started French's Better Baits in 1988, to make superior engineered fishing lures for sportfishermen. He learned about a fiber optic material called lumiflex, that he used to innovate spinnerbait skirts with, an industry first application. Sadly, Don closed down the operation when he refused to compromise his quality to achieve cost efficiencies. A lifelong Democrat with liberal concepts, Don always enjoyed a debate about political policies and ideas. His opinions were always well reasoned and based in logic. Many editorials were submitted to the local area news publications and quite a few were published, to his enjoyment. Don was generous with his talents, resources and time to help others and was well known and liked in his adopted community of Lanexa. He was a lover of the Chickahominy River and all of it's nature and wildlife. As one of my best friends, mentor, and fishing buddy, I will truly miss him during my remaining days. Rest in Peace my Brother.

Jay Baskette - May 06, 2017 at 11:33 AM

AR

Bowie High, Maryland Alumni send their heartfelt sympathy to his family and friends. RIP Don. Fly high with the other Bowie Angels watching over us!

Adele Liebermann Richardson - May 06, 2017 at 02:38 PM

DG

A fine neighbor with a big friendly smile, an interesting viewpoint on many subjects and some of the best fireworks on the 4th of July.

David & Judy Graham - May 08, 2017 at 03:17 PM

MD

We are sad to hear of Don's passing. Don was a good customer, friend and all around good person. I like his telling of his boating experiences like when his motor fell off his boat and he spent all day trying to retrieve it. Don will always be remembered by his friends at York River Marine.

Mark and Carolyn Drexler

Mark Drexler - May 13, 2017 at 10:34 AM