

Dennis DeToye



Dennis was a modern day Renaissance man. He was the best husband and best friend his wife Lela could have found. He was a devoted and loving father to his daughters Anne and Kate. He was role model for his sons-in-law Cody Moore and Zac Friederich. He was a proud and doting grandfather for Emma and Joey Moore and Olive Friederich.

He gave generously of his talents and tenderness, as well, to many beyond his immediate family. First and foremost he was a teacher - a great teacher. He spend his entire teaching career as an art teacher and Art Department Chair at Edwardsville High School. Before his illness, but especially since, his former students have reached out share the impact he had on their young lives and how his influence is still felt even as a adults.

One student wrote to him upon her graduation, "You are everything a teacher should be and incredibly more. I know I am not alone when I consider you to be the greatest, most respectable teacher I have ever encountered. Your classes went beyond art; you taught equality, decency and respect for others with a perfect combination of humor and wisdom." He was a great art teacher, but he was also an artist in his own right. He loved to paint. After retirement he would spend several hours a day, often long into the night, working on large-scale paintings – "big-ass heads" as he proudly called them. His paintings have hung in several galleries in the wider St. Louis region. He was always amazed and grateful when people bought his work.

Dennis appreciated the arts in general and supported artists by purchasing their work. Over his 35 years of teaching he purchased close to 100 pieces of student artwork, which he later donated back to Edwardsville High School. He and his wife have filled their home with his work and the work of other local and regional artists. He was also so proud of the part he played in finding a home for the Edwardsville Arts Center in Edwardsville High School, and was humbled when the student gallery at EAC was named in his honor.

For a short, but important period of his life, Dennis was the mayor of Edwardsville. After a couple of years of political cartooning he thought rather than poking fun he should try to take an active role. Over his four years of service, he had a positive impact on the growth and development of Edwardsville. He was especially proud that his name is on the plaque dedicating the new wing of the Edwardsville Public Library.

Dennis loved ESIC Baptist Church. He served as a deacon and trustee for three years. He did the weekly announcements for the church in his own humorous style often to his wife's chagrin. After one summer Bible School at child saw him at McDonald's and said, "Look mom, there's Noah."

At various times in his life, Dennis was also an airplane pilot, a football coach, a community theater performer, a Student Council Advisor, a world traveler, an unpublished novelist, a bicyclist, an activist and a best friend – truly a Renaissance man.

As written by the family.

Published in Edwardsville Intelligencer from Nov. 21 to Nov. 22, 2015