



DAVID NIVEN WATTS (5/20/1937 to 2/16/2017)

David N. Watts passed away at St. Andrews Memorial Hospital in Kingston, Jamaica on February 16, 2017 after a long, brave struggle with COPD. An only child, David grew up in New York State. He graduated from Fayetteville-Manlius High School and then later from Union College in Schenectady, NY with a degree in journalism. Upon graduation, he was off and running. He married and started a family, opened his own business boarding dogs, Pine Hill Kennel, and was employed full time by SUNY Upstate Medical Center in the public relations department. These are the mere facts and foundation of his life, the simple framework that contained and supported David's passionate nature, unique character, and the depth of his humanity. Those who met him in the later stages of his disease would have been unfamiliar and most certainly impressed with the boundless energy that propelled him right up until just a few years ago. In spite of all that he was doing in the early days to support and raise his family, he found the time to build his own house, his own boat, a huge theater organ, and much more. He was a true Renaissance man who was blessed with a thirst for knowledge as well as the ability

to master any subject that captured his interest. He could do both the practical and the creative, from building to designing, photography, plumbing, electrical work, any DIY project, writing, creating furniture and objects out of wood. He did all beautifully, meticulously, and with aplomb. All during the time he was working, running his business, and completing a variety of projects, he was writing prolifically. He had pen friends from all over the world, and his letters were long, descriptive, and opened up a whole new world for him outside of Central New York. In fact, it was through his correspondence that he discovered Jamaica, perhaps the greatest love of his life. Once he set foot upon the island and took in the natural beauty of the sea and sky and experienced the friendly people, he had found his true home. He closed the kennel not long after his mother passed in 1989 and retired early, at the age of 55. He bought his own dwelling in Kingston and over the years spent more and more time there, coming to visit Syracuse just for the summer months. Eventually his illness made it impossible to make the trip, but he was more than satisfied to spend the time in Kingston. In writing about David's life, it must be said that he was indeed a character, unforgettable to even the most casual of acquaintances, whether it was the pharmacy clerk, the receptionist, or the taxi driver. He was a quirky, brilliant, detail-oriented perfectionist. These qualities made him a success in both his professional and personal life. It should be said that when David used epoxy to coat a piece of wood, there wasn't a single bubble to be found. He was friendly and charming and could talk to anyone. Journalism was the right degree for him as he truly enjoyed listening to people, asking lots of questions, and getting to know their life stories. In addition, people both respected and trusted him. Because of his jovial, inquisitive, and gentle nature, he made many true friends in the course of his lifetime. Like most people, there were contradictions in his personality. For instance, he was known as being quite thrifty and keeping to a carefully monitored budget; and yet, those who know him well will always be impressed and touched by his sense of fairness, charity, and generosity. He had a big heart, and his contributions touched the lives of so many souls. This is evidenced by the calls coming in from many friends who have expressed what a great void David's passing has left in their lives. These friends brightened David's life beyond measure. Family and friends have noted that even though David's disease was debilitating and caused much suffering, he did not complain. In fact, these are his own words, discovered in a draft from his email account the day after his passing:

“I guess I am stunned that you see me as someone who is strong and does not complain. But what do I have to complain about? I am only 6 months from being 80 years of age, and as it turns out that age is near the end of life for most people. So, I have gotten used to that idea and therefore feel it would be a waste of time to complain. In other words I know death has to come, and that I must be prepared for it. In fact, there is nothing I can do to change the way things are in that regard.”

There is no denying that he was a man who certainly worried over the small stuff, but who faced life's major curveballs with gracious acceptance. He was always ready with a joke and a smile even while he was hospitalized and fighting for breath. He will be

greatly missed. Surviving are his three children: Michelle Watts (James Stevens, Jr.); David N. Watts II (Susan); and Tana Osada; three grandchildren: Alicia Watts, Nicole Watts, and Rachel Ortiz (Kenny); and one great-granddaughter: Alana Ortiz.