



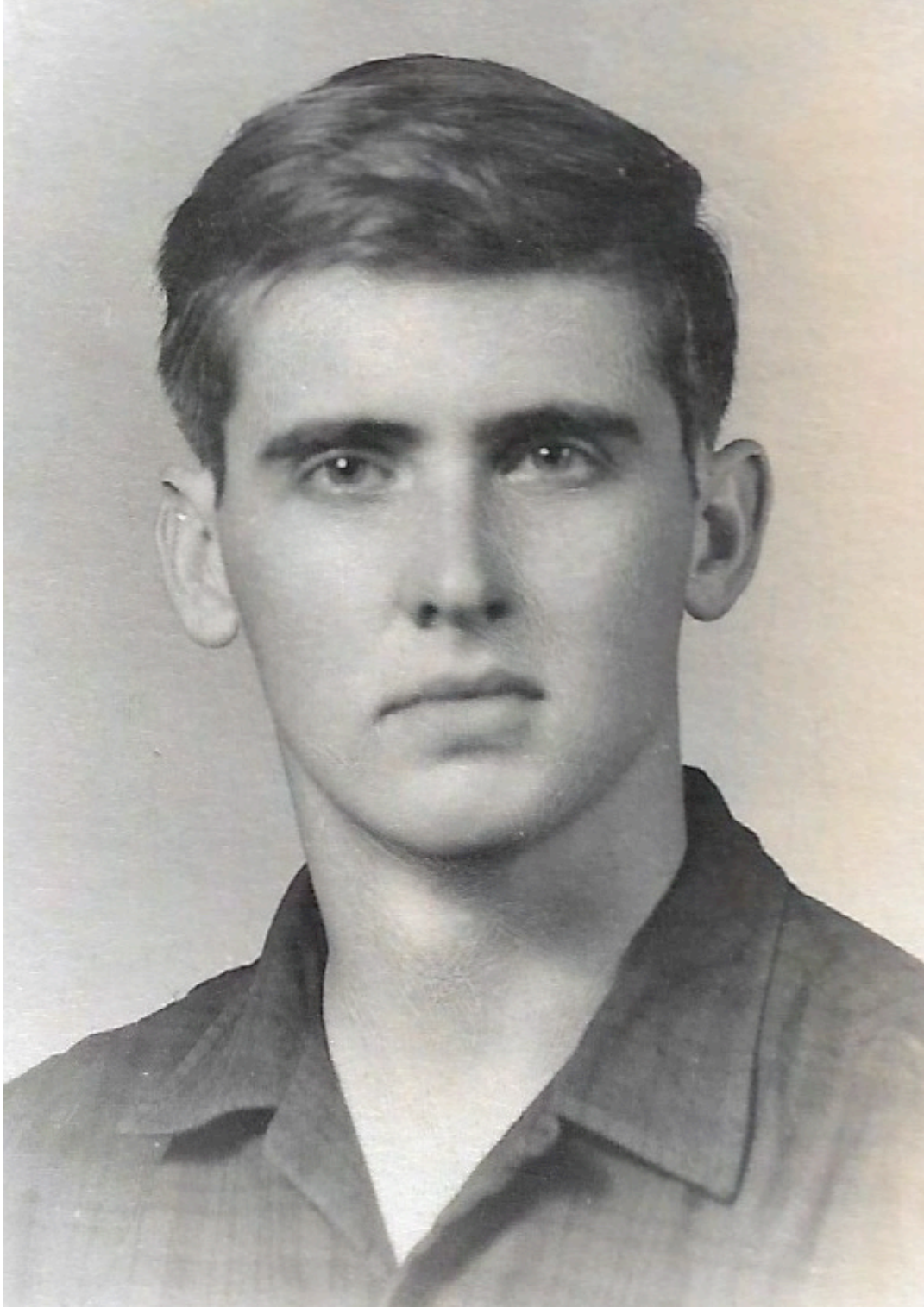
REMEMBERING DAVID DOOLITTLE

AUGUST 20TH 1942 – APRIL 29TH 2021



Remember me when I am gone away,
gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
nor I half turn to go... yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
you tell me of our future that you planned,
Only remember me; you understand...
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
and afterwards remember, do not grieve.
For if the darkness and corruption leave
a vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile...
than that you should remember and be sad.

Christina Rossetti







A letter from **Diane Mellinger**
(North Chapel Choir Director)

Dear Choir:

David died last night. He was a lovely man - such a good listener. He was witty, deeply spiritual, and gave great shoulder rubs. I picture him wearing his favorite blue hand knit sweater on Christmas Eve.



He will be sorely missed, and really, already was.
Hug someone in honor of David.
xo Diane

ps. Feel free to "reply all" with some memory or comment about David.

VOICES FROM NORTH CHAPEL CHOIR



Meredith Kendall: A beautiful person who leaves a warm impression you don't forget, even when he's gone. Heaven will be so lucky to have him.



Ford Von Ryan: Yes, a kind, warm, and spirited man; very fond memories of singing with him in the bass section (our anchor).



Barbara Abraham: I'm so sorry to hear of his passing. What an extraordinary person he was...a kind, caring, and beautiful soul.



Hope Yeager: Diane, Thank you for sharing this sad news. I will always remember David for the way he really looked you in the eye to connect even in quick conversations. Always cheerful and lighthearted, complimenting and teasing gently, truly interested in what the other person had to say. And for bringing in that bass!! Wow, I will miss him!

Norwood Long: Many of you will remember that David was a staunch and effective member of Buildings and Grounds for many, many years. He said more than once that doing little and big fixes of things inside and out gave him great satisfaction and joy, like building the supports for the old steeple roof that turned it into the riverside pagoda, and creating the pizza oven. I always called him "David Domuch."

Joanna Long: Such a dear, warm-hearted, cheerful presence. Many years ago, in the very first round of Covenant groups, David was the leader of the one I was in. The theme was supposed to be failure, one month, but David would have none of it. He'd made a lot of transitions in his life, coming out better from each. I don't remember how he transformed that theme, but it made for a fine interchange. And that deep voice - I can hear it still.

Suzy Malerich: So sad to hear that news, Thank you for letting us know, Diane. We will certainly miss him and remember him with love and gratitude

Deborah Rice: David was a key part of the choir when I joined in 2008. His wonderful deep bass anchoring the spirituals made them complete. I enjoyed his sly humor and felt lucky to receive an occasional shoulder rub! He will be greatly missed.

Peggy Kannenstine: The choir has lost a special voice-and-I do mean that in so many ways. I remember David on our congregational trip to Star Island, particularly well. He gave out his lovely shoulder rubs left and right to each one of us, and cheered us on to all the delights of Star Island. But, David also told us of standing on Star and seeing a man whose boat capsized, just far enough away that he, David, could do nothing, and the man drowned. I'm sure that he carried that sight with him always, the sense of being powerless to help-especially since helping others was a main thread of David's life.

Pierre Fournier: A wonderful man! As a fellow singer I was always jealous of his deep bass voice that gave such resonance of the choir. Rest in Peace, dear David...

Richard Waddell: He was a gentle and gifted man. I will always remember his smile and the twinkle in his eye.

Sunny Martinson: I am overwhelmed by such stellar tributes for a truly stellar gentleman and can't imagine anything else to add, except that I feel blessed to have known David. Even the few choir encounters have created a kindly remembrance of a very kind man.





Anne Dean: David and I recognized each other early on as Spiritual seekers. We exchanged histories of our various quests and soon became good buddies. One day David came to me with a book called **Awakening to Oneness** and said, I think you need to read this. I groaned and said I'd read just about every spiritual book known to man and they all said pretty much said the same thing. However, because it was David recommending it and because Awakening (also the name of the energy work I do) was in the title, I took it and read it. In the **Awakening to Oneness** book it described placing your hand on someone's head and transferring a Divine energy, which would assist in the process of Awakening. I got drawn in! This soon led to finding a Oneness group in the Upper Valley and eventually to a trip to Fiji for my first **Oneness University** experience. But I was not alone on this quest. David came on the trip as well. We experienced a magical week with other seekers of Awakening and the amazing Dasas, or monks, and Oneness Beings. When we returned, we began our own Oneness Group at North Chapel. That group is still going to this day 14 years later, and is at the core of my Spiritual practice. Thank you David for your gentle, loving guidance. I will always remember you as the One who steered me toward Oneness.

Chris Lloyd: David, you were, and still are, a blessing to this church in so many ways. As a deep, rich bass voice standing next to me in the choir loft Sunday after Sunday, we helped each other tune our pitch, establish an opening note, practice a phrase, and even find our lost music. Our voices, along with other basses who no longer sing in the choir, were a force multiplier, sometimes--in fact--too forceful. And we loved bantering in the choir loft, about almost anything, and not just in English, but sometimes in German, or French. David was a German major, and I was a French major, having gotten my degree from Oberlin, the place I would teasingly refer to as "the Harvard of the Midwest." David was a devoted Harvard man, and a very a good sport about my not quite making the cut. He had a sense of humor and a gentleness that always put one at ease.

He was a generous, giving kind of guy. And we're not just talking neck rubs or sharing his wisdom with therapy clients. Once he gave me, out of the blue, some cuttings from his thornless raspberry patch, and we still enjoy them to this day. They stand as a symbol of his generosity and neighborliness.



He cared deeply about the world, and all the life in it. He and I worked on the Altai Conservancy together, which raised funds to protect the Siberian snow leopard and the magnificent Russian wilderness areas. Saving the snow leopard is still a work in progress, but I believe we advanced the cause.

I know the words "devout" and "Unitarian" don't always go together, but if anyone was devout about Unitarianism, it was David. As a birthright UU, he was steeped in it. He and his family's long association with the UU faith and with Star Island were an asset to our congregation. David, your life was a blessing not just to this church, but to the world. And as I reflect on these words, I realize how terribly we still miss you.



Susan Inui: David's and my first connection, besides choir, was the discovery that both of us were members of multi-generational UU families. As you might imagine, there aren't a lot of us who can make that claim. I don't remember any more who claimed more generations but one thing we both agreed was that we loved being members of our LRY, Liberal Religious Youth groups as teenagers.

As a new member of North Chapel I was tapped to join the ministerial search committee. Someone thought that even though I was new to NC, I could bring the perspective of a lifetime UUer to the committee and to the search process. The search resulted in our hiring Daniel Jantos as our minister. I think most of us would agree that was a very positive outcome, however, the process was not always smooth sailing. There were times when I needed to talk or vent with someone outside the committee who had a level head, someone who was a good listener, someone who wouldn't feel a need to be opinionated, and someone who understood strict rules of confidentiality. David was that "safe harbor" for me. What a gift.

As for our time in choir – because of the way Diane arranged our sections, I was always somewhere in front of or beside David. I loved hearing his rumbling voice as he reached low notes and loved how he loved being able to sing those notes.

The metaphorical "heavenly choir" is probably still counting their lucky stars now that David has joined their ranks.



Chris Bartlett: Over the past 20 years, I got to know David twice. I first met him as the energetic, smiling group leader who organized our first visit to Star Island. I was immediately attracted to his charming, engaging personality, and for the next decade it was his cheerful sense of humor and willingness to laugh that was at the core of our friendship. But so many people spoke of a different David, one who provided emotional support, had a deep meditation practice, and gave great back rubs. This was the David I gradually got to know. Inside his big, masculine frame was a gentle, sensitive being. And behind that sonorous bass voice was his quiet, meditative soul. As we developed a new connection through our informal men's group, I got to know that sweet and kind part of him that was his essence. He was a man who gave so much more than he took and left behind so many of us who will always remember him with gratitude and a smile.



Richard Schramm: I knew David early on as a voice in the choir and a hug during social hour, and later as a colleague in a men's group and a good friend. Throughout these years, including the years when David was starting to lose touch, I always felt "at home" with him, like a close

brother, calmed and centered by his presence. I was drawn to him, enjoying how it felt just to be around him. It wasn't about ideas or arguments so much as it was about feelings. Even towards the end, when David was continually struggling to make sense of his world, I experienced him as an embodiment of love. It was mystical. I miss those times with David. He was a special kind of refuge for me and, I'm certain, for many others who had the good fortune of walking some part of their lives with David by their side.

Peg Brightman: I first met David at a BarnArts holiday rehearsal shortly after I'd moved to Vermont from Maine. We singers were waiting in the Barnard General Store between rehearsal and performance; I knew no one there at all. He sat near me, and invited a relaxed, wide-ranging conversation. I will never forget his kind, warm and welcoming attitude. Later, in choir rehearsals, it was always a joy to hear how he anchored us with his beautiful voice and kind humor. He always warmed a room.

Lynn Peterson: David reached out to befriend my wife Nancy and me when we first started coming to the North Chapel, especially at Coffee Hour. Later, when I was a member of the Board of Trustee, I witnessed the amazing breadth of David's concern for the Church and the Parsonage. I recall a problem with the roof and flashing around the chimney, which David tackled with intensity and thoroughness. Another indication of David's expertise was his tackling of a water leak along the west wall of the church foundation. I joined David and several other church members as we dug a space along that wall and filled it with gravel to enable any water to run away from the foundation.

David and I sang in different sections of the Church choir. His bass voice was terrific, and my tenor was sometimes slightly off, but David didn't seem to notice. In fact, he seemed to value my feeble contribution!

David was a truly kind and thoughtful man!



Emma Bragdon: When I first was contemplating moving to Woodstock a mutual friend introduced me to David on a visit here. He welcomed me with open arms and I felt immediately embraced by his warm heart. I thought, "If this is what Woodstock is all about: count me in!" After renting an apartment in town I joined the UU Church, sang in the choir, and enjoyed a long lasting friendship with David —with much good cheer and many laughs. He traveled to Brazil with a group I led to visit a spiritual healer...that was a big adventure. Dear to my heart was also getting to know Kim Clark, David's wife, and their son Nick.

Polly Forcier: When Jack and I first joined the church, David was so easy to talk to at coffee hour that I immediately felt comfortable with him. I always sought him out and we had our little special laugh - I called him Mr. Fish because he sang "bass."

Nancy Baker: David and I led a psychotherapy group together for 5 years. I loved working with David as a co-therapist. He was wise, insightful, loving and just plain fun to work with. Wherever he is on his journey in this moment, I send him my Love!!!



Molly and John McHugh: Our dear friend David delivered the BEST and longest heartfelt hugs in the entire world, hands down! We were Scrabble enthusiasts and played often after a dinner that typically included pineapple, coconut macaroons, and ice cream. Who cared about anything else! The commentary during Scrabble would vary between name calling and ribbing to statements of 'you are cheating'! Always with an impish smile, of course.

David, who built his own house, was SO excited when he learned we were finally building on our land in East Barnard. He was with us almost every day of our long process of clearing, making timbers out of our trees, and then putting the frame up. Driveway clearing – I (Mollie) will never forget the two of us with our feet up against a small stubborn tree, butt to butt, pushing with all our might to get the dang thing to topple over! David was more than a friend to us, he was family. His sweat is in our beams and floors. I can touch them whenever I want and feel his presence. To quote a favorite folks singer of mine: *"There's a hole in the middle of the prettiest life."*

This is David a few years ago
Holding our grandson,
next to one of the
beams he put up in our house.



Joby Thompson & Anne Macksoud:

It would not surprise us at all if each member of North Chapel's choir thought that he or she was David Doolittle's favorite ...and in a very real way, each one was right – we were all David's favorites...he had room for everyone. We will always be deeply grateful that we had the opportunity to be two of his many friends.

We look forward to seeing him again someday...somewhere...
In the meantime, we talk about him (and talk **to** him) very often.



Several months before David died, **Christen Thompson** (Joby's daughter) sent him this letter:

Dear David,



I just want to thank you for everything you did for me. I would not be where I am now without you. I've not had a lot of positive male role models in my life and you are one of the best men I have ever known! You were the best therapist I ever worked with, and now, as a therapist myself, I hope to live up to your example. You were a mentor, and a dear friend. I cannot express my gratitude enough for the huge impact you have had on my life. The work you did with me normalized my history and made it possible for me to take responsibility for myself as an adult. Your fluid use of inter-woven EMDR, more than 25 years ago, proves that you were a trend-setting leader in the field. I truly cannot convey to you the scope of my gratitude... and putting this into words I always fall short. You remain in my heart forever.

*With love and admiration,
Christen*

EXCERPTS FROM REV. DR. LEON DUNKLEY'S REFLECTION

MAY 23rd 2021

"...I had just moved to East Barnard Vermont and had met my neighbor, Sabra Field –Vermont's own, well-known artist. The East Barnard community was gathering for an Oyster Supper at the Community Center and I was invited. I knew no one and I was nervous, so, I was immensely comforted when Sabra said that she would introduce me to everyone. At the last minute, Sabra had a conflict and couldn't be my guide. I would have to go alone! So, I went to the gathering by myself, feeling terribly out of place.

And then, a small miracle started to unfold. I heard the laughter of a little kid who was playing on the swings. I heard his voice. I heard him giggle.



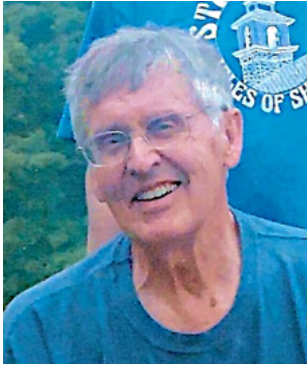
This little mystery kid and his giggle were on a holy mission—to shake me from the barren tree of loneliness and anxiety. And he did it...quite handily. He was my shepherd that day. I just followed the call of his laughter and it led to good community. My little shepherd wasn't alone. I noticed that a young woman was with him—his mother.

She and I fell into conversation. She was easy to talk to. I can't remember what we talked about but I remember that it was fun...and I remember that our laughter joined so easily with her son's—overlapping and overflowing so gently. Very soon, her husband came over to us. He had a warm and gentle smile.



As we got up to head inside, I saw someone who I recognized from North Chapel, so I took the opportunity to do some introductions: *"David, may I introduce you to the three new friends I've just made? This is Ashley and her husband, Nick and their lovely son, Mateo?"*

David looked deeply into my eyes... but he didn't say anything, he just stood there smiling and enjoying the moment. Ashley and Nick were laughing...and Mateo was riding the bubble of lightness. I felt strange, like I didn't understand the punch line of my own joke. Then, David said, *"Yes, Leon. I've met these people. I have met Nick. He is my son, Ashley is my daughter-in-law and Mateo is my grandson."* Then, with Mateo, I, too, started riding the bubble of lightness as we all went inside and found dinner together.



At North Chapel, David made friends easily and he held us close. His eyes, his soul eyes, saw us without judgment...with only love, with only kindness and gratitude. He held this community. We were within his strong embrace. We are within his strong embrace—even now...and especially now.

And the choir will miss him so. The tenors admired the depth and the power of his voice. The altos and their inner-work harmony were musically grounded by him. And the sopranos—because of their position in front of him—were beneficiaries of his talents as a giver of amazing shoulder massages. And, of course, his fellow basses knew him deeply, as their own.

We can still hear him. He anchored us so warmly and so well. It's our turn now, our turn to anchor David—we, the choir of his angels...his community.

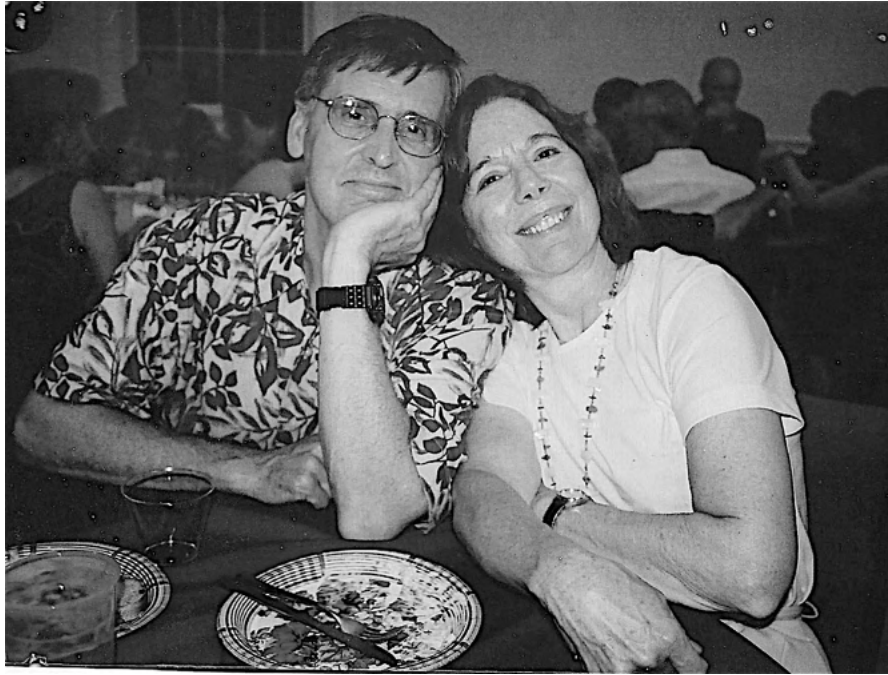
I can't remember who told me this story from the late stage of his life that David was forgetting some things, but he was remembering other things - things like the sacred practice of simple kindness. David saw someone that he recognized but he could not recall the details of this person's life. He smiled and said, *"I don't remember who you are but I think that I am supposed to hug you."* Blessings rarely get more beautiful.



Thank you, friend.
Thank you for burning so brightly and for being so brilliant.

Thank you for seeing your light reflected in those who have looked up to you...which was difficult **not** to do because you were so tall.

May it be so. Blessed be and Amen.



*TO LIVE IN THIS WORLD, YOU MUST BE ABLE TO DO
THREE THINGS:*

TO LOVE WHAT IS MORTAL;

*TO HOLD IT AGAINST YOUR BONES KNOWING YOUR OWN LIFE
DEPENDS ON IT;*

AND, WHEN THE TIME COMES TO LET IT GO, TO LET IT GO.

Mary Oliver

