

Jody Knowlton

(Pop's Niece)

Early August, 2018, I had this amazing thing happen....Mom and Dad were going to see Don and Jo...it was a difficult time for Don as Jo's condition was worsening, and Don needed some help and maybe more, to see his brother. I was on a family vacation in Vail and changed my flight back in order to join them. Don and Jo are my godparents, and I wondered too if I would have another opportunity to spend time with them like this. For four days, I had my parents and my godparents to myself.

During this time, there were few distractions, so we really enjoy spending time together. Don told incredible stories at dinner about Italy in the War, flying with no instruments, and all kinds of other things. It was thrilling. It struck me that I'd know Don all my life as an older man, to envision him as this handsome, young, brave pilot was really something. And then there was the barn or rather the House of Tools.

Don had two projects for Jener and me: to fix the wooden squirrel that held back the hose and to polish the beautiful stone that was so prominently displayed on the side of the barn. He loved it but felt its full beauty wasn't being expressed. I've now forgotten the origin of it. Anyway, Don gave us our marching orders - like a coach, or a Dad, or a teacher - he knew where EVERYTHING was in that tool shed and he literally had everything to make anything. I realized how creative he was...how resourceful and self-sufficient there in the tool shed. I loved witnessing him so relaxed and happy in that space...a space where he seemed so at home, fulfilled, and so alive.

Uncle Don...he always had a giggle and a hug for you. I love you Uncle Don and miss