



Donald Gene Mt. Castle

October 22, 1940 - December 18, 2023

Our brother, Donald Gene “Coty” Mt.Castle, age 83 left us peacefully on December 18th, 2023.

Born October 22nd, 1940 to Gerald and Ruby (Ketring) Mt.Castle at their family home near West Manchester, Ohio, Don was the oldest of six Mt.Castle children: Dale, Barbara, James, Dixie and Marvin. Learning on the piano from his mother, Don was an exceptional musician. He performed on stage and on the radio starting when he was 10 years old playing guitar and singing with country western groups. Later on as a teenager he was given the stage name Don “Coty” by a close friend and fellow guitarist Frank Jennings and it stuck.

In the mid 1950s, the Mt.Castle family moved to McClure, Ohio, where Gerry would manage the Hoof Prints dairy farm. On Sundays, Ruby would clear out the kitchen table to make room for family and friends to play music together. Summer weekends with the Mt.Castle family also meant pick up games of baseball. Despite being legally blind since his youth, Don had a passion for the sport, playing with family as long as he could and listening to Reds, Tigers and Cubs games over the radio.

In the summer of 1961, Don would come to work for Jack & Rena (Thayer) Frantz of Grand Rapids, Ohio at their farm house on Box Road. He would help around the home and watch their four young children Donnie, Ronnie, Gary

and Elaine on weekdays. After that summer, at age 20, Don moved in permanently and lived as a foster older brother to the Frantz children. Over the years he would bring the gift of music to the Frantz family as well. He taught young Gary to play the piano, helped young Donnie as he learned the saxophone and taught Rena to play the steel guitar.

In 1967, Coty and friends started the Sundowners dance band with Chet Brown (alto sax) and Don "Cupcake" Estep (drums), Gary on keys and Donnie on tenor sax. Billed as an eight-piece orchestra, they played all kinds of music with Dale and Stella Kamm playing string bass and accordion respectively and Rena Frantz on steel guitar. For 30 years, Coty was the anchor member of the Sundowners and would be joined by many talented area musicians and eventually his own brother Marvin Mt.Castle taking over on drums. The Sundowners played privately and publicly at halls, clubs and fairs all around Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan until 2001.

Don loved all types of music but especially country western and Texas swing. Throughout his life, he taught guitar to children and adults out of the parlor in the Frantz home. In his later years, Don would continue to perform with Toledo area musicians and vocalists at local jazz clubs Rusty's, Lucille's and Dégagé. Longtime family friend and jazz legend Gene Parker and son Ray, along with Jimmy Cook were some of his favorites. In his final years, young musician friends Lucas Sigurdson and Courtney Freels would venture out to the house to perform with him as long as he was able.

An avid philatelist, Don collected world stamps and loved to share his latest finds. His knack for telling a joke was legendary and his dry wit and sharp opinions made every minute a treat with Don. The Frantz family kitchen was an open and welcome place for family, friends and strangers alike and after Rena's passing in 2010, Don was the last one to sit at the table and share a coffee or whisky with anyone who dropped by.

He is survived by his brother James (Teresa) Mt.Castle, sister Barbara Shufelt, brother Marvin (Julie) Mt.Castle, foster siblings Donald "Donnie" (Dana) Frantz and Elaine (Loren) Angel. His role as a loving uncle was shared by many including Vincent (Cathy) Frantz, Mathew (Elizabeth) Frantz, Kyle (Alexa) Frantz, Holly (Lisa Mills) Frantz, Kristine Angel, Daniel (Sara) Angel, Michael (Vanglorious) Angel, Wendy Mann, Rex Mt.Castle, Dale Mt.Castle Jr, James Mt.Castle Jr, Dixie Harmon, Steve Spitler, Sheila Davis, Angela Schlosser, Jason Mt.Castle, Christopher Mt.Castle, Cassandra Bengela, Dawn Spies, William Harter III, Jeffery Mt.Castle and Mathew Mt.Castle. He is preceded in death by his parents; brother Dale Mt.Castle; sister, Dixie Harter; nephew, Marcus Mt.Castle; foster brothers Gary and Ronald Frantz; and Jack and Rena Frantz.

The family is especially grateful for the lengthy and loving care provided to Don by Michael and Vanglorious Angel, their son Jack, Eleanor Barnes and Martha Frantz.

A Celebration of Life by friends and relatives of Don Mt.Castle will be held at 4:00 PM January 27th 2024 at the American Legion Hall Post 232 at 12580 S River Rd, Grand Rapids, Ohio. Don was cremated and will be memorialized at the Frantz family plot at Wakeman Cemetery in Waterville, Ohio at a small private service at 2:00 PM the same day.

Donations to St Jude Children's Research Hospital in memory of Don are appreciated.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life Service

JAN 27. 4:00 PM (ET)

American Legion Post 232
12580 S. River Road
Grand Rapids, OH 43522

Tribute Wall

CT

“ I send sympathy and prayers to the Mt Castle Family. Don and I were school classmates graduating in 1958. I quickly recognized his talent and became a fan of his music. We reconnected via phone several years ago, and enjoyed catching-up and recalling the old days. I will miss our conversations that always included one of his jokes.

Carol Van Tassel-Mayabb - January 17, 2024 at 01:36 PM



“ Marv, I'm so sorry to hear of your Brother passing. He sounded like an incredible man! Sending Prayers to all your Family! 🙏🙏🙏



Reda Maynard - January 14, 2024 at 10:08 AM



“ Don was a true gift to mine and my children’s lives over the years. He changed my life forever. I could call him anytime and say I was coming over and was always welcomed. We’d play music all night and learn songs. We attended many concerts together and he showed me so much music I will love forever. He will be greatly missed.



Courtney Freels - January 13, 2024 at 01:39 PM



“ About 35 years ago our son took guitar lessons from him for awhile and really enjoyed it. In fact randomly over the years he’d talk about it. That was the end of it until maybe ten years ago when he took it up again and renewed his love for it.

Betsy Boyle - January 12, 2024 at 04:19 PM



“ 7 files added to the album Don "Coty" Mt.Castle



Vince Frantz - January 12, 2024 at 12:58 PM