

Donald Booth (1932-2022)



Education- **Donald R. Booth**, Professor of Economics; 1959. B.A., Whittier College; M.A., Claremont Graduate School; Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles.

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of our beloved Professor Emeritus Donald Booth, a founding member of our Association of Retired and Emeritus Faculty. I am forwarding the announcement sent out by President Daniele Struppa on Donald Booth's passing on February 17 at the age of 90. As you will read, Donald Booth left an enormous legacy and impact, not only in the Argyros School of Business and Economics, but in the lives of generations of Chapman students. Claudia Horn, Communication Chair



From the Office of the President

Daniele C. Struppa, Ph.D.

It is with a heavy heart that I announce the loss of Professor Emeritus Donald Booth. He passed away peacefully in his sleep in the early morning of February 17, 2022. We all knew him as an individual who dedicated his time and energy daily to the success of Chapman University, demonstrating an exceptional level of interest in students of every school and college. His time as a teacher and administrator spanned nearly 60 years, the longest of any in our history. I want to take this moment to honor his incredible life and the legacy that he has left behind for the university's community.

As many of you know, Don was an educator of extraordinary intellect, drive, and compassion. He was an economics professor at Chapman since 1959 until he completed his service in 2018,

which was a whole five years after his “retirement.” During his time at Chapman, he also served in numerous leadership roles and led many initiatives. Among other positions, he served as the first Chair of Corporate Faculty from 1966-68, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of College from 1977-78, Vice President of Finance and Administration in 1988, and the Founding Director of the Executive Masters in Business Administration from 1995-98, during which he incorporated a study tour in China as a requirement for the degree.

No matter the title he held, including the Larry Parlett Professor of Economics in Memory of Alan Thompson, he was an ever-involved proponent of the Chapman Experience — the promise of personalized education of distinction. In fact, while he was an undeniable resource for future entrepreneurs, economists and business professionals, countless students saw him as much more than a professor of economics. He was a mentor ready to guide them in life, and the bonds he formed were for life. He stayed connected and engaged in conversation throughout the years with hundreds of alumni on an annual basis. Even former students from his classes in 1959 would stay in touch with Don up to and beyond his retirement.

For “An Economic Theory of Love,” a special lecture held by Don during 2013’s Homecoming festivities, past students from a range of graduating classes made trips simply to see and hear him once more. One former student present was Kelsea Ballantyne ’07, who had flown across the country to see him. When asked about Don’s impact, she noted that he showed her what was truly possible: “[He] inspired me to go out into the world and do what I’m passionate about. He helped provide the support so I could feel comfortable going abroad. No one in my family had gone to college, and I had no idea what opportunities were out there.”

Clear from Kelsey’s words, Don had a transformational impact on his students, and he helped ensure a lifelong connection between not only them and himself but between them and Chapman. Alumni like Tom Elliott ’60, who alongside his wife, Pat Elliott ’60, established the Elliott Alumni House, had Don as a professor and highly appreciated his approach to teaching.

I imagine many of you reading this will have a personal memory of Don similar to Kelsey’s, as anyone with ties to Chapman, from George Argyros ’59 to President Emeritus Jim Doti, and myself, admired and appreciated Don dearly, often leaning on him for advice. Among the things that will resonate with those who knew Don, perhaps you’ll recall his involvement in the 1962 “Elephant Races,” his consistent storytelling that in turn focused on highlighting students, alumni and his own experiences, his deep love for travel, or perhaps, his sincere love for the Chapman Family.

In addition to his work as a professor, Don generously donated his finances to support Chapman and its students. Alongside Louise, his wife who passed away in 2012, he provided support to practically every corner of campus. The Leatherby Libraries, College of Performing Arts, Chapman Athletics, Office of Church Relations, Town & Gown, scholarships and, of course, many funds connected to the Argyros School of Business and Economics received contributions from Don and Louise. Moreover, Don secured donations from alumni and community leaders for the Don Booth Philanthropy Fund to bridge the financial gap for students who needed assistance. Notably, Don was always ready to support international students and underserved communities,

and his desire to create equality was well-known. In fact, he helped secure Martin Luther King, Jr. to speak in Memorial Hall on December 10, 1961.

Without a doubt, the couple shared a deep love for Chapman. The evidence lives on today through the lives of countless Panthers, and Louise's carefully crafted history book, "Fulfilling a Dream – The History of Chapman University," which was independently published in 2001.

I send my sincerest condolences to his whole family, especially his son, Dave Booth '80, and all who knew and loved him. He will always be remembered at Chapman as his name and spirit are carried forward with the Donald R. Booth Professorship in Economics in Honor of Larry Parlett and in Memory of Alan Thompson.

"He was always a voice of calm and reason during frequent turbulent and pressure-filled times," said Mike Drummy '74, former assistant vice chancellor and chief admission officer. "Over the years, I'd reach out to him often, or he'd just show up ... somehow sensing I needed a pep talk."

At a 2013 celebration in Booth's honor, Doy B. Henley, chairman emeritus of Chapman University's Board of Trustees, said, "He has helped so many people, whether it's with an airline ticket, an internship or something else. There are so many ways he has transformed people's lives. He's one of the best people you will ever know in your life."

"Dr. Donald Booth was among the legendary faculty members of Chapman University," said David B. Moore (MA '09), assistant vice president of legacy planning. "His son, David Booth '80, tells me that Dr. Booth believed the memory care center where he lived the last several years to be the Chapman campus, so he was in his happy place."

(Staci Dumonski contributed to this tribute), April 15, 2022