



Don Hazlett

September 3, 1949 - January 5, 2019

Donald Lavern Hazlett, 69, of Pierce, Colorado, beloved husband, father, and grandfather, passed away peacefully at home on the morning of January 5, 2019.

Don was born on September 3, 1949 in Pueblo, Colorado to Charles and Else (Stjernholm) Hazlett. Although, if you asked him, he might say he was born in a magpie's nest by the Apishapa River. He grew up on a farm outside of Fowler, CO and cherished his early memories of farm life. Don enjoyed chasing stray steers with his dad, feeding pigs with his brother Chuck, collecting cotton from cottonwood trees with his sister Marilyn, and eating his mom's Danish pastries. He had vivid memories of sharing farm life with his "city" cousins when they visited from Pueblo. He was particularly drawn to the native prairie land located "above the ditch" toward the west of the farm. He was attracted to the uncultivated land and it was here that his appreciation for native plants began. Don graduated from Fowler High School in 1967. He then attended Augustana College, majoring in biology. In college, he learned guitar and began a lifelong love of folk and country western music. He later went on to receive his Master's degree in botany from South Dakota State University. He served in the Peace Corps from 1970-1975 in Honduras, working at the forestry school and botanical gardens. As a young man that grew up in prairie country, he felt he was in heaven when he saw the vast amounts of plant species in the tropics. He was passionate about learning as much as he could but always felt there were "so many plants, and so little time." During his time in the Peace Corps, he led the construction of the herbarium at the forestry school. It was during these years that he met his wife, the prettiest and most exotic flower he ever found, Marta Esperanza. They were married on December 27, 1973. Don continued studying tropical plants in Central America and had their first child, Randia Esperanza, while living in the Lancetilla Botanical Gardens. He would later write a book on the history of these gardens as well as the ethnobotany surrounding them. He received his doctorate from University of Washington in forestry ecology. Their son, Eric Lavern, was born in 1982 while Don worked at a research station in Costa Rica. It was during his time in Central America that he discovered two new plant species, one which was later named after him: *Haptanthus hazlettii*.

Don and Marta moved back to Don's native Colorado to raise their two children. Don was an ethnobotanist and naturalist. Don lived and worked on a research station on the Pawnee Grasslands and later ran his own business, New World Plants and People, providing consultative and education services. He worked as a consultant for the forest service as an expert on the plants of the western grasslands. He compiled the flora of the Pawnee, Kiowa, and Rita Blanca National Grasslands. He had a passion for sharing his understanding of plants, animals, lore, and the charisma associated with his semi-arid homeland. Whether while giving tours of the grasslands, selling native plants at the Farmer's Market, or entertaining frequent guests in his backyard, Don was always ready and eager to share a plant-related story or joke. He enjoyed traveling to conferences for the Society for Economic Botany and the Society of Ethnobiology. He was a member of the Colorado Native Plant Society and was one of the early presidents of the society when newsletters were still typed, copied, and stuffed into envelopes to be mailed to the members. He received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Colorado Native Plant Society. He loved making people laugh and was a kid at heart. He was always ready with a joke. One of his favorite sayings was "Growing old is mandatory, Growing up is optional." It was this youthful take on life that made him so adored by many, but especially by his grandchildren. Don spent countless hours keeping score of the Rockies games, organizing baseball cards, painting gourds, and playing guitar with his grandchildren.

Don is survived by his wife of 45 years, Marta Hazlett; his daughter Randia Morrow (Cody), his son Eric Hazlett (Emily); his brother Charles Hazlett (Kaona); his grandchildren Caleb Morrow, Wyatt Morrow, Jack Hazlett, and Elizabeth Hazlett as well as many cousins and an extended network of family and friends.

He was preceded in death by his father, Charles Lavern Hazlett; his mother, Else Stjernholm; and his sister, Marilyn Ruth Hazlett; and an infant brother that died at childbirth.

He will be buried near his homeland at the Fowler cemetery.

A funeral service to celebrate Don's life will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 9, 2019 at the Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1865 14th Avenue in Greeley. Graveside services will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 10th at the Fowler Cemetery in Fowler, Colorado. A private family visitation will be held.

Memorial contributions can be made to the Marr Fund at the Colorado Native Plant Society which supports research on the biology of Colorado native plants and plant

communities. CONPS P.O. Box 200 Ft. Collins, CO 80522

Cemetery

Fowler Cemetery

Fowler Cemetery, US-50

Fowler, CO, 81039

Events

JAN 9 **Funeral Service** 11:00AM

Immanuel Lutheran Church

1865 14th Ave, Greeley, CO, US, 80631

JAN 10 **Graveside Service** 01:00PM

Fowler Cemetery

Fowler Cemetery, US-50, Fowler, CO, US, 81039

Comments



“ A tribute video has been added.



Moser Funeral & Cremation Service - January 07, 2019 at 03:46 PM



“ I had the incredible fortune of spending a summer inventorying the Crow Reservation with Don. I became forever endeared to him (including his corny jokes!) and grateful for all he taught me. RIP my friend. - Renee Galeano-Popp

Renee Galeano-Popp - January 07, 2019 at 05:17 PM



“ To be out in the field with Don, was like winning the jackpot. Not only was one in the company of an incredible botanist, but Don's sense of wonder, enthusiasm, and humor made it a really fun adventure! It got even more interesting when he started collecting dragonflies in addition to plants. Don carried both a plant press and a butterfly net, and I don't know how he was able to walk and focus on both simultaneously, but he did! He truly was one of a kind, and I am so grateful to have enjoyed his friendship. Dina Clark

Dina Clark - January 07, 2019 at 09:00 PM



“ Tuve la enorme fortuna de conocer a Don Donald. De trabajar y de subir montañas, coleccionar plantas y nuevas especies.. contar cientos de historias y reír a carcajadas.. grandes proyectos q emprendió y grandes contribuciones a la ciencia y a Honduras. Ajenjamente

Una de sus frases.

Hermes - January 08, 2019 at 12:00 PM



“ Una de las personas más positivas que he conocido con una energía y sentido del humor contagiante, sin duda, todos nosotros y las plantas, te extrañaremos Don.

P.D. Musa balbisiana.

Jennifer Torres - January 08, 2019 at 03:05 PM



“ Una de las personas más positivas que he conocido con una energía y sentido del humor contagiante, sin duda, todos nosotros y las plantas, te extrañaremos Don.

P.D. Musa balbisiana.

Jennifer Torres - January 08, 2019 at 03:12 PM



“ As children my brother Bob and our cousin Don spent lots of time together. Sometimes I joined them in riding stick horses, climbing trees and playing in and on the farm buildings and equipment. Even then, Don's creative mind was evident. He could always think of something new to play. He and Bob were companions throughout their school years, both pursued careers in science, and both loved their families intensely. Both of them contributed a great deal to their families, friends, and communities and have left many good memories. I'm privileged to have had Don as a cousin.

Margaret Schulz

Margaret Schulz - January 08, 2019 at 08:41 PM



“ Tuve el placer de conocer a Don en 2012, ya que el y su esposa me brindaron de su apoyo para el desarrollo de mi tesis de para optar al título de Ingeniera Forestal, nunca olvido la pasión con que Don miraba las plantas, verdaderamente era su vocación, agradezco profundamente todo lo que Don le dio aís y principalmente el apoyo y la confianza que depósito en mi, siempre lo recordaremos como gran profesional y excelente ser humano a mi pque el fue.

Yensi Yanez - January 09, 2019 at 06:22 AM



“ Don was not only the best botanist I have ever known but more importantly the best person I have ever met. He knew exactly knew who he was and was not afraid to be that person. His jokes were so bad they made me laugh. Working in the field with him was never dull and when things would get frustrating he would undoubtedly tell me " Paul, lets go get some pie". So we would sit in a small cafe eat our pie and laugh. I love him dearly and will miss him greatly. Thank You Don you are one of a kind. Asclepias tuberosa!!!

Paul Swartzinski

Paul Swartzinski - January 09, 2019 at 10:43 AM



“ Descansa en paz tío Dan

Eric Flores - January 09, 2019 at 11:00 PM



“ I would label Don “exceptional”, certainly one of a kind. His jokes were combined with a broad knowledge and enthusiasm for plants and with joy in life. I have pictures in my office of the two trees he discovered, proud to say “that’s my cousin”. Don and I talked about a sense of place. For him it was firmly attached to the prairie; he was writing a book centered on sense of place. My father enjoyed times when Don would stay with him after collecting plants on the grassland, and then sit on the driveway to put the plants in a press – and I was happy that Don made my father happy. As I think about it, I believe that Don made many people happy – his own delight was contagious.

Elise Kimble

Elise Kimble - January 13, 2019 at 05:00 PM



“ I had the great pleasure of getting to spend several field seasons with Don in Colorado and New Mexico. I remember his glee at finding a wild species of potato he hadn't seen there before and having to let him do some collecting before we could move on down our transect. He was the most passionate botanist I have ever met and so generous in teaching what he knew. His jokes were so bad they were good and there was never a dull field day with Don. An eccentric, kind, wonderful friend who I will deeply miss.

Karen Caddis

Karen Caddis - January 18, 2019 at 03:18 AM



“ I just found out about Don's passing and I am so incredibly heartbroken. Two years ago I had the pleasure of working with Don on the Pawnee National Grasslands. For my doctoral work I studied the impact of oil and natural gas on short-grass steppe communities. While my advisor was on sabbatical, Don stepped in as a mentor. He had no obligation to help, but did so because of his love for botany, his interest in environmental justice and simply because he was a wonderful and kind human. We keyed hundreds of plants together whilst listening to music and talking about indigenous knowledge. He taught me that friends don't let friends plant annuals and that as a grassland expert I would have to develop a strong

sense of place. I am thankful he chose to impart some of his wisdom to me and I am so grateful to have known him, because he really made an impact on my life.

Randi Lupardus

Randi - March 24, 2019 at 03:25 PM



“ I just learned of Don's passing by reading the Augustana alumni magazine. Don and I shared the same birthday and we usually called each other by our draft lottery number (and year of birth), "49". That was long ago but I haven't forgotten his humor, knowledge and love of plants, and songs he played on his guitar. I miss him

Paul C. Steffenson

Paul C Steffenson - May 15, 2019 at 10:05 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Margaret Schulz - January 08, 2019 at 08:31 PM



“ Un amigo de verdad en la tierra.....y un amigo de verdad en la eternidad!!!! A. Cortés.

Asdrúbal Cortés - January 09, 2019 at 08:48 AM



“ My uncle Donny taught me a lot of things! Some of them were strange, some funny, and some were lessons in humanity. He was a brilliant mind who was always be on my level and better yet, the level of children and anyone who needed a laugh. I will miss him.

Tim Hazlett - January 08, 2019 at 06:02 PM



“ Lovely One Spathiphyllum Plant was purchased for the family of Don Hazlett.



January 08, 2019 at 03:31 PM



“ 3 files added to the album LifeTributes



Moser Funeral & Cremation Service - January 08, 2019 at 10:14 AM



“ 1 file added to the album LifeTributes



Stacey Anderson - January 07, 2019 at 10:40 PM



“ Don had a surprise gift of his songs at my 60th birthday. I feel fortunate to have this video of his singing. (watch above) His humor and kindness are all there. An amazing human being. He enriched my life with his humor, his plant stories and most of all, his generosity and acceptance. Stacey Anderson

Stacey Anderson - January 11, 2019 at 02:04 PM



“ Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of Don Hazlett.



January 07, 2019 at 10:10 PM



“ Don was a wonderful plantsman and all-around great guy. I enjoyed his visit to Denver Botanic Gardens where we would chat about a variety of topics. We owe our ethnobotany collection to him and his enthusiasm for ethnobotany and market collections in particular. He will be greatly missed.

Jenny Neale - January 07, 2019 at 04:53 PM



“ 61 files added to the album LifeTributes



Moser Funeral & Cremation Service - January 07, 2019 at 02:38 PM



“ I was fortunate to be a rookie botanist for the Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands at the same time that Don worked there. We did several surveys together and working with him was always fun and educational, both in the office and in the field. He would bring in edible plants to office potlucks, teach us how to make music on various plant parts, and always seemed to know when a state record was being collected. His vitality will be missed.

Melanie Arnett - January 07, 2019 at 01:22 PM



“ I have many fond memories of CONPS activities (workshops, field trips and many conversations at meetings) with Don. He taught about plants in such an engaging way. His ethnobotany stories were always a delight. He knew of my interest in seeds and showed me some fascinating ones. I feel so lucky to be among the many whose lives he touched. Annette Miller

Annette Miller - January 07, 2019 at 01:04 PM



“ I knew Don since the summer I graduated from CSU (1985), when he was working at Pawnee Nat. Grasslands. He and I maintained regular contact over these many years, and it was always a delight to visit with him and Marta in Pierce. Don was a frequent visitor to the UNC Herbarium in Greeley, where he was a great help to myself and students for a decade. He knew the native plants of the eastern Colorado prairies as well as anybody, and was generous in sharing that knowledge. He published or coauthored floristic summaries of several National Grasslands (Pawnee, Comanche, Kiowa and Rita Blanca). He spoke Spanish with a high degree of fluency, and over the years gleaned considerable knowledge of the use of plants by Spanish-speaking denizens of the southern Rockies. In so doing he broadened my understanding and appreciation of regional ethnobotany. Don also was the driving

force behind the creation of the ethnobotany collection housed at the Denver Botanic Gardens. He also discovered one of the rarest plant species in Central America, which was named in his honor (*Hapthanthus hazlettii*). Don was generous to all, loved to laugh, was a good personal friend, and a darned good botanist. I'll miss him.
Neil Snow

Neil Snow - January 07, 2019 at 12:26 PM



“ We have so many memories as we were blessed to call Don "friend" for a long time. Our daughters remember the silly songs he and Jeff used to play on guitar when the kids were little. These were timeless classics like "Ah Whoa Is Me", "Move My Piano" "Marvelous Mystery Toy, "Daddy's Taking Me to the Zoo Tomorrow", "Bernard the Mule" and of course "Tiny Bubbles". Hopefully many of you remember some of these and Don's incredible ability to enjoy life. We loved the walks on the prairie or in the garden, the native plants he brought to plant in our yard, and the wonderful dinners where we would laugh all evening as Don told his special brand of jokes. You couldn't go to the house without listening to his latest acquisition of vintage folk music, in vinyl of course or his baseball card collection. Don had many fine qualities including intelligence, humility, simple living, a sense of humor and social justice, but mostly, we remember a man who loved his family and lived joyfully. The Steg Family; Kay & Jeff, Colleen & Allie

Kay Steg - January 07, 2019 at 11:54 AM



“ I know of Don from his work on the Pawnee Grassland – I take his report on the plants with me whenever I hike at Pawnee Buttes. So I enjoyed learning about his good life, thanks for sharing.

Hollis Marriott (a Wyoming botanist)

hollis m - January 07, 2019 at 09:38 AM



“ Don stayed with the Yorde family the Summer of 1969 . My brother Steve and Don and I were cruising Marshall one night , I was in the back seat . A car was tailgating us very close so I looked and looked at this car , as it kept tailgating us . Don was driving . We soon made a left turn toward home , so did the tailgater . This tailgater turned out to be a Police car . He pulled us over . Don didn't have his glasses with him , so I handed him mine . The officer discovered my name on the glasses , and gave Don a ticket . When we got home , my Father was furious with the Police officer mainly because Don was our guest . He called City Hall and chewd their a**es for many minutes . I don't remember the result . But I think my Dad paid for the ticket . Sent with Love , Jeff Yorde

JEFF YORDE - January 06, 2019 at 08:34 PM



“ Don, we will miss you.

Mickey and Julie Marcus,
Amherst, Massachusetts

mickey - January 06, 2019 at 08:25 PM



“ I first met Don on a CoNPS field trip at Pawnee Buttes a few years ago. I was a newbie when it came to ID'ing Colorado natives, and I was amazed as he proceeded to identify every plant and weed in the parking lot. I quickly gave up trying to take notes. He was a great teacher and very generous with his knowledge.

Ann Grant
CoNPS Member

ANN GRANT - January 06, 2019 at 03:12 PM