

DAVID B. PANKRATZ

1954-2023



David Pankratz, PhD, retired Research and Policy Director of the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council passed away Friday at his Lawrenceville home in the embrace of his wife, Susan Swarthout, his son Nathaniel, the family pups, and the strains of Beethoven and Schubert.

Born in Toledo, Ohio, the son of George E. and Beatrice (Miller) Pankratz, and raised in a family of educators and

musicians, he grew up in a city where all the arts were a familiar and accessible part of everyday life. A talented guitarist and violist, David was a member of the DeVilbiss High School Orchestra, the Toledo Youth Orchestra, and the Ohio All-State Orchestra, and a frequent attendee at the concerts of the Toledo Symphony and the Peristyle and Great Gallery Series of the Toledo Museum of Art.

He began his undergraduate studies in music at Bowling Green State University, but, inspired by the writings of John Dewey, John Holt, and Jonathan Kozol, as well as by his own experiences with schooling, he turned to an analytical and philosophical reflection on the means and ends of education, and graduated from The University of Toledo with a BA in Philosophy, the fourth Toledo grad in his immediate family. David went on to earn a Masters in Aesthetic Education at the University of Illinois and a PhD in Arts Policy at The Ohio State University. He was always keenly appreciative of the good that teachers and educational/cultural institutions do, and equally aware of how they could do better.

Authorship of two books - *Multiculturalism and Public Arts Policy* and *The Future of the Arts: Public Policy and Arts Research* - established David as an expert on the intersection of culture, education, business, and politics. He brought that deep learning to a long list of institutions as a consultant and teacher, including Urban Gateways of Chicago, The Independent Commission on the NEA, The Getty Center, the American Symphony Orchestra League, Ohio State, American University, Carnegie Mellon, and finally GPAC. To each of these settings David brought an extra measure of curiosity and enthusiasm, going well beyond an analysis of institutional needs and opportunities to a celebration of what was outstandingly unique about each organization and place.

David became a true fan of Pittsburgh, touting its museums, theatres, concert series, neighborhoods, universities, and sports teams as an unofficial tour guide for visiting friends and family.

David and Susan, a theatre artist and fellow educator, shared a passion for travel, spending significant time on five continents. David was never a casual tourist. Always the researcher, he would create the optimal itinerary of little-known sites and distinctive eateries. He managed to visit 49 of the 50 states, and he wished to have his ashes scattered at the fiftieth.

With son Nathaniel he shared a love of sports, something passed on from his own father, and an affection for dogs, something learned from Nathaniel himself.

While David enjoyed his colleagues, students, and the grad students he mentored, his closest friends throughout life were his pals from DeVilbiss High, who maintained a tradition of broken plate reunions for many decades.

David was an early and constant advocate for cultural inclusion, for both broadening the artistic forms and traditions that we value and for making all the arts available, meaningful, and accessible to all persons regardless of background. That inclusiveness is strongly reflected in GPAC's 2017 publication *From Pointe Shoes to Pierogies: Impacts of the Arts in Allegheny County* for which he served as principal investigator. As his own mobility faltered, he thought pointedly about physical access, referring to the polished marble steps of a certain concert hall as a barrier to inclusion. Indeed, David's critical edge, which made him such an effective researcher and advocate, could, for some, seem too acute. He was not always comforting, but he was usually correct.

David is survived by wife Susan Swarthout, son Nathaniel Pankratz, brother John Pankratz, sister-in-law Cocol Bernal, and was predeceased by niece Julia Pankratz.

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