



info7141004 🏠 · Mar 29, 2020 · 2 min read

Remembering Doug Miller: A Niece's Story of Art, Culture & Love



This picture was taken on my first trip to Europe. Doug and Colleen hosted me - with everything literally first class, as only they would do. Some say they ruined me for all travel at the mere age of 14; I say they merely set the standard.

Doug introduced me to art. And I cannot thank him enough for that gift. He grew up in a life far from the world I grew up in. His was certainly artless. As an adult, he embraced it and wanted to spread that beauty to those in his life.

We arrived in Paris right as the Tour De France did. It was fabulous. Until we needed to get to our hotel on Île de la Cité. All streets were blocked off. Imagine the three of us just off a 9-hour flight walking miles with overpacked luggage to get to the hotel. Exhausting. That's one way Doug and I were the same. We didn't like when things weren't going our way. Thank God Colleen had the patience for our complaints!

In Paris, we spent hours in the Musée D'Orsay, the Picasso Museum, and many others I can't remember. He could stand in front of a painting for what felt like 30-minutes for a 14 year old. In all actuality, it certainly could have been that long. In that time, I had already traveled through most of the museum, finally landing on the impressionists where we would catch up -- eventually. To this day when traveling, no matter if I have been to the city or not, I always try to go to one new museum or see a new exhibit at one of my faves. I thank Doug for that.

He introduced me to the terms I still use en francais. Most importantly "ou est..." as Colleen and I were constantly getting turned around. He wasn't patient with most (as friends would confirm), but when it came to practicing my french at cafes, he allowed it. He was also ok with 14-year old me, not used to night trains, buying two tickets to have a cabin to myself on the train to Switzerland. I was NOT ready for a stranger to walk in to that cabin at night!

Paris will always be a special place in my heart because of him.

Doug passed away around this time in 2016. It was something I never thought would happen. We'd had multiple scares before. When I heard he was heading home, the thought that he was home yet wouldn't survive the night never crossed my mind.

As I remember Doug, I cannot thank him enough for introducing me to culture -- the paintings, sculptures, musicals, languages, you name it.

But culture came second to his love for his wife, my aunt Colleen. They were the definition of soul-mates; more than happy being alone with each other yet welcoming of guests when they moved down to the bay. Heading to the bay with Colleen and Doug was a welcome escape for all.

Doug would ask multiple times, "Maddie, do you know how happy we are that you're here?". At the time, I wondered why he was continually asking me this.

Now I know... it's so I can close my eyes and remember him and his love.