

# UC Irvine

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Undergraduate

IN MEMORIAM for Donald McKayle (1930-2018)

This issue of *Dance Major Journal* is dedicated to Donald McKayle, whose death on April 6, 2018 hit the dance world hard. For his longtime colleagues and his students at the University of California, Irvine, where *DMJ* is based, it felt very personal. McKayle was a fixture for several decades here, teaching modern dance, singing in the hallways, telling stories about touring with Martha, or dancing on Broadway, or choreographing the big Portobello Road scene in *Bedknobs and Broomsticks*. He oversaw staging of his iconic dances, as well as making a new one each year. Over a long lifetime, he made works that celebrated life, revealed injustice, and made us think and feel a more expansive connectedness to each other. Through the medium of the dancing body, Donald McKayle showed us the depth of the human spirit.

Until a few months before his death at age 87, McKayle had been rehearsing with his student ensemble. A celebration of his life and work took place at a last concert of McKayle's UCI Etude Ensemble last June, followed by a memorial service where friends, family, and colleagues spoke movingly about his life and work. He had won all the awards the dance world had to offer and could have rested on his laurels, but instead, he was picking out music and planning his next dance.

For us, it's the end of an era. For the dance world, Donald McKayle's works will continue to speak for ages to come.