



## Dr. Roger D. Gross

January 25, 1931 - April 23, 2017

Dr. Roger D. Gross passed away peacefully April 23, 2017 in his home in Fayetteville, AR, on the anniversary of the birth and death of William Shakespeare.

Roger loved teaching above all other pursuits and his students responded in kind. He loved the works of William Shakespeare above all other playwrights. He loved composing and performing music and was creative and playful in all activities. He dedicated his life to these, his faith, and his family.

He was born to Orien W. and Theresa Gross on January 25, 1931, in Spokane, WA. Survivors in addition to his wife Patricia include his daughter and son-in-law, Kimberly and Duke Pennell, of Fayetteville, Ark.; parents-in-law, Joseph and Rita Relph, Fredonia, KS, sisters-in-law, Mina DeBerry of Fredonia, Ks., Virginia Relph of Auburn, Ind., Meredith (Phillip) Odell of Fredonia, Ramona H. Gross, Sparks Nev.; brother-in-law, Ross (Josie) Relph of Lenexa; nieces Mary Klem, Debby Enstad, Barbara Gross, Kelly Gross and Mary Ellen Huff, Rebecca Relph and Emily Relph; a nephew, Michael Gross, and three goddaughters, also his nieces, Elizabeth DeBerry, Jillian Johnson and Stephanie Wilson.

His brothers, Orien W. Gross, Clayton Kelly Gross, and his nephew, Stephen DeBerry, preceded him in death.

Roger graduated from Gonzaga Prep High School 1948. He attended Eastern

Washington College before joining the Air Force in 1951 and serving in the 560th Air Force Band at McChord AFB, Tacoma, Washington. He received his B.A. in Theatre at the University of Oregon; M.A., Speech and Theatre Arts, University of Minnesota and Ph.D. in Theatre at University of Oregon. His teaching positions included: Speech and Drama, University of Santa Clara; Speech, University of Oregon, Theatre, Bowling Green State University and Drama, University of Arkansas, where he served as the first Chairman of Drama and Director of the MFA Playwriting program and retired in 2012 Professor Emeritus.

Roger was the co-founder, producing and artistic director of the California Shakespeare Festival in Los Gatos, CA from 1962-1970. He was a lecturer and writer on Cognitive Skill Development.

He was active in the Kennedy Center's American College Theatre Festival, and held national offices in the Association for Theatre in Higher Education and the University and College Theatre Association.

He wrote two groundbreaking books *Understanding Playscripts* and *Shakespeare's Verse: a user's Manual* for actors, directors, readers, and enlightened teachers.

As a composer, Roger wrote musicals for young audiences and music to accompany Shakespeare's songs, as well as jazz and popular music. He was a member of the choir and a lector at Saint Joseph's Catholic Church, Tontitown.

As an artist and educator, he worked in the theatre for fifty-five years and directed over 180 plays.

While battling Parkinson's disease during the last years of his life, Roger gratefully acknowledged the help of his caregiver, Erica Lindsey, along with speech and physical therapists and the nurses and physicians who worked to strengthen him.

A 9:30 am rosary and 10:00 am memorial Mass at will be held at the Saint

Joseph Tontitown Catholic Church, 192 E. Henri deTonti Blvd on Friday, April 28, 2017, with Father Gregory Hart officiating. Sisco Funeral Chapel in Springdale is handling cremation.

There will be a public celebration of life at Sudduth Friends Lounge, Walton Arts Center, Saturday, May 6, at noon.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Roger's memory to a theatre in your community or to Walton Arts Center, Theatre Squared, Trike Theatre, Arts Center of the Ozarks, Arts Live! and the University of Arkansas Theatre.

Online condolences may be left at [www.siscofuneral.com](http://www.siscofuneral.com)

# Previous Events

## Rosary

APR 28. 9:30 AM (CT)

St. Joseph Catholic Church  
136 E Henri De Tonti Blvd  
Springdale, AR 72762  
<http://www.stjoetontitown.org>

## Mass of Christian Burial

APR 28. 10:00 AM (CT)

St. Joseph Catholic Church  
136 E Henri De Tonti Blvd  
Springdale, AR 72762  
<http://www.stjoetontitown.org>

# Tribute Wall



“ *Dr. Roger D. Gross*

January 21, 2023 at 02:29 PM



“ *Debbie Jordon lit a candle in memory of Dr. Roger D. Gross*



**Debbie Jordon** - April 27, 2017 at 11:23 PM



*May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7)*

**Debbie Jordon** - April 28, 2017 at 12:13 AM



“ *Rhonda G. Williams lit a candle in memory of Dr. Roger D. Gross*



**Rhonda G. Williams** - April 26, 2017 at 02:19 PM



*"And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."*

**Rhonda G. Williams** - April 26, 2017 at 02:20 PM