



Doni Van Beek

August 10, 1952 - December 6, 2025

Doni Van Beek, 73, much-loved musician, vocalist, and bartender; of Chicago's Rogers Park; passed away December 6, 2025, after a brief battle with metastatic prostate cancer

Donald Earle Van Beek, Jr. was born in Evergreen Park, Illinois, attended Thornton Township High School, and graduated from Hillcrest High School. As a teenager, Donald discovered Jimi Hendrix and decided to go by "Doni". After a few college classes (probably history) Doni saved enough money to backpack across Europe for three months.

It was in 1976 that Doni caught the eye of Connie Gordon at the Odd Sock, a dive bar in Midlothian. Doni was standing stage-side, playing harmonica alongside a band. At their second meeting, Connie accidentally stepped on and broke his guitar cable. The two enjoyed platonic friendship for a year before becoming lovers and on September 5, 1981 they held a small wedding party after a modest civil ceremony at the Markham Court House. The couple moved from Blue Island to Beverly to Wrigleyville to Lakeview before returning south to Bridgeport for a decade of loft-living. They purchased a house in Homewood in 1999 and moved all the way north to Rogers Park in 2015. Doni and Connie enjoyed a solid healthy marriage. The couple were incredibly supportive of each other's interests and pursuits. They traveled to Barcelona, Germany (Berlin, Nuremberg, and Munich), Los Angeles, New York, San

Francisco, London, and Mexico (Puerta Vallarta, Cabo San Lucas, and even visited Cancun just weeks ago.)

Music was Doni's life. He played Southern-style rock with a local band, did the guitar duo scene with Ric Radick and even jammed with Slash once in the late 80's. From 1985-92, Doni fronted Price of Priesthood opening for Smashing Pumpkins and other touring bands. Doni played harmonica and rhythm guitar and sang lead vocals along with bandmates Vince Szydlowski (lead guitar), Jim Hauser (keyboards), Mike Hosman (drums), and the late, great Bill Hyland (bass). Although lyrical and poetic, the band prided themselves as being one of the loudest bands in Chicago.

Doni, Hyland, Hosman and Billy Anderson (rhythm guitar/keyboards) briefly joined Babette Novak in Babette's Feast in 1992, and they toured some clubs in Colorado. In late 1992 Doni, Hyland and Anderson reformed as Tungdriven with Bob Schneider on drums. They held the unique honor of being the subject of a Wesley Willis-penned song. Doni's next band, 40 Horse Johnson, with Bill Hyland, Mike Hosman and lead guitarist Dave Menet, served an even harder, more riff-driven sound. Over the years, Doni and Bill collaborated creatively, most recently on Daddy Burger Swag (with Doni on guitars and vocals), joined by Sanjay Mehta and later Mike Collins on drums, and Tom Van Kanegan and later Fred Jackson on sax.

Lastly, Doni enjoyed a very spirited and experimental collaboration with Indiana vocalist/guitarist/producer Jef Sarver at Jef's studio for well over a decade and into this year. They were 'brothers from another mother', their great friendship having started while waiting in line at a New York Dolls concert in 2010.

Doni worked in Chicago's events industry as a bartender for Artifact Events, the Chicago Theatre, and Food for Thought Catering. He also made floral

deliveries and seasonal decorations set-ups for Florisculpture at hotels, residences, and the Union League Club. He was an avid reader who studied history and watched Sunday sports with his friends at Cary's Lounge on Devon. Don rooted for the Chicago Bulls and was eager to watch Bears games, even while his health was failing

Doni is missed by so many people. Most of all, his adoring wife of 44 years, Constance Jane Van Beek (nee Gordon), who feels lost without her baby. Their three cats Bootsy, Freddy, and Flint are confused but keeping Connie warm at night.

He was the eldest brother of Richard (the late Carol) Van Beek and Cathy (Phil) Wilder; loving "Uncle Doni" of Jimmy, Jeff, and Kevin (Lisa) Barrett and twins Alex and Andrew (Lara) Van Beek; great-uncle of Leo and Nora. Doni is also survived by Thomas Oberg, his best friend of 60 years. Tom called Doni "South Side Slim" and the two enjoyed many youthful adventures, hitchhiking and other shenanigans. Tom was there when Doni picked up his first guitar at the age of 14.

Preceded in death by parents Donald E. and Jeannette Catherine (nee Dugan) Van Beek, Sr. and special feline friends Clancy and Devin.

The family has donated Doni's body to science via the Anatomical Gift Association.

Memorial service Sunday, February 1, 12:30-4:30pm. (Doors open 12:30, eulogy service begins 1:30pm). at Artifact Events, 4325 N Ravenswood Ave, Chicago, IL 60613. Livestream the event here: <https://www.asimplestreaming.com/dvbeek/>

Friends and family will gather after the service for "Jammin Without a License": Doni's Memorial Afterparty with Live Music, 6-10pm, at Cary's Lounge 2251 W. Devon Ave, Chicago, IL 60659.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his name to the American Cancer Society; <https://www.cancer.org/> or to Sweet Relief Musicians Fund: <https://www.sweetrelief.org/>

Arrangements by Inclusive Funeral Care, 773-318-1305 or www.InclusiveFuneralCare.com/

Previous Events

Memorial Service

FEB 1. 12:30 PM - 4:30 PM (CT)

Artifact Events
4325 North Ravenswood Avenue
Chicago, IL 60613
<http://artifaceteventschicago.com>

12:30pm Guest Arrival; 1:30pm eulogies; reception to follow

"Jammin Without a License": Doni's Memorial Afterparty with Live Music

FEB 1. 6:00 PM - 10:00 PM (CT)

Cary's Lounge
2251 W. Devon Avenue
Chicago, IL 60659
<https://caryslounge.com/>

6-10pm

Tribute Wall



“ *Inclusive Funeral Care created a Livestream Doni's Memorial Service in memory of Doni Van Beek*



Team Inclusive Funeral Care - January 13 at 05:45 PM

FR

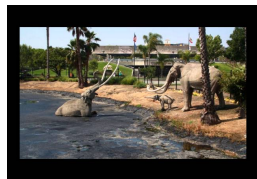
“ *2 files added to the album blue mud*



frank raven - February 02 at 04:33 PM

KI

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



kik - January 31 at 10:20 PM

KI

Donni and Bill and the lads, kickin' it out and over the top! Party in the Tarpits: Price of Priesthood... YES!

kiki - February 01 at 03:24 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Doni Van Beek.



January 30 at 04:39 PM



“ Dick Van Beek, and family purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of Doni Van Beek.



Dick Van Beek, and family - January 29 at 02:39 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Frank Raven - January 24 at 11:40 PM



“ 1 file added to the album tungdriven



Frank Raven - January 24 at 11:31 PM

TS

“ *The Oberg Family and friends from the So purchased the Days of Sunshine Bouquet for the family of Doni Van Beek.*



The Oberg Family and friends from the So - January 23 at 01:54 PM

MC

“ *I had the amazing pleasure of playing music with Doni. I remember one unbelievable time that he came to my house to record on his composition Kerin. He was overdubbing guitars brought a few pedals and it just came out amazing. A lot of it didn't even sound like guitars. It sounded like a symphony and some parts. I was amazed, and it was one of my favorite recording memories. I will miss Doni forever.*

Mike Collins - January 04 at 10:07 AM

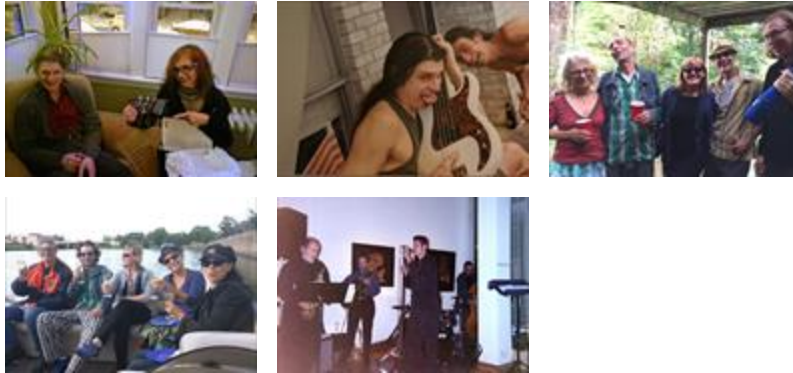
MC

Pedals not panels.

Mike Collins - January 04 at 10:07 AM

BN

“ 20 files added to the album *Babette Memories Album*



Babette Novak - January 03 at 04:59 PM

JP

“ *Julie Pietryla lit a candle in memory of Doni Van Beek*



Julie Pietryla - December 31, 2025 at 09:17 AM

CO

“ *Doni was one of the most authentic and naturally cool fellas I have ever met. Always enjoyed an opportunity to chat with him, he was a font of fantastic stories and just such an effortlessly kind soul.*

Carter O'Brien - December 24, 2025 at 02:38 PM

CB

“ Constance Beek lit a candle in memory of Doni Van Beek



Constance Beek - December 23, 2025 at 08:15 PM

CB

Green, always his fave color

Constance Beek - December 23, 2025 at 08:16 PM

LK

“ *I met Constance in London in 2009.. actually I met her in the mid 1980s when she worked at Chiaroscuro, a gallery that showed my work, but I didn't realize she was the same. Connie until years later. Anyway, I saw Connie and Doni at many shows over the years and they were the sweetest, dearest, and kindest of couples. They enjoyed music so much, and were very talented musicians in their own right. It was always so wonderful to see them. Doni will be so missed by everyone who knew him. You could not meet this special couple without being touched by their genuine warmth and kindness. My heart goes out to Connie and their friends and family.*

liz Krinsky - December 22, 2025 at 08:47 PM

MP

“ Recently I was speaking with a friend a fellow artist/musician and we started speaking about Doni. Doni and myself go back to the Metro days (for us) in later 80's. I would wander in and Price of Priesthood would be commanding the Metro stage with Doni driving the mad sleigh. So this friend tells me how often Doni was showing up at their gigs these days. And I was taken aback because Doni was showing up at many of my gigs, now I know what my energy level can handle these days and my emotional battery gets over taxed easily. But just doing some rough math in my old noggin I was astounded at how beautifully supportive Doni was to his entire community. And all of this love from him while him and Connie were dealing with his illness. He never shared any of that with me, we talked books and memories kinda typical old man shit. I get weary of asking how friends are, often the answers are so much to bear just hearing peoples struggles. When Doni left this world we lost a physical column to our community temple. Luckily he left behind his art and his love Connie to shore up that missing weight bearing wall. Love ya Doni, I'll see ya at the bar backstage.

Mark J Panick - December 21, 2025 at 02:03 PM

LB

“ My love and condolences to Connie, family and friends. I only met Doni a couple of times through Connie, a paleontology colleague. But I could see his Light through Connie's eyes and what she chose to share on FB, etc. It is clear that he lived a fabulous life, sharing a Path of Love with his Soulmate, Connie.

Lisa B - December 21, 2025 at 12:20 PM

TG

“ Godspeed to Doni, a great guy who I loved talking to about music! You will be missed my friend!

Thomas Halle Guerra - December 21, 2025 at 12:14 PM



“ *Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Doni Van Beek.*



December 12, 2025 at 09:58 AM



“ *Doni was a great guy enjoyed working with him back at Coral and debating him on sports*

RIP my guy.

Jeff Grek - December 09, 2025 at 04:53 PM



“ *4 files added to the album Memories Album*



Team Inclusive Funeral Care - December 07, 2025 at 06:28 PM

AT

To My Good Friend, Donny

You will be greatly missed my Friend. We had some Great Times. You will be missed Buddy :-)

Your Buddy Mr. Torres

Alex Torres - December 12, 2025 at 01:01 PM

KI

<https://youtu.be/fjaX8JXNTxo?si=iUclbYktlbhv2JmH>

kiki - January 31 at 10:17 PM