



Robert Douglas Bruce

August 26, 1963 - June 11, 2024

Robert Douglas “Doug” Bruce, 60, of Chicago’s Andersonville/Uptown neighborhood, passed away from pancreatic cancer at home, surrounded by love, on June 11, 2024.

Doug is survived by his husband, Craig; his sister and brother-in-law, Moira and David; and by his three nephews, Rostik, Vadik, and Austin. He was preceded in death by his parents, John and Jeannette.

Born in Columbus, Mississippi, and raised in an Air Force family, Doug graduated from Air Academy High School and earned a Bachelor’s degree in English from Southern Methodist University. After college, he lived in New York City and New Orleans before settling in Chicago thirty years ago. He earned a Master’s of Social Work and a PhD in Public Health, both from University of Illinois at Chicago.

Doug was an accomplished public health researcher and, at the time of his passing, a Professor of Health Sciences at DePaul University. He served as chair of the Department of Health Sciences and taught in the Master of Public Health Program, which he helped shape with his vision. He served as principal investigator on grants from the National Institutes of Health. As a program evaluation and development consultant, he worked with a number of local organizations, such as the AIDS Foundation of Chicago and Chicago

Department of Public Health, as well as national and international organizations, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the US Agency for International Development. In work as in life, Doug was generous with his time and was a dedicated mentor of junior faculty and so many students.

Doug loved to travel with his husband and friends, cook, garden, listen to music, attend concerts and theatrical performances, throw a kick-ass party, hunt for treasures at antique malls and flea markets, enjoy a glass of wine or other adult beverage, craft and draw, complete challenging crossword puzzles, ride his bike, and spoil his cats Buggy and Dutch, who preceded him in passing. His wit, intelligence, and mischievous smile lit up every space he entered. His love and support for his family and friends was unmatched.

Doug chose to be cremated and there will be a private celebration of life for family and friends at a later date.

In lieu of flowers or food, please celebrate and honor Doug by making a donation to DePaul University Department of Health Sciences student scholarships (<https://secure.alumni.depaul.edu/s/1906/19/interior.aspx?sid=1906&gid=2&pgid=3730&cid=8831&fid=8831&gfid=7939>) or checks can also be sent with "In Memory of Doug Bruce/Fund for Health Sciences" in the memo line or in an attachment to: DePaul University, Attn: Gift Processing, 1 E Jackson Blvd, Chicago, IL 60604; or to Northwestern Memorial Hospital Cancer Center (<https://nmgive.donordrive.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=donate.event&eventID=619>)

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

give.depaul.edu/dougbruce

Tribute Wall

PT

“ I stumbled across the news of Doug's passing just yesterday and was saddened, but looking through the tributes and pictures I am glad to see he continued with his life as I knew he had begun it very early on. I met Doug in high school, we were assigned to be lab partners in Biology when we were 15 and 16 years old. He was so much fun and so very kind, and though he never knew why, I desperately needed that at that time as I was going through a personal hell at home I won't detail here. Doug is one of the first people I ever met who helped me realize that perhaps I deserved to be able to smile and that it could be possible. When we had to dissect frogs, he & I shared a frog and were each supposed to dissect half of it. The stench of formaldehyde made me gag and I could barely stand being in the room, plus the whole idea upset me. Doug realized this and instead of criticizing me, he surreptitiously took over and did most of the work himself, making sure our teacher did not see this so that I would not get into trouble. He joked and helped me get through it, and made sure I was okay. In fact, he always did. I was so shy and scared in those days, and he must have seen it, and though he was just a kid himself, he not only tried to help, he really did help. Before social media or internet were invented I always wanted to get back in touch with him and thank him, tell him that I made it, that I moved to England and found life and happiness. I never did tell him and now I've missed my chance. But thank you Doug, and thank you to all of you who knew and love him too.

Paula Telesco - January 04, 2025 at 08:16 AM

AF

“ A few days ago I received my DePaul magazine in the mail and I was shocked and saddened to see Dr. Bruce’s name in the “In Memoriam” section. Dr. Bruce had a profound impact on my life while I was a student at DePaul and he was my mentor. During my junior year Dr. Bruce asked me to be his Research Assistant after I took his Intro into Epidemiology class during fall quarter of 2012. That internship would help guide me into a career of public health research where I still work today. It was also because of that internship that I had to sign up for UIP250 during the winter quarter of 2013, and it was in that class where I met my now husband. During my senior year I felt so honored when Dr. Bruce nominated me for the “Dr. Dorothy Kozlowski Outstanding Student of the Year Award”. After I graduated Dr. Bruce went out of his way in helping me find a job, he even made a phone call to an old colleague of his to let them know I would be applying for a research position with their team. That would be my first job out of college and it gave me an amazing jump start for my career in public health. Dr. Bruce was an extraordinarily caring professor and I will always cherish my time at DePaul when he was my mentor.



Aimee Fata - January 02, 2025 at 06:12 PM

SG

“ Dear Craig and all of Doug’s family and friends. It is hard to know the best words at such a time. Our hearts ache for your loss. The last time we saw Doug was at an Alvin Ailey performance in Chicago. I remember with fondness his warm smile and hug as we shared a pre-show drink together. Whenever we were with Doug over the years his warmth is what I will always remember. His smile lit up a room. We send you all our love and peace during this difficult time. May his memory be a blessing.
Sally & Brian Gill.

Sally Gill - July 01, 2024 at 01:11 PM

TT

“ I met Doug when we both lived in the French Quarter of New Orleans in the late 1980's. We both earned master's degrees in social work, and later worked together on the National Association of Social Workers HIV/AIDS Spectrum Project where Doug serves as the project evaluator. I was able to connect with him on and off over the years in Washington DC and Chicago. His humanity and authentic character were an asset to the public health space as well as in our friendship.

Terry M Tauger - June 28, 2024 at 08:29 PM

JU

“ Besides being a great friend and colleague, Doug and I always bonded over music. Here’s some songs to enjoy: <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/4evJHHsjvGMsD8YxHAXwCZ?si=9ayLXxUcTQq0TrdQDAyDSw&pi=u-oVjaqgz4TL2d>

You will be missed my friend. Love, Julia

Julia - June 27, 2024 at 07:54 PM

JQ

“ Doug was so many wonderful things: a supportive friend, a witty and lively conversationalist, an intelligent and kind teacher and mentor. We shared so much together, we laughed a lot, and I miss him so much. He lit up the world, and his light shines on for those of us who loved him. Janet Quinn

Janet Quinn - June 23, 2024 at 11:46 AM

HS

“ Doug was an exceptional person. I am at a loss for ways to describe him. He was brilliant and fearless. He was the person who knew why I was crying when I got to work the day Bowie died. He laughed at me being too “treatment naive” to take edibles for debilitating headaches when we were robbed because I had never gotten high. He went to extraordinary lengths to advocate for me professionally. I love you, Doug. You are so missed.

Heather Sevener - June 21, 2024 at 09:24 PM

AG

“ I had the honor to have Dr. Bruce as a professor. He was a very sympathetic individual who sought for the well-being of his students. My heart goes out to his family, friends, and loved ones. He will be greatly missed.

Alejandra Gonzalez - June 18, 2024 at 04:48 PM

EN

“ Doug was a caring and dedicated colleague who was always willing lend an ear or tell a great story. He will be sorely missed, but his memory will always bring a smile. Condolences to all who knew him.

Eric Norstrom - June 18, 2024 at 11:03 AM

SR

“ I was lucky enough to meet Dr. Bruce when I reached out to CHS PhD alumni to request participation in an alumni panel for current students. Dr. Bruce replied almost immediately, and was happy to participate. He was generous with his time, offered an extremely relevant perspective, and expressed willingness to engage with attendees after the event. Based on how helpful he was during a volunteer event with individuals he'd never met before, I can only imagine how dedicated he was to his students at DePaul. Higher Education (and public health) are better for the wonderful work he did. My condolences to his family and friends.

Stu Robinson - June 18, 2024 at 10:59 AM

CH

“ I had the chance to work with Doug during DePaul's response to the COVID pandemic. While his expertise in public health was extremely beneficial, he will be most remembered for his compassion, humor, and wit. He helped us get through those difficult days and I will remember him fondly.

Cheryl Hover - June 17, 2024 at 04:41 PM

DK

“ I had the pleasure of meeting Doug when I became the Inaugural Chair of the Health Sciences Department in 2011. He wasn't officially yet a faculty member but his work in Public Health at DePaul made him curious about what this new major and department would become. The best thing this new department did was to hire Doug (and Sarah) as the first tenure-line faculty in 2012. Doug brought his expertise in public health to the curriculum but more importantly to this interdisciplinary department who was trying to do something unique by preparing students who are holistically trained in health - not just in the basic sciences. Although my time as chair was short, I had the pleasure of interacting with Doug in many ways over the years. When my interest in traumatic brain injury moved away from working in my lab and into working in the community Doug helped me navigate this new area, introducing me to colleagues in public health. He was a dedicated scientist...even reaching out in his last months to ask me my thoughts on some data he was examining. Doug's sharp wit and sense of humor made working with him so enjoyable. He will be missed, but his legacy lives on in so many students, staff, faculty and administrators who had the privilege of his presence. My deepest sympathy goes out to his closest friends and family.
Dorothy Kozlowski

Dorothy Kozlowski - June 17, 2024 at 03:40 PM

KJ

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Kristin Jacobson - June 17, 2024 at 12:43 PM

HS

This is how I will remember him. That face is classic.

Heather Sevenser - June 21, 2024 at 09:25 PM



“ I only knew Doug for a brief period, but in that time, I saw firsthand what a kindhearted and fun-loving soul he was. During the VMI trip to Niagara, I fondly remember Doug and I being among the few who trekked down to the edge of the falls, getting soaked in the process. Neither of regretted it for a minute. My condolences to his family and friends.

Andrew Miller - June 17, 2024 at 09:16 AM

EF

“ Decades ago, one of my doctoral advisors shared her guidelines for assessing potential colleagues: ask yourself, are they smart, fun, and nice? From our first meeting in 2012, through our collaborative research projects, to our later interactions as fond colleagues, Doug proved to be super smart, wickedly fun, and... nice is too bland of a word. He was truly kind to me. A patient and empathetic listener and a mentor in how to live an academic life as a whole person. Given the gap that I feel with his passing, I can only imagine the grief his close friends and family must feel. My deepest condolences go out to you.



Elissa Foster - June 16, 2024 at 06:14 PM

KJ

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Kristin Jacobson - June 15, 2024 at 11:58 PM



“ 10 files added to the album Memories Album



David Schaefer - June 15, 2024 at 12:14 PM



“ My deepest condolences to all of Dr. Bruce's loved ones. DePaul faculty and students alike will miss him. I am so lucky to have met Dr. Bruce when I took a class with him. He was knowledgeable and excellent at facilitating learning. All of his students in my class had a deeper appreciation for public health and health equity because of him. Dr. Bruce was also incredibly kind. I felt seen and heard in a time of my life where I needed that more than anything. He will forever be remembered by me as one of the people at DePaul that taught me, but also one of the people in my life that saw me for me before I even fully knew who I was and treated me all the same. I would not be so unapologetically me without him. Rest in peace, Dr. Bruce.

Ashland Flackus - June 15, 2024 at 09:31 AM

SG

“ Doug epitomized Vincentian Personalism. His life touched hundreds if not thousand of students and his legacy is long lasting. May the memories provide comfort to his family, friends, and colleagues.

Sincerely,
Salma Ghanem

Salma Ghanem - June 14, 2024 at 09:34 PM

ML

“ Know that many at DePaul, including me, will remember Doug fondly and continue to honor his life and memory by seeking to carry forward his generous and caring spirit, as we grieve his loss. Sincerely, Mark Laboe

Mark Laboe - June 14, 2024 at 07:27 PM

CM

“ I have been fortunate to feel the guidance and care of loving mentors before. But what I experienced with Dr. Doug Bruce was beyond my wildest dreams. It started 8 years ago with him sharing his syllabus and tips when I taught my first Epidemiology course my first quarter at DePaul. Followed by countless discussions ranging from research to travel to family. To him literally being the impetus for the tenure track position that I am starting in the fall. Doug was an impeccable Chair of the Department of Health Sciences, leading us and serving with intention, innovation, tenacity, and loyalty. But the care and love that he showed me (no... that he showered me with) is something that I will never let go of and that has shaped me as an academic. He mentored me perfectly. He was generous. He gave the best advice. He was hilarious. He was an incredible friend.

Our students are better for having learned from such a public health champion. Rest in peace, my friend. Thank you for every ounce of love and friendship over our too short time together. I miss you dearly. I will make you proud.



Cricel Molina - June 14, 2024 at 06:10 PM

CM

“ Our students are better for having learned from such a public health champion. Rest in peace, my friend. Thank you for every ounce of love and friendship over our too short time together. I miss you dearly. I will make you proud.

Cricel Molina - June 14, 2024 at 06:03 PM

DO

“ My condolences to Doug's family and loved ones during this time of sorrow and grief. Doug was a rare colleague at DePaul who generously lent his time and brilliance to make things happen in the name of social justice and expanding our vision of the possible. I share a photo of him in action during a panel on cannabis and health that we did just a year ago. He was a creative partner in a range of initiatives we did together, which touched on areas that included LGBTQ studies, cannabis studies, health administration, service learning, and more. I will miss him in person, but I will keep his spirit close; he remains an inspiration for the projects he helped set in motion and bears the mark of his steadfast care, creativity, and can-do spirit. Thank you Doug. ❤️



Don Opitz - June 14, 2024 at 05:32 PM

SA

“ Doug and I joined Health Sciences together in 2012, before we even had office space. Being part of a small department meant that all of us were involved in all the decisions. From that start and through the past 14 years, Doug built our program. He was trustworthy leader, with great humor and the best stories. He was a supportive friend who helped me through the tenure process and beyond. He was fair and professional, but I admit that some of my favorite times were when he lost his cool. When needed, his outrage was fantastically affirming. I am grateful for his understanding and empathy. I am glad that he chose to be a professor because the position allowed him to impact so many students and share his unique perspective. We were better because of him and he will be deeply missed.



Sarah - June 14, 2024 at 05:26 PM

SA

(12 years)

Sarah - June 14, 2024 at 06:01 PM

SC

“ I’ll miss you forever. I’ll remember the Virgo parties, and the nerd herd, and the years at MATEC, the way you ordered my beer for me (and ruined cheap beer forever), so so many Halloween festivities, our epic D & D game, how you talked me into a full time job at DePaul, the conference in Toronto, your doting cat dad videos, and being the only two weirdos doing the PhD part time. We shared our unparalleled capacity for sarcasm, our passion for equity, a deep appreciation for live music, and recently-hidden art talents! There are too many memories, and too few pictures of it all. I know what you gave me, and I’ll carry it with me every day ❤️



Suzanne Carlberg-Racich - June 14, 2024 at 03:33 PM

KG

“ I started at DePaul in 2013, and Doug was one of the folks I met early on from the college of science and health outside my own unit. He was always kind, supporting, helpful, and insightful. He always focused on care for our students, faculty, and staff and was honest and kind in all his interactions with me. We lost a great colleague. My thoughts go out to his friends and family and I hope they feel some solace in the fact he had such a great impact on so many people from a wide variety of walks of life.

Kyle Grice - June 14, 2024 at 03:02 PM



“ 13 files added to the album Memories Album



Team Inclusive Funeral Care - June 14, 2024 at 11:13 AM