



Edmund W. Perry, Jr.

MAR 8, 1963 - JUN 17, 2019



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Edmund Warren Perry, Jr., age 56, passed away on June 17, 2019 at his home in Memphis after a short battle with cancer. Warren was a generous spirit, warm, funny, intelligent, and deeply passionate about art, literature, and history. He held graduate degrees in medieval literature and creative writing from the University of Memphis and in playwriting from the Catholic University of America. He grew up in Memphis, Tennessee and in Southaven, Mississippi. Warren began working part-time at the planetarium of the Pink Palace Museum in 1981 while simultaneously attending classes toward a degree in English and American literature at Memphis State University, the beginning his life-long pursuit of both literature and museums. He met his wife, Shannon, when they were installing paintings at the Dixon Gallery and Gardens in Memphis; they were married in December 1996. A few years later, they moved together to Washington, DC, where they lived for almost fifteen years. Their only child, Jeanne Lynn, was born there in 2012. The Perry family returned to Tennessee (Knoxville) in 2014 and moved back to Memphis in 2017. Warren was a writer of both creative and nonfiction work and a museum professional with expertise in American history, popular culture, and literature. Since October 2018, he had been Programs Administrator for the Pink Palace Family of Museums, managing exhibitions, collections, the planetarium, the CTI giant screen theater, Lichterman Nature Center, the historic properties (Mallory-Neely and Magevney houses), and the Coon Creek fossil site. In the last thirty-eight years, Warren delivered planetarium talks, installed hundreds of pieces of artwork from museums all over the world, curated exhibitions, and gave over forty lectures at the Smithsonian Institution, the National Civil War Museum, the National Portrait Gallery of Australia, the National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo, Kyoto University, and many major American museums including the Gibbes and the Michener. His publications include *Echoes of Elvis* (Rowman and Littlefield/Smithsonian Scholarly



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Press, 2012, winner of the 2013 Smithsonian Secretary's research prize) Swift to My Wounded: Walt Whitman and the Civil War (Smithsonian/National Portrait Gallery Press, 2010), and he was a co-author of the book *Elvis 1956: Photographs* by Alfred Wertheimer, which accompanied the Smithsonian traveling exhibition *Elvis at 21* on its international tour from 2010 to 2014. *Elvis 1956* received Foreword Review's Book of the Year Bronze award for adult nonfiction/music writing in 2009. Warren also contributed to and co-edited the forthcoming *Doom with a View: Historical and Cultural Contexts of the Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons Plant 1952-2017*, a collection of essays to be published by Fulcrum Press in 2019. His plays have been staged with Yellow Taxi Productions (2006, Manchester, NH), the Strawberry One Act Festival (2006, 2007, 2008, NY), the Samuel French Off Off Broadway Festival (2004, NY), the Kennedy Center's Page to Stage Festival (2003-2007, Washington DC), the National Portrait Gallery's "Cultures in Motion" project (2006, 2007, 2008, 2011, Washington DC), and the Voices of the South Memphis Fringe Festival (2018). In August 2006, he received the award for Best Director at the Strawberry One Act Festival where "The Sitters" was nominated for every award in the program. Warren has also taught at the University of Memphis, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, the University of Mary Washington, and The Catholic University of America, including courses in literature, drama, writing, and art history. He has worked for museums across the United States, including the Pink Palace Museum, WONDERS: the Memphis International Cultural Series, the Dixon Gallery and Gardens, the Knoxville Museum of Art, the American Museum of Science and Energy, and the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC. He is survived by his wife Shannon Kennedy Perry and daughter Jeanne Lynn Perry, as well as his parents, Edmund Warren Perry, Sr. and Martha Perry, his brother Patrick Perry and sister-in-law Jennifer Perry, his sister Carrie Sue McClain and brother-in-law Jim McClain, nieces Jenna and Hannah McClain, and many aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends who loved him and will miss him deeply. A memorial service will be held at the CTI Theater of the Pink Palace Museum, 3050 Central Avenue, on August 8 at 5:30 PM. Memorial contributions may be sent to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital (stjude.org) or the Pink Palace Family of Museums (memphismuseums.org).



Tribute Wall

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LL

Linda Lyle posted:

WHERE HAVE YOU GONE, WARREN PERRY - OH, OUR "FAMILY" TURNS ITS LONELY EYES TO YOU..."]WE REMAIN SADDENED BY YOUR ABSENCE -- WITHOUT YOU, THE "FAMILY" IS INCOMPLETE -- and there is simply NO DENYING IT, especially on our "special day" of CHRISTMAS EVE-EVE (12/23) CAN YOU "SEE" US AND OUR CONTIUED FOIBELS FROM WHERE YOU ARE NOW? ARE WE RUNNNG IN TIGHT CIRCLES THHAT GET US NOWHERE?? ARE WE ALL TOTALLY CRAZY?? OR WORSE ?? We want to make the most of your "cosmic knowledge" when we arrive,; plan and carry on a cosmic trivia game that lasts an erternity! You'll doubtless be light year (reverse quark years?) ahead of us - - then again, we might be the only entities to "think up" such a thing!ALONG THOSE LINES, please let us know what you have found that amusing and incredibly lumious soul to have been made of! It was so resplendent that we could have followed you through a hundred midnights in a cypress swamp and avoid getting lost. How did you manage that?? "Talk Fareneheight! Talk Centigrade! Use language that we can comprenend! Tell us whatelements you blend;WHAT ARE YOUR "DIGS" LIKE IN YOUR NEW BRAVE AND ALLEGEDLY PERFECT WORLD? PLEASE RESERVE THE ATHENE SUITE ATOP WHATEVER REPRESENTS THE ATHENS HILTON FOR KERRY & ME -- I HEAR IT'S NO TROUBLE TO "BLINK UP" IF YOU KNOW HOW TO ASK PROPERLY TRUST ME -- YOUR GIFTS OF GAB AND PERSUASION WERE A FORCE TO BEHOLD ON YOUR EARTH JOURNEY WHERE YOU COULD HAVE EASILY SOLD ROAD BIKES TO THE BLIND ANBOOM BOXES TOTHE DEAF! SO I WOULD LIKE THE SUTIE TO FACE BOTH EAST & WEST, ENABLING ME TO WATCH HELIOS ARISE, MAKE HIS WAY ACROSS THE SKY, AND PUT THE SUN TO BEDMake no mistake: Warren --- we still have "pomises to keep and (at least a few) miles before we sleep." We must all be true to our missions before moving along. I just wanted to say HELLO and to let you know that when the tide carries me across this cosmic sea, I'll be looking for you. Ane I have no doubt you'll find me.Our love to you eternally,Linda (your older sister) Kerry & Madison

September 24 at 7:05 PM

MM

Mrs. Jean. Michelsen posted:

My heart is broken as i find out the death of Warren. Warren was my first student in Oakshire School, whay a compassionate & sweet child. As he is as an adult. Since the China exhibit we have rekindle our Friendship. How i enjoyed working with warren. My Deepest Sympathy to all your Family. God bless.

July 20 at 4:45 PM

MM

Mrs. Mean Michelsen posted:

My heart is broken , when i learned of Warren death. His most compassionate & sweet, his my first student in Oakshire school.since the Cihina exhibit in Memphis we rekindle our Friendship. I will be missing you Warren.. My Deepest Sympathy to all your Family God bless

July 20 at 4:28 PM



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TA

Terry Rogers (Aunt T) posted:

A bigger than life individual. I was so lucky to have you in my life, dear nephew. Aunt T holds a place in her heart full of your memories. Thoughts and prayers with the Perry family.

July 6 at 2:04 PM

RB

Roy Caldwell Brewer posted:

We really seldom crossed paths but when we did, it seemed like no time had passed and our conversation. . . just continued. His love and respect for Southern American music and culture was remarkable. My thoughts to his family.

June 25 at 11:46 AM

EH

Eileen Hinders posted:

I had the privilege of teaching with Warren at Memphis. He always shared techniques and inside info on various pieces of literature. He was a walking encyclopedia! Warren's warm smile and friendliness will forever be etched in my heart. We have lost a great person.

June 22 at 10:05 AM

DW

David White posted:

We can find some comfort, recalling time spent in Warren's orbit, reminding each day's gift. His affinities for language, history, art, humor and love, embraced us, humanities' children — enhancing and appreciating our enduring journey. Thank you Warren.

June 22 at 6:57 AM

LM

Lyman Mclallen posted:

Warren was one of the best people I ever knew in my life. He would always be there to help. Always.

June 21 at 11:33 AM



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JM

Jay Mintz posted:

I worked with Warren over 20 years ago and he was always keeping everybody laughing with his wit and humor. Such a positive spirit who has been taken from this world too soon. We had reconnected on social media about five years ago and I enjoyed reading his amazing work. A very talented individual who left a mark on everyone he knew. He will be greatly missed and my thoughts and prayers go out to his family.

June 21 at 9:45 AM

JN

J N posted:

Warren was a one of a kind phenomenon. His sense of humor kept the two years I worked beside him interesting. It was tragic to learn of his premature passing.

June 21 at 9:18 AM

MS

Malcolm & Carole Smart posted:

My wife Carole and I want to express our deepest sympathies to Shannon and Jeanne and the rest of Warren's family and friends for this loss. I met Warren over 35 years ago when we were both in our early 20's working at Merrill Lynch. It was the early 1980's, and we were both a couple of college dropouts who knew that our best hope for a future filled with ideas and art was to return to school. Soon, after several beers, we decided to quit our jobs and finish up our respective degrees. Over the next few years, we all lived together in a triplex just off campus. We shared food, beer, laughs, and endless Jim Morrison songs on the stereo. A special bond developed that will always be a cherished part of my life. It was that special time in life when you're in your twenties and the future is bright and opportunities seem endless. Following college, we both pursued our careers in Memphis and around the world. We always kept in touch and saw each other whenever we were in the same town. As a true friend, I was always very proud of Warren's many accomplishments. There was never any jealousy or envy, just extreme pride whenever I read one of his published works or watched him give a lecture. Warren was always very humble and modest regarding his professional success, and I'm willing to wager that many people never knew just how prolific and highly regarded he was within the art and historical communities. If I had to describe Warren to someone who had never met him, the only words I could use are; Larger than life. He had an exuberant and theatrical personality and an endless supply of energy. He leaves a wonderful professional legacy, but his most precious legacy is his beautiful daughter Jeanne. As one of his best friends, I will make sure that she knows and never forgets how special her father was. Rest in peace dear friend, and thank you for all of the memories.

June 17 at 8:17 AM



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DM

Don Mitchell posted:

What a great guy and human being, the world will miss him! His family must know that his tremendous legacy surpasses most and that we all loved him. Right now, I'd love to know what plans God has for Warren and his sense of humor...while at the U of M, he taught me the value of 'desk chair racing' and its okay to have fun. To his family...he lived life better than most and treasured friends and family, God Bless him and you!

June 21 at 5:20 AM

AH

Amy Henderson posted:

I was very saddened to hear of Warren's death. We worked together curating ELVIS at 21 for the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Service, and co-wrote the accompanying, book Elvis 1956. He was a wonderful colleague at the National Portrait Gallery as well—smart, thoughtful, and funny. My heart goes out to Shannon and their daughter.

June 21 at 5:00 AM

SM

Steve Masler posted:

Warren was my friend, but there were hundreds of people around the world that could say the same thing. Warren worked for me in the 1980s, was my colleague in the 1990s, and my boss this past 7 months. He treated everyone with respect and curiosity. He did well in his too short life.

June 20 at 7:44 PM

JW

Johnna Jeans Wallace posted:

I was so sorry to hear about Warren. I went to high school with him & don't think I had seen him since 1991 at a class reunion. We all had a big time & Warren was so much fun. It certainly sounds like he had a honorable & successful life. May God wrap His arms around you & give you the peace & comfort only He can give.

June 20 at 7:15 PM



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TR

Tricia Draper Rainey posted:

I didn't really know Warren, but I knew who he was, and His curly hair. As sad as losing him way too soon is, I am in awe of what he accomplished and how brilliant he was. He left loved ones and those who admire the legacy he left here on earth. May your family find comfort in the many memories you made with him.

June 20 at 4:52 PM

CM

Cynthia Markert posted:

He lived in Maplehurst Park for a time. He was brilliant and brilliantly funny. He made quite an impression on the colorful group there at that time. My condolences to his lovely wife and precious daughter.

June 20 at 4:30 PM

BA

Bill Adelman posted:

Shannon, I am deeply saddened by the loss of Warren. Although it was many years ago that we met, both of you have remained in my thoughts over the years. The memories of our time together fill my heart with laughter. Whether it was something we worked on together for the fire museum, or sharing food and drink at your house on Garden Lane, or some funny scheme we cooked up at 2600 Poplar, my time with your husband almost always made me laugh. He was like another brother to me. I wish I had known earlier of his illness, I would have been there for both of you. Again, very sorry for your loss. Angela and I will keep you all in our prayers.

June 20 at 3:30 PM

TS

Terra Parker Stenbridge posted:

My sincere condolences to all of Warren's family and friends. Especially Shannon and Jeanne Lynn. Warren was such an amazing person who was unaware of what an incredible influence he had on those around him. I know he was well loved by all and will be missed very much. I will always think of him with joy and laughter because that was a big part of his gift to this world. I am forever grateful that he was my friend. Praying for God's comfort for us all.

June 20 at 3:26 PM



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KZ

Kimberley And Mike Zimmerman posted:

We love and admire Warren Perry. What wonderful accomplishments. Warrens family is incredibly proud of him and so everyone else. Myself and Mike will attend the memorial at the Pink Palace. We miss you Warren. You married us in 2011 in Stafford Virginia. Kim and mike Zimmerman

June 20 at 3:25 PM

LB

Lynn Binet posted:

Deepest condolences, Shannon and Jeanne Lynn. Warren was an exceptional man and father and will be remembered for his kindness and humor.

June 20 at 2:57 PM

PF

Patricia Foster posted:

Warren never met a stranger. When you met him immediately you would be his friend. That is a gift only a few have. Thanks for the memories and the giggles Warren Perry. ??

June 20 at 2:56 PM

TH

Tim Harris posted:

Ed, Martha, Pat, and Carrie Sue- My heart has been heavy along with all of you in the passing of Warren. My memory of Warren was his quick wit and sense of humor. All of you are like family to me. You are in my thoughts and prayers. With love- Tim Harris

June 20 at 7:43 AM

JK

Jon Klein posted:

Shannon, everyone at Catholic University was shocked and saddened by this sudden news. We all remember Warren so very well, with fondness and smiles. Thinking of you at this difficult time.

June 20 at 4:57 AM

KA

Kay posted:

My sincerest condolences for your loss. Please know that when times like these arise, God is there to comfort you through prayer and his word the Bible (Psalm 147:3).

June 17 at 8:17 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Edmund by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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