



Don Ellsworth MacCullough

MAY 15, 1927 - APR 5, 2025



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Donald E. MacCullough, 97, Visionary Leader in Miami Public Broadcasting

Donald Ellsworth MacCullough, a pioneering figure in Miami's public broadcasting scene and longtime general manager of WLRN, passed away on April 5, 2025, at the age of 97. His unwavering dedication to educational media and community service left an enduring legacy in South Florida.

Born in Connecticut, Don moved with his family to Miami as a young boy, a city he would passionately serve for the rest of his life. After graduating from Miami Beach High School, he joined the Navy's officer training program and served aboard the USS Missouri in World War II, later attending Georgia Tech to study industrial engineering.

After graduation, Don channeled his energy and creativity into education. He began as a teacher at North Miami Elementary where he met the love of his life, school librarian Janet Stone. Don's visionary approach to using technology to improve learning outcomes led him to pioneer instructional media within Miami-Dade Schools, eventually creating WLRN-encompassing both television and radio stations-and turning it into a national model for community-driven public broadcasting.

Don's passion extended beyond media-he was deeply involved in preserving Miami's history, serving as a trustee of Dade Heritage Trust and leading efforts to save what became Oak Grove Park. An enthusiastic adventurer, he cherished fishing off the rock piers in Miami Shores and camping with the Sea Scouts on Biscayne Bay. Don also enjoyed taking his children to places like the lumber yard, Home Depot, and the plumbing supply store, where they helped with his many projects around the house.

Family was central to Don's life. He and Janet created cherished memories with their children at "Mac's Landing" in Vero Beach-a haven of reading, fishing, board games,



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and family time, always without television. Don approached life like a flight of stairs: two at a time, always moving forward with determination. He was always improving something, always curious, always busy, and always standing up for his beliefs.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 62 years, Janet Stone MacCullough; his children, Kara MacCullough (Francis Pelly), Scott MacCullough (Leslie Rohrer), Corrie Dretler (Tom Dretler), and Casey Wood (James Wood); his grandchildren, Tristan Wood, Riley Wood, K.D. Dretler, Jack Dretler, Selah Wood, Mikaela MacCullough Pelly, Jessi Dretler, and Patrick MacCullough Pelly; and six great-grandchildren. Don also leaves behind many meaningful relationships with an extraordinary care team of professionals who respected him, took the opportunity to learn from him, and allowed him to be his authentic self as he fought the challenges of aging.

A wake will be held on Thursday, April 10, 2025 between 5:00pm and 8:00pm at Van Orsdel Funeral Home, Coral Gables Chapel, located at 4600 SW 8th St, Coral Gables, FL 33134. The funeral service will also be at Van Orsdel in Coral Gables on Friday, April 11, at 10:30am, followed by burial at Flagler Memorial Park.

Donations in Don's memory may be made to Friends of WLRN, Dade Heritage Trust, and the MIND Institute at Miami Jewish Health, three organizations he was passionate about.

Don's legacy lives on through the airwaves of WLRN and in the hearts of the thousands he touched.




Events


Don Ellsworth MacCullough

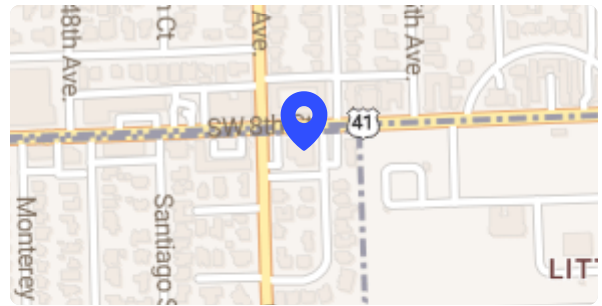
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Public viewing

 **Thursday**, April 10, 2025

 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM ET


 **Van Orsdel Coral Gables**
4600 SW 8th Street, Coral Gables FL 33134

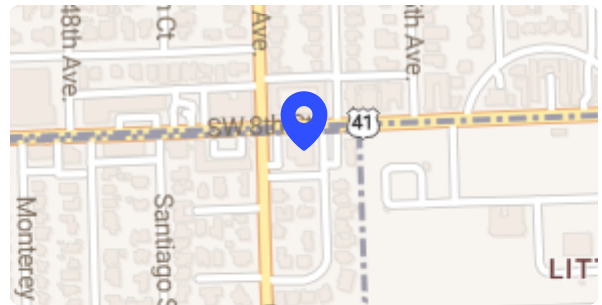


Funeral Service

 **Friday**, April 11, 2025

 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM ET

 **Van Orsdel Coral Gables**
4600 SW 8th Street, Coral Gables FL 33134





Tribute Wall

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Van Orsdel Funeral & Cremation Services shared a **Webcast Video**.



April 11 at 7:05 AM



Theresa Lianzi posted:

I can remember the times I spent with Don and his family. I met him through Carol Stone, his sister-in-law who passes away some time ago.

April 23 at 11:09 PM



Anonymous planted a grove of 3 Memorial Trees in honor of Donald.



April 23 at 11:03 PM



Angel & Carolyn & Family, & Abuelo Miguel sent a Lily and Rose Tribute Spray to the MacCullough family.



April 8 at 9:56 AM



Anonymous sent a Peaceful White Lilies Basket to the MacCullough family.



April 8 at 5:25 AM



Media

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Van Orsdel Funeral & Cremation Services shared a **Webcast Video**.

April 11 at 7:05 AM





Memories only last if you share them

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



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