

# OBITUARY

## Don Lynn

Following all too swiftly upon the sudden death of Dr. Alan Adler has come that of another STURP stalwart, Don Lynn, who suffered a cerebral haemorrhage the night of Thursday 12 October and died two days later without regaining consciousness. His memorial service was held on Tuesday 17 October at California's Church of St. John Baptist de La Salle. This huge church features stained glass windows created by Isabel Piczek. Besides Don's widow Patty, their five children, nine grandchildren and hundreds of relatives, friends and well-wishers, the service was attended by Isabel Piczek, Barrie Schwartz and Dr. August Accetta on behalf of the American 'Shroud Crowd'.

Don Lynn was born in Cicero, Illinois in 1932. Even after losing his right eye in a childhood accident he remained an active enthusiast for baseball and basketball, and graduated in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Illinois in 1954. Two years later he married to the love of his life, Patty, and in 1960 they and the first of their children moved to California where Don began work as a consultant on several aerospace projects, including designing portions of the instruments that the Apollo astronauts placed on the Moon. This led to Don joining the staff of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, where he pioneered the image processing techniques needed for photographs being received back from interplanetary spacecraft. In 1976 he and colleague Jean Lorre were working on the images that the Viking Lander mission had been sending back from the surface of Mars, and because their techniques seemed applicable to the Shroud, they were approached by the then still embryonic STURP project. This led to Don taking up a strong interest in the Shroud that would never wane. The Jet Propulsion Laboratory allowed Don and his colleague to use the Laboratory's equipment for Shroud research, just so long as the work was done in their own time. Despite intense pressure of work on the Viking Lander images, within months Don became a participant at the Shroud conference held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, March 1977, and eighteen months later he flew to Turin as a key member of the then fully-fledged STURP team which worked directly on the Shroud.

Don's special contribution to Shroud studies was to show, via the then very new method of digitizing photographic images, that the Shroud's image has none of the directionality, such as left and right-hand brush-strokes, that is readily evident whenever paintings are studied by the same methods. Filmed comments by him made during a discussion linked to that same conference formed part of the closing moments of David Rolfe's 1977 Shroud documentary *The Silent Witness*. Don appeared in other documentaries, also the *National Geographic* magazine and he gave numerous talks on the Shroud with particular reference to the STURP team's scientific findings.

Such was the unexpectedness of Don's death that only a few weeks beforehand he and Patty attended the Orvieto Symposium and during the same trip he also took the opportunity to revisit Turin and the Shroud. He was an overseas member of the BSTS, and by one of life's ironies had paid for his membership as far ahead as the year 2004. In the words of the programme of his memorial service 'He has touched everyone who has known him and he will be missed by us all.'

A Personal Tribute to Don Lynn,  
from the creator of the [www.shroud.com](http://www.shroud.com) website  
Barrie Schwartz:

Don Lynn was the man responsible for me staying on the STURP team when we were first forming up in 1976. Since I am Jewish, my first reaction was to hesitate about getting involved in something I perceived as a "Christian" project. When I mentioned this to Don, he smiled and said, "Apparently, you've forgotten that the Man in question was a Jew. So you don't think God wants one of the Chosen People on this team, eh?" he asked, his voice dripping with irony. "I'd never really thought of it that way" I replied.

Then Don gave me some really great advice. He told me that God doesn't always let us know the plan in advance, so I should go to Turin, do the best job possible and worry about why later. He said that someday God would let me know the reason.

When this website went online in January 1996, I called Don and said, "Don, you were right!" "About what?" he asked.

"Years ago, when you told me that someday I would know why I was on the Shroud team, well, you were right. I've finally figured it out and it only took eighteen years!"

So Don is really the man responsible for my website. Not only did he encourage me to build it and stick with it when things got tough, but without his sound, wonderful advice so many years earlier, I would have left the STURP team at the beginning and you certainly wouldn't be reading this now. Don's passing was very difficult for me and will be even more difficult in the future when I need some good sound advice and won't have him to turn to. But I'm very grateful that I was able to tell him how much his words meant to me. I will never forget him and I'll never forget what he told me so many years ago: "Do the best job possible..."

Barrie Schwartz