January 30, 1992. As you can see, there have been some new developments here, and I wanted you to know that we got the letter to Mary [congratulating his daughter on her marriage]—good stories—and the ms. [for *Composition in Context: Essays in Honor of Donald C. Stewart* (Southern Illinois UP, forthcoming)], but I'm not functioning very well so haven't been able to respond. In a nutshell, I was hurting in the back enough that I couldn't teach, and I had about lost my blood-clotting ability. In the first thirty-six hours I was in the hospital I received four units of blood and one of platelets, had X-rays (for which they gave me a pain-killer which would have made an angry Kodiak bear docile), had a bone marrow biopsy, and first radiation treatment. Also had blood tests and constant interruption by someone taking my "vitals." Last night I finally got some sleep. My medical situation is pretty clear. The disease is getting me, but it's hard just to determine when I'll be got, so I keep working ....

I've had a kind of old home week in the hospital. Nurses on all the shifts remember me from October, 1990 (greatest love in history of St. Francis cancer patients, and if you believe that, I'll sell you some ocean-front property in western Kansas); the chaplain remembers me; the radiation therapist said Howdy-do, etc. They treat me well, audio visual services lent me a VCR so I could see Hamlet tonight. Next time I'll do *Electric Horseman.*

I would like to do more work, but I'm taking stuff that makes me sleepy or mentally disorganized, sick or constipated, etc. I need exercise, but am too anemic or too much in pain to get it in. And all those years I took good care of myself. God and I are going to have some long conversations.

*My Yellowstone Years* continues to generate interesting mail. My old boss, Dave Condon, made a video of his movies. I'd like to get home to see it. He lived in that park a long time.

Sack time. Just wanted you to know why I wasn't getting back as rapidly as usual. This old body is just giving out. Ross, I'm like Lee on the way to Appomattox Court House.

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Don Stewart: A Personal Memoir

**Winifred Bryan Horner**

Many of us knew Don Stewart as a fine scholar and teacher and, above all, as a writer of insight and brilliance. He liked to describe himself as a "good writer," one of the many understatements that he loved to sprinkle through-
out his conversations. We knew him toward the end as a courageous man fighting a relentless enemy that finally would not allow him time to finish his work on Fred Newton Scott, a nineteenth-century rhetorician that Don knew better than any of us. I knew Don first and best through our work on *The Present State of Scholarship*, for which he wrote the nineteenth-century section. He was the obvious choice for the expert in a field that few people knew "about" or even "of" in those days. His work on both editions of that work was thoroughly researched, and, of course, his scholarship always arrived either on time or even early—an amazing feat among academicians. But all of these cold facts only begin to describe Don Stewart.

About a month before Don died, he sent me a copy of his wonderful book, *My Yellowstone Years*, a work he wrote not from his brilliant mind but from his warm and loving heart. There was a note on the flyleaf:

Win: Here it is. When and if you get a spare moment, let me know what you think of it.

The book is about the thirteen summers after his twenty-first birthday that he spent working in Yellowstone Park, an experience he describes as "other that my marriage to Pat and the birth of our children, the most important thing that ever happened to me." He says of those days:

They remain today a collective event to which I return continually for strength and sanity in a world which seems to be losing both. They were my 'going West,' my 'Oregon Trail,' my reliving of the national drama of the nineteenth century frontier, the trip to the promised land. (Introduction)

In the sometimes ridiculously serious world of academe, Don always knew how to keep his perspective:

The Yellowstone experience also gave me a sustained opportunity to get an early perspective on my life. It was all too easy, while going to college and earning a succession of degrees, to become preoccupied with assignments, term papers, examinations, requirements for a major, and learning the rules for the incessant and necessary politicking that goes with "getting ahead" in one's profession.... The quiet trails of the park, in the words of the psalmist, restored my soul. (Introduction)

Don spoke often of returning to Yellowstone and of those early years there:

Thirty years have passed since Pat and I sat among our friends around Jacobi's campfire in the cool summer evenings in Yellowstone Park.... But resting here, on a hot and sultry Kansas summer night, I close my eyes and see Madison Campground, as it was then. We are all one people again, contented with a fellowship so deep we cannot express it. Jack smiles quietly and speaks to himself, so softly that only Pat and I, who sit on either side of him, can hear—"So nice... so nice to be back among such good friends again." (309)

Don writes of climbing Mt. Washburn in Yellowstone and being disappointed at the view from the top but on his way down encountering the high mountain meadows full of wild flowers:
But to notice flowers—to really see them the way I was seeing those flowers was a new experience for me. The scent they gave off was the most exquisite perfume I have ever smelled. At that moment I had a sudden vision that I had arrived in heaven and was ready to lie down in the beautiful wild garden and contemplate eternity. That vision is with me yet: purple, yellow, rose, blue, and orange flowers in profusion, the wind only a breath carrying a sweet scent cleansed of all impurities, white clouds floating against a deep blue sky. (40)

I never got around to telling Don how much I liked his book and how much I liked and respected him as a scholar and as a human being. I thought I didn’t have that “spare moment.” Somehow I know that much of his life and spirit will always be at Yellowstone, perhaps in that “beautiful wild garden” where he was able to contemplate that eternity which has claimed him now. And reading this book written from his heart has made me appreciate the full measure of the remarkable person that was Donald Stewart.

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Donald C. Stewart: A Colleague

David Smit

I want to be clear-headed about Don Stewart; I want to be fair. I don’t think he would accept anything less.

I first met Don when I came to Kansas State University to interview for a position in composition/rhetoric. I don’t remember when I was first introduced to him, the thin ascetic gentleman with the long face and the thinning red hair, but I do remember the first time I had to deal with him: it was during my presentation to the faculty. I had chosen to adapt a section of my dissertation on stylistic theory and the late writing of Henry James, hoping thereby to bridge the gap between comp/rhetoric and literature for a faculty which, I had been informed, contained a number of people who were suspicious of comp/rhetoric as a discipline.

The talk seemed to go well, even though I was very nervous: people laughed in the right places and nodded sympathetically in others, especially when I complained of the difficulties in dealing with James’ late style. I remember how badly my hand shook when I took a drink from the glass of water I had been provided.

The questions afterward were friendly and not particularly pointed, so I had reason to relax. But then Don asked me what I thought of the maxim, “The style is the man.” In the back of my mind, I knew that Don’s text The Versatile Writer promoted the idea of writers’ finding their own unique voice,