**Donald Woodford Perry**

Donald Woodford Perry was born on September 7, 1933 in Yellow Springs, Ohio in a house at the corner of Center College Street and High Street across from the Lace Apartments. He was the first born of Kingsley and Elizabeth Perry. Later Donald became big brother to one brother and two sisters.

When Donald entered first grade his parents were concerned that he would not do well because he was so quiet and did not talk much. One day his mother decided to make a visit to the school to find out how he was doing in his studies. When she entered his classroom, much to her surprise she could see papers posted around the room marked with As and Bs and many of the papers belonged to her son Donald.

After Donald graduated from Bryan High School in 1952, he tried to join the Air Force but was classified 4F after it was discovered he had nephritis, a chronic kidney disease. He began working at PK Lumber and started saving money to go to college.

Donald worked for the lumber company for five years, driving a truck. During that time he founded the Little League program in Yellow Springs and continued working with kids coaching on the playground and helped out in other recreation programs.

He had a very serious nephritis attack in 1957, which ended his career with the lumber company and postponed his plans for college and a degree in elementary education. Bills for medication, hospitals, and doctors ate up all that he had saved for his education.

It was at this time that Donald switched jobs and began his six-year career as the night custodian at Mills Lawn Elementary School in Yellow Springs. He began saving money for college again. By 1959, he had enough put aside to enter Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio. He studied by day and worked at night and graduated in 1963. The day after his graduation he got a job with the Columbus Public Schools.

His work was widely recognized. Donald was selected as the Jaycees Man of the Year in 1963.

His health worsened while teaching in Columbus and he began dialysis treatment, spending weekdays in the classroom and weekends in the hospital connected to a dialysis machine. When Donald decided to undergo a kidney transplant operation, the first ever attempted at University Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, Patricia Perry, his sister was the donor. In August 1967 the Don Perry Summer’s End Sports Carnival was formed to raise funds for the operation.

Donald went into University Hospital on September 1, 1967 with Patricia. Five days later, the day before Donald’s 34th birthday, they operated, transferring one of Patricia’s kidneys to her brother.

Donald was confident that he would be back teaching as a substitute in the Yellow Springs schools by the next spring. “All the tests so far,” he said, “indicate my body will accept my sister’s kidney.” A new treatment at the hospital had helped him to recover some of his previous strength.. Before entering the hospital he was almost immobile and was depressed as a result. The operation was successful. All of his family wished him happy birthday and were thankful their prayers had been answered. Donald’s weak heart had skipped a beat and stopped. Donald Woodford Perry died on his 34th birthday.

*The Dayton Daily News* ran a feature on Donald and Patricia. In that article, Police Chief James McKee said of Donald: “He gave his time to help young people when he didn’t have any time to give and many of us will miss the smiles and the help and the friendship he provided for the kids of Yellow Springs. A *Dayton Daily News* editorial noted that “Don Perry was a school teacher, confidant and counselor to scores, maybe hundreds of kids.” It said his story was heroic and he will be remembered. Three years after Donald’s death, 1n 1970, the minor league, a baseball program for 6-9 year olds was renamed the Perry League in honor of Donald Perry. Robert Baldwin established a scholarship at Central State University in Donald Perry’s name to help students who are majoring in education.

*Geniveve Perry Bellinger*