



Royce F. O'Donal

February 16, 1927 - June 6, 2019

GORHAM-- Royce F. O'Donal, founder of O'Donal's Tree Nursery, peacefully passed away in his sleep at his Gorham home on June 6, 2019 in the arms of his beloved wife after a long and prosperous life.

The eldest son of Charles and Lena O'Donal, he was born on February 16, 1927 in Smithfield, Maine. Here he attended a one room schoolhouse and learned the value of hard work to help support the family. He later graduated from Scarborough High School with the class of 1945.

In 1944 he met the love of his life, Selma (Sally) Milbury from Danvers, MA and he knew immediately that he would one day marry her. He proudly served in the U.S. Navy from 1945-46 before earning an honorable discharge due to family hardship, returning home to work on the family farm.

He and Sally married on May 10, 1952 and recently celebrated their 67th wedding anniversary. Together they owned and operated O'Donal's Tree Nursery while also raising six children.

In 1959 he purchased property on 132 County Road in Gorham, opened the tree nursery in 1960 and devoted the next thirty-two years to developing one of the largest retail tree nurseries in the state of Maine. He was a founding member and past president of the Maine Nurserymen Association and served on the advisory committee to set up the horticultural program at Southern Maine Community College. Over the decades he earned numerous accolades and honors culminating in the Al Dwight Black Lifetime Achievement Award for Horticulture in January 1999.

After "retiring" in 1992, Royce spent the next twenty-seven years planting and caring for trees and shrubs, building furniture and bird houses and spending time with his expanding family. He also spent as much time as possible in the woods and outdoors, hunting and fishing among his many interests. It was a frequent sight to see him inspecting the grounds with his beloved dogs Chico, and later Rocky.

He was predeceased by his parents, Charles and Lena O'Donal, sisters Erla Merry and Avis Mitchell, and brothers Merle and Roger O'Donal.

Royce is survived by his wife Selma Milbury O'Donal and children:

Michael O'Donal and wife Cherrye of Moffat, CO,

Wayne O'Donal and wife June of Denmark, ME,
Jeffrey O'Donal and wife Elaine of Gorham, ME,
Suzan Sweeney and husband Larry of Saranac Lake, NY,
Nancy Mash and husband Nelson of Gorham, ME,
and Ellyn Phelps and husband Tim of Hollis, ME.

His grandchildren include:

Micki (O'Donal) Buteau and husband Tobey of Gorham, ME,
Heather (O'Donal) Ouellette and husband Ryan of Buxton, ME,
Jennifer (O'Donal) Jackson and husband Kyle of Wrentham, MA,
Timothy O'Donal of Denmark, ME
Perry (O'Donal) Hopkins and husband Will of Belleville, IL,
Stephanie (O'Donal) Loebel and husband Michael of Tyngsborough, MA, Stacey O'Donal of
Aurora, CO,
Megan (Sweeney) Schafer and husband, Ryan of Queens, NY,
Bennett Sweeney and wife Lyndsey of Suffield, CT,
Emily Sweeney of Lake Placid, NY,
Ashley O'Donal of Gorham, ME,
Whitney Quint of Gorham, ME,
Ryan Quint and wife Joanna of Williamsburg, VA,
Samuel and Aidan Phelps of Hollis, ME.

Great-grandchildren include:

Asa and Keenan Buteau,
Madison Ouellette,
Allison and Andrew Loebel,
Gage and Izak Young
and Trenton Kidder

Royce also leaves behind a beloved former daughter-in-law, Diane Meech of
Scarborough, ME and beloved "bonus" daughter Judy Johnson of Hollis, ME. He is
survived by his brother Harmon O'Donal of Eagle Point, OR, and sister Hattie Jane Stubbs
of Windham, ME.

Visiting hours will be held on Monday, June 10, 2019 from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at Dolby Blais
& Segee, 434 River Road in Windham. A funeral service will be celebrated Tuesday, June
11, 2019 at 2:00 PM at First Congregational Church, 191 Black Point Road in
Scarborough. Burial services will follow at Black Point Cemetery, Black Point Road
Scarborough.

A special thank you to the hospice team at Compassus- especially Kim, Mercedes, and
Jasmine for their care and guidance in Royce's final days.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his name to the Alzheimer's Association,
Maine Chapter at 383 US Route One, Ste. 2C, Scarborough, ME 04074.

Cemetery

Events

Black Point Cemetery

Black Point Rd.
Scarborough, ME,

JUN **Visitation** 05:30PM - 07:30PM

10

Dolby, Blais & Segee - Windham Chapel
434 River Road, Windham, ME, US, 04062

JUN **Funeral Service** 02:00PM

11

First Congregational Church
161 Black Point Rd., Scarborough, ME, US, 04074

Comments



“ We have been customers of O'Donal's since we bought our house in 1975. I remember going out to the nursery for the first time on a drizzly cool fall day to pick out some shrubs. We asked Royce if he had Rhododendrons and he said “yup” and set off at a forced march pace to the rear of the property. We struggled to keep up... When we arrived, he waved over to shrubs in the ground and told us to look them over and take our pick. He would tag and dig them later for us...

Royce was our “go to” nursery guy for advice and tree/shrub choices until he “retired”. Now Jeff fills that role. He and other O'Donal's employees are always there for us and we appreciate their knowledge and strong customer service ethic, learned from Royce.

I was thrilled to see Royce at the nursery a few years ago and reintroduced myself. He claimed to remember me...but I'll bet he “told that to all the girls”... Rest In Peace, Royce, after a life well-lived.

Anne Pringle, Portland

anne pringle - June 14 at 11:31 AM



“ I too am saddened to hear of Royce's passing. My very first real job was at O'Donal's Nursery when I was about 14 years old. I worked at O'Donal's over the next 6 years during every school break that I had. Royce was great to work for, patient, and taught me a ton about trees, shrubs, landscaping, and growing Christmas trees. To this day I love puttering in the yard trying to make everything I grow look different than all my neighbors, thanks to the great education I got from Royce. Its a hobby I love thanks to Royce. Funny thing - I still have a dig spade in my garage from my O'Donal's Nursery days. I use it all the time. Royce was a really good man that raised a great family. My condolences to you all. Tom Bachelder (Holly Springs, NC)

Tom Bachelder - June 11 at 03:53 PM



“ I was so sad to hear about Royce's passing. When I was 14 years old Royce gave this skinny, no experienced kid a job at the nursery. The next four years working with Royce, Jeff, Mike and Judy paved the way for me to be a success in life. Royce was fair, firm and an ever patient teacher in all things. Royce taught me (and so many others) about giving 100% to whatever job you were given regardless how insignificant you thought it was. He told me every job was meaningful in the bigger picture and to take pride in what you do. This came in handy many times as I questioned my hours in the "Potting Shed" !

I am 58 years old now, spent time in the military, 26 years as a Portland Police

Officer and still in law enforcement today. I have been very successful in my life and often speak of my time at the nursery. Royce's life lessons have been the foundation of every task I have been given over the years and I have tried to pass that along to others that have worked for me. I am thankful for the opportunity Royce gave me all those years ago and told him every time I saw him.

Royce you may not be here physically but your spirit, strong work ethic and the love of the outdoors will live on through me and those who were fortunate enough to have learned from you. Thank you.

My thoughts are with you Sal and the entire O'Donal family.

With deepest condolences,

Scott Pelletier

Scott Pelletier - June 10 at 10:59 AM



“ 101 files added to the album LifeTributes



Dolby Funeral Chapel - June 09 at 08:52 AM