

Speech for John McDonald's Memorial Service

Subtle, studious, dapper, jazzy, clever and humorous, John McDonald was the smartest person I have ever known. John freely shared his thoughts and observations, even if it meant I was a schmuck for not going back to take his red ball before I set out for the last wicket - and what I thought would be a victory.

For almost a decade of summer afternoons and evenings, John and I battled at croquet, across an uneven lawn with one particular depression - around the middle wicket - which John's friend, Robert Penn Warren, christened, "Nasty Hollow."

"When I win, I win," John would often declare. "And when you win, I win," he would add occasionally, employing the discreet logic that, as his croquet apprentice, my victories represented his persistent tutelage.

John understood the Gods of Croquet and he summoned their spirit often - and with assurance. Just ask the two female, Episcopal ministers that rented the Kienbusch house a number of years ago.

One of the great joys of my adult life was the time I spent with John McDonald.

So, John, as we have always done, when there is no more light left in the day and we can no longer see, I have written down the wickets we are for; which balls are dead on which; and where they rest on the court.

Douglas Alan Frank
August 22, 1999
Great Cranberry Island, Maine