

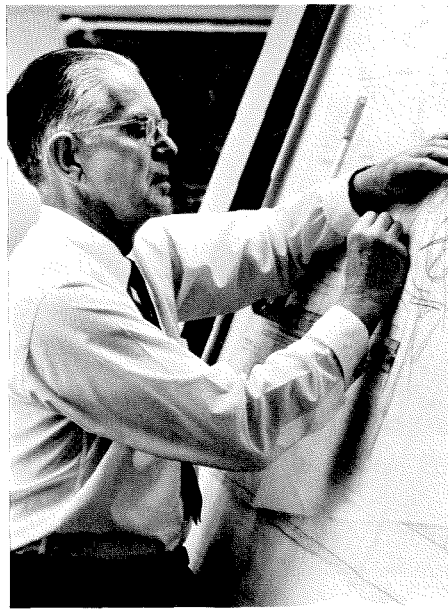
# HENRY AND DORIS DREYFUSS

*Henry and Doris Dreyfuss died on October 5. Their son, John, paid this tribute to his parents at a memorial service held in Beckman Auditorium on October 22.*

I am John Dreyfuss, and I welcome you warmly on behalf of my sisters, Gail and Ann, myself, our families, and—most of all—on behalf of my parents. They would have appreciated this day. As diverse and incredibly complementary individuals, and as partners, they enjoyed and they created beauty, love, and dignity. All those qualities are embodied in this gathering. My parents were partners in a life they loved through its last moments. But my mother was ill, and had little time left, so they elected to die as they had lived—together.

From the beginning, in 1929, they were partners in industrial design, creating a business they loved. In it they shared a great, quiet pride. Industrial design was an essential building block in their lives. Others included family, friends, possessions, and ideas. But the keystone supporting those blocks, and many more, was one of unsurpassed mutual respect and encompassing love. Before October 5th, some recognized the grand dimensions of that respect and that love. Now we all do.

For my sisters and me, and our families, the great gap created by the loss of our parents is partially filled by a legacy of wisdom and love and understanding. The essence of our feeling was captured by Bill Hewitt, a close friend and chairman of Deere and Company. Celebrating the 30th anniversary of his



company's wonderfully close relationship with Mom and Dad, he displayed a 1936 tractor seat. It was an example of what that product looked like the year before my parents started working with Deere. On the seat was a message. It said, "We have come a long way from this, but there is no limit on how much further you can guide us."

For the Dreyfuss children, and grandchildren, and we hope for you, Bill Hewitt's words are as true today as they were when he said them six years ago. There is no limit on how much further we can be guided by the heritage of



attitudes and convictions and ideas and designs my parents left. It is up to us. Mom and Dad meant something different to each person here. Some of you knew them longer than Gail and Ann and I have. You shared, as we did, the excitement, the challenge, the support and encouragement and the deep human caring that were part of being involved with them. As we consider what we share, please enjoy some of my parents' favorite music and a poem read by a valued family friend, which reflects the strong spirit of Doris and Henry Dreyfuss. May that spirit remain alive in each of us.

*These lines were written by Hallett Smith, professor of English, former chairman of the division of humanities and social sciences, and a long time friend of Doris and Henry Dreyfuss.*

Henry and Doris Dreyfuss were indeed inseparable. Their gifts were different: Henry was always the man of vision, seeing new ways to make things better, more useful, more beautiful, for *people*. Doris was the sharp detector of sham or fraud or pretentiousness.

Henry was a leader in such civic organizations as the Center for the Performing Arts, the Music Center, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles Beautiful, and Pasadena Beautiful.

Doris was certainly in favor of these constructive efforts, but it was characteristic of her that she and a friend amused themselves by imagining a foundation called Pasadena Hideous, which was supposed to present suitable awards to the most ghastly atrocities constructed during the year.

Doris had her own civic interests. She spent untold hours working on the boards of Westridge School, the Pasadena Humane Society, and the Foothill Family Service.

With their varied talents, Doris and Henry catalyzed each other's strengths as only creative and vital people can.

They always realized, and those who knew them well also realized, that the Dreyfuss accomplishments—many and great as they were—belonged to both of them, though Doris hated to discuss it. They shared the same curiosity, the same ineradicable itch to know, that characterizes the scientist and scholar. The phone in a Caltech home would ring, and a familiar voice would say, "Doris and I have been racking our brains. Now, you tell us—who was the composer of *Eadie Was a Lady*?"

Henry became a trustee of Caltech in 1963 (and he was very proud of it), though he had been a faculty member of the engineering division for many years, and had annually lectured on industrial design to students in Business Economics. On the board, he persuaded his fellow trustees to employ the best architects to design new buildings on the campus. He introduced students, graduate and undergraduate, into the annual trustees' meetings at Palm Springs, and in these sessions he seated everyone in circles, so that nobody would be in a dominant position. He accepted very conscientiously the role of chairman of the Visiting Committee for the Humanities Division, getting to know the faculty, and endlessly asking students about their ideas and interests. When he observed what a wonderful time Albert Ruddock, the retired chairman of the board, was having at a party for a retiring dean, Henry gave a similar party for Albert, and it was a very lively affair.

When one asks about how Henry Dreyfuss will be remembered, it is easier to answer the question than it is for most great men. In St. Paul's Cathedral in London, there is an inscription to Sir Christopher Wren, its architect. The inscription says, in Latin, "If you seek his monument, look around you." That means to look in awe at those vast spaces and all that white marble. If you look for Henry Dreyfuss's monument, you will find it in a much more intimate and much more universal medium than a neo-classic cathedral. You will find it in the things we use in everyday life—the telephone, the sewing machine, the tractor, and a thousand others. His heritage is a *living* heritage; it is a part of our daily experience.

Henry's contribution to Caltech will not stop with his life. He confronted the monster that terrified most of us—the thought that we would be swallowed by

our parking lots or deafened by our traffic. He knew that to lead the life of the mind, which is what Caltech is all about, it is necessary to have space, rest for the eyes and ears, some kind of order in the visible world. Close a street, plant grass and flowers and trees, tear down Throop Hall to provide an inspiring vista—he was often told it would be too expensive, or couldn't be done for one reason or another, but it usually turned out that he was right. And his vision of the environment for Caltech extended far beyond 1972. Future generations of students and faculty and staff will have reason to be grateful to this far-sighted planner whom they did not have the good fortune to know.

Henry and Doris worked best together. Their last, and perhaps their greatest, collaborative work was the *Henry Dreyfuss Symbol Sourcebook*, an international dictionary of symbols. They loved it—Henry with his belief that the eyes can catch visual symbols faster and more easily than the mind can catch words, and Doris with her keen insistence upon absolute clarity of meaning and simplicity of explanation. The whole world profits from their codifying a language which can be read by literates and illiterates, by people of many different cultures, and at the high speed required in a technological world.

In one of his earlier books, *Designing for People*, Henry wrote, "Wherever I go, I look for people who have achieved tranquility." He and Doris achieved it. Shakespeare knew about them:

*Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments; love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove.  
Oh no, it is an ever-fixed mark  
That looks on tempests and is never  
shaken.*