

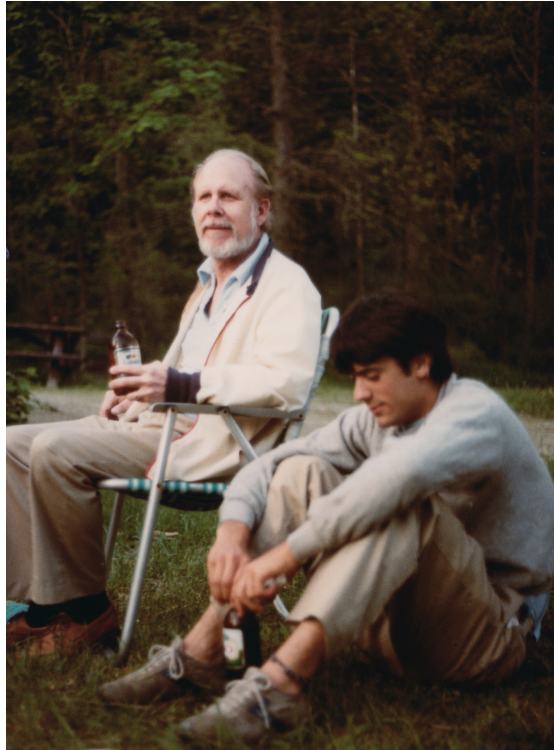
Thin Hardcover Artbook

Neighborhood Walks



David Estes





Jim and John. Ithaca NY. 1984.

I didn't know John very well but we liked each other and shared a similar group of friends. He went on to medical school and now lives in Colorado but that's just information found on the Internet.

Dad had been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease over ten years earlier and the physical symptoms were obvious and increasingly limiting. And the social consequences were already devastating—regular dinner dates with friends and colleagues had dwindled and in general, people would shy away from any engagement with him. Certainly, I was aware of this but at the time I had my own issues.

Dad was a kind and quietly inquisitive person, and always easily amused, but to realize this required patience; a willingness to allow him the time to manage the limitations necessary to communicate. John sat with Dad for a long time that late afternoon, sharing a beer and chatting about art.

# Neighborhood Walks

Ithaca NY. 2007.

Soon after Mimi agreed to take a photo of us, I asked Dad if he had recently seen Mom. He said that he thought she was dead. I immediately tried contacting her on the phone but there was no answer. So although it was getting late, nearly lunchtime at his nursing home, we dropped by Mom's apartment for a visit. She had been asleep.





Mimi.

It was quiet; damp and chilly and even the gallery that was suppose to be open was closed. And finally, I had noticed Dad needed his gloves. So we were grateful when Audrey stopped and agreed to take our photo. Handing back the camera, she warned us of the results, quietly apologizing for being "just not much good at these kind of things."





Audrey.

Brooks was a bit wobbly and as we neared I could smell the cheap liquor but he had a big smile so I asked him to take our photo. I don't recall why we took a short-cut through the parking lot but here we are emerging from this curious passage under a downtown hotel where the breeze forced Dad to hold on to his cap. Brooks had a lot to say and was memorably polite and I think endeared to what he perceived as Dad's appreciative tip of the cap. Before departing he bowed and shook our hands and then said to Dad: It was a real pleasure to meet you, sir.





Brooks.

Dad was still sleeping when Damian took this photo. He often falls asleep on our walks. Usually I try to keep him awake with a steady stream of questions, but today while taking a break near the creek, I sit beside him and watch him doze in the early-April sunshine.





Damian.

I shared with Don how this alley reminded me of Dad's hometown (Topeka KS) where it seemed that every block had one. When I asked Dad if he agreed he made it clear that he wasn't interested in talking about Kansas. Instead he told us that he had recently been to Paris and how nice it was at night with all of the lights.



Don.



I asked Shannon to take our photo in front of this brick wall. She thought it was a good idea and even had some more to say about it but I had a difficult time understanding her. As much as I feel grateful for the time we spend together today is especially challenging when I say goodbye to Dad and then step into the elevator to wait for the door to close. I try my best to smile and I sense the time is near.



Shannon.

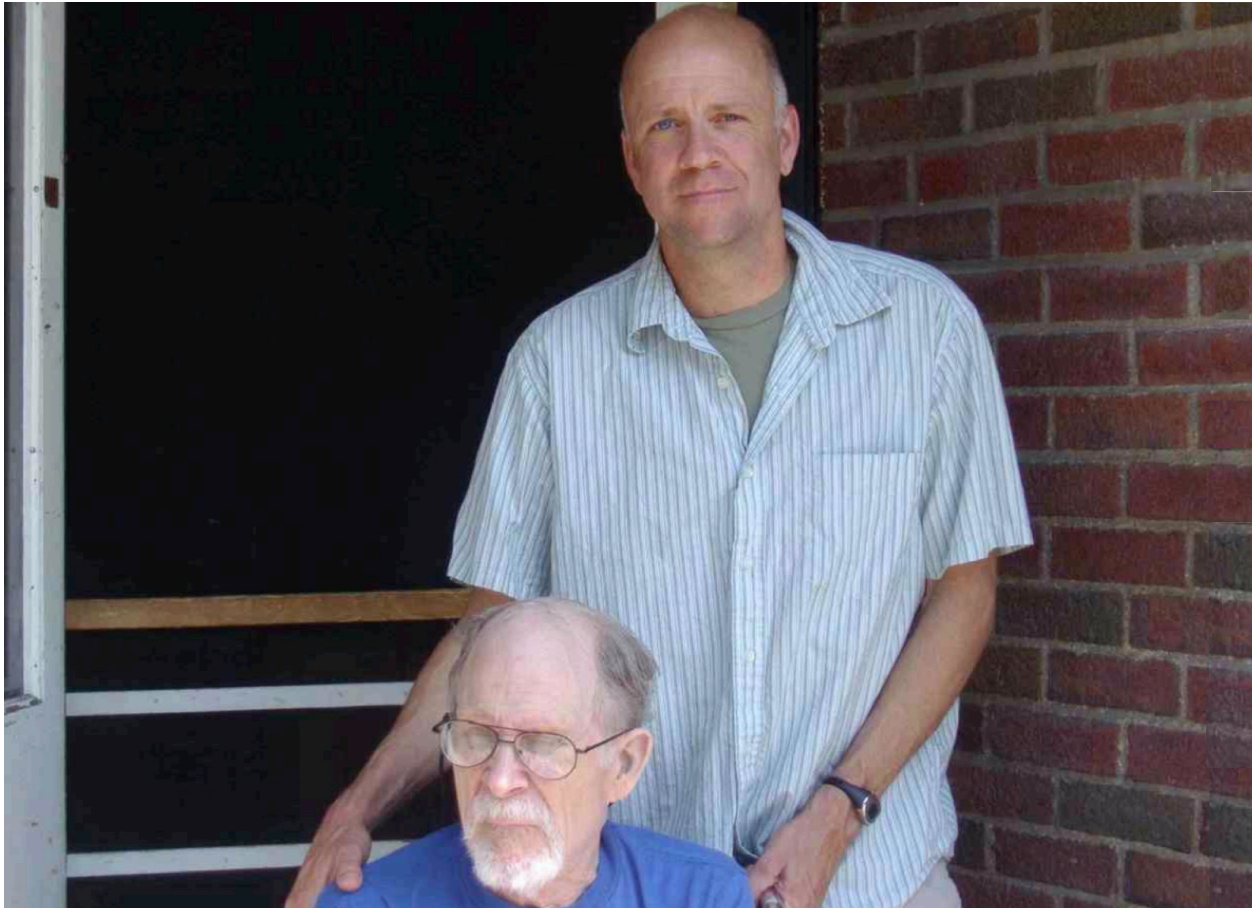
I was surprised to learn that Lauren recognized Dad from the nursing home. She had been an aide. When I asked Dad if he remembered her, he shook his head and for that moment, I felt badly for Lauren but she was still smiling. Either she hadn't heard or of course, she understood.





Lauren.

Some days Dad and I barely say a word to each other. I like to think that is a sign of how much we love each other. We weave through his neighborhood and stop to share a cup of coffee. Have I ever been more pleased when he answers: delicious. Stacey took this photo of us in the shade before departing back to the nursing home. We went the long way.



Stacey.



For the first time I make a request after approaching Eric to take our photo; I whisper the suggestion for a close-up. It was a very warm day and Dad was wearing shorts. The frail thinness of his legs was startling.

This is the last photograph of us together.



Eric.

David Estes received his BA in History from Cornell University and MFA in Sculpture from California College of the Arts.

Ithaca NY

2024