

A Tribute to Master Artist Don Graves

Missouri Folk Arts Program

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by Lisa Higgins, Director
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Once again, we at the Missouri Folk Arts Program must share sad news. Don Graves, a master artist of old-time dulcimer and a dulcimer luthier from Lebanon, Missouri, died on Monday, April 14, 2014. Don Graves hailed from a musical family, the son of the late Bill Graves, with whom Don and his sisters played old-time music at festivals in Missouri and beyond over the years. Most recently, Don taught old-time dulcimer music in Missouri's Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program in 2010 and 2011.

During his participation in TAAP, Don performed at Missouri's capitol and at the Old-time Music, Ozark Heritage Festival in West Plains (where he and his family often performed). In 2007-08, MFAP, the Missouri Arts Council, and ExhibitsUSA featured Don along with five other luthiers in the traveling exhibition "Work is Art and Art is Work," which traveled to seven towns in Missouri. In June 2011, Don and his family graciously welcomed the Missouri Folk Arts Program and several community scholars to his home, where he and his grandchildren set up their dulcimers on the porch and played several tunes during a fieldtrip. MFAP staff joins Don Graves' family and friends in mourning the loss of such a kind and talented man. Rest in peace. We will miss your music, your voice, and your smile.

