

Don Bain: Mentor, Colleague, Friend

By Tony Tedeschi

If your first meeting with Donald Bain has been preceded by your researching a bit of his biography, it would be understandable if you might feel somewhat intimidated by someone who has published so many books, at such a level of consistent quality, for so long. A seriously elevated ego would have to be the result. Wrong. To those of us who not only enjoy the pleasure of calling Don a friend, but also a respected professional colleague, he is appreciated as the person least affected by his success. And there is certainly not a lot of that going around these days.

When I first met Don Bain, he was already a successful author, having even cracked The New York Times Best Sellers List. I was an aspiring writer, with a day job in public relations for a major airline, which had hired Don to help prepare press materials for a major marketing rollout for its hotel subsidiary. (He had been at the airline previously and had a reputation for his marketing skills.) We worked together on the project and, in the process, began a lifelong friendship. At the same time, he mentored me as a writer, providing insights into how to improve my craft, how to make my work more attuned to media markets, how to approach agents, editors, etc.

As I developed as a writer, he and I collaborated on numerous projects over the years. Despite the fact that he had first mentored me, he never treated me as anything less than a colleague. That I eventually got to brainstorm plots and characters with a master, for the projects we worked on together, was particularly fulfilling. That he sometimes asked my advice on some plot twists for some of his novels I felt recognized how I had advanced as a writer. I will always look upon the work we did together with a great deal of pride and a sense of accomplishment.

An indefatigable worker at his craft, there seems no end to his sense of wonder as to how the next plot, the next cast of characters will evolve, and down what paths they will lead his devoted readers. For the past number of years, only Don, with the help of his talented wife, Renee, could continue to find more challenges for that master distaff sleuth Jessica Fletcher, after she had seemingly exhausted all possibilities around Cabot Cove during the long-running, ragingly successful TV series, "Murder, She Wrote," starring the equally indefatigable Angela Lansbury.

If Don's books are a body of work that defines the conflicts between the good guys and the bad guys, then it is virtually impossible to ignore the analogy that your organization honors not only a great writer, but also one of the real-life good guys. It is a pleasure to call Don Bain my friend. It is an honor to participate in anything that recognizes his work.

Tony Tedeschi is an author, journalist and founding editor of naturaltraveler.com. Now in semi-retirement, he writes a weekly music column for AOL's patch.com site in his hometown of Glen Cove, New York and hosts the weekly open mic there.