

# PROFESSOR DOUG MANCHEE

1954–2018

## A CELEBRATION OF LIFE



PHOTOGRAPHER, PHOTO-EDUCATOR, FATHER, COLLEAGUE,  
FRIEND, AUTHOR, ARTIST, MENTOR

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DOUG—  
AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE RITPHOTO COMMUNITY—  
IS GREATLY MISSED.



Doug Manchee, professor and chair of the advertising photography program in the School of Photographic Arts and Sciences at RIT, passed away on March 29, 2018. Doug was born in Rochester, NY on November 24, 1954. He was predeceased by his father, Richard S. Manchee, and son Alexander E. Manchee, and is survived by his mother, Johanne Manchee, son Sean Manchee, and former wife, Barbara Manchee, in-laws Pam Roleder and Mike Prusack, nieces and nephews Kira Roleder, Anna Prusack, Makenzie Prusack and Max Roleder.

Doug loved his career as a teacher, photographer and designer. Early in his education, Doug studied graphic design in California with Greg Berryman, and this exposure provided a visual sensitivity that served him well as he moved to a career as photographer, author, administrator and teacher. With multiple visual strengths, Doug was a superb critical thinker, enhancing his thinking, writing, teaching and scholarship. His photographic studies were influenced by master photographers and teachers Jack Welpott and Don Worth, with whom he studied at San Francisco State University.

Doug joined RIT in 1989, after a successful studio business in San Francisco. He first taught as an adjunct instructor in the School of Design before moving fulltime to the School of Photographic Arts and Sciences, where, as an associate professor, he taught in the advertising program and served as its current chair. For more than two decades, he was a devoted educator, beloved by students and alumni alike. In 2005, on the occasion of receiving the prestigious RIT Eisenhart Teaching Award, Doug said, “Far and away the best thing I love about my job is to walk into a classroom.” Doug also maintained an active career as a writer and photographic artist. His well-received book—*Sutures and Spirits, The Photographic Illustrations of LeJaren à Hiller*—was published by RIT Press in January 2018. By far, it was Doug’s work as a photographic artist that captured his insatiable curiosity about images and their cultural alignments. This was especially true in the many photographic projects that embraced both

his attraction to and questioning of archives, books, and photographic reproduction. For Doug, the photograph offered an immeasurable world of cultural ideas with complex interplay. His many exhibited and published photographic series—which often hinted at his playful and wry humor—included *20 Works of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*; *Concretions*; *In and Out of Print*; and, *Picturing the Archive*.

Doug was a dedicated teacher and mentor who expressed a wonderful sense of humor that was witty, insightful and just plain funny. His humor often softened difficult situations. Doug shared his enthusiasm for RIT with faculty colleagues via numerous service activities. For many years, he participated on the University's Faculty Affairs Committee, Resource Allocation and Budget Committee, and the Eisenhart Award Committee, along with many other University, College and School groups that worked to shape curriculum with a keen eye to exceptional student learning. He served as a mentor to newly hired faculty in the Photo School, offering them insight and guidance as photo educators and creative practitioners. Beyond RIT, Doug dedicated his time and talents to Visual Studies Workshop (VSW). From 2012 to 2017, he was a VSW board member, and in 2015, was named President of the Board. He held this post for two years.

A celebration of Doug's life will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, May 5th at RIT's Allen Chapel, located in the Schmitt Interfaith Center. The RIT flag will be lowered to half-staff on that day in Doug's memory. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Doug Manchee Student Support Fund in memory of Doug Manchee, RIT Office of Development—Gift Office, P.O. Box 92765, Rochester, NY, 14692, or at [rit.edu/makeagift](http://rit.edu/makeagift)



From Facebook's ***Doug Manchee Tribute*** page

### **Amy Moore**

To put into words what Doug meant to me and countless other students is impossible. From my visit to RIT as a timid high schooler to a senior in college freaking out about the real world, he guided me, and filled me with the confidence to aim high. When I applied to work for Pari, he insisted on following up with him via email. When I saw him on graduation day, he said “I told Pari to hire you and he asked if there was anyone else I should consider. I’m not going to respond.” I’m sure I had never given anyone a bigger hug and that led to a job beyond my dreams.

Then, when returning to Rochester, he didn’t fail to ask me the real question of “why the hell are you back?” followed by “okay, if you’re going to be here, you wanna teach?” Which led to me teaching among him and other amazing professors at the top photo school. RIT won’t be the same ... we will all miss you to pieces, Doug.

### **Christy Dee**

I was shocked when I found out the news. My condolences to his family and friends. He will be missed in the photography community.

## **Doug Nunn**

It is great to read from all those students on this Tribute page who were affected by Doug and his teaching. I had the good fortune to room with Doug as he was a young art/photography student at SF State back in 1976-77. He was bright, talented, and driven to excel as an artist and a photographer. He also had a wonderfully smart-alecky sense of humor. We lived below a garbageman named Frank Fontana, who did a lot of yelling out on 27th Ave. Manchee did a spot on Frank Fontana imitation.

## **Douglas Sonders**

When I was about to graduate RIT back in 2004, my family life back home was in a really tough place. I was giving myself an ulcer worrying about my family, career, and generally my future. I remember sitting in Doug Manchee's office on one of the last days of school asking his advice on how to completely not fall on my face in life. It's been so long, I don't recall his exact words, but the essence was ... "live." He told me to live life and experience things. Learn about myself, travel, push my boundaries. I know he was just trying to reassure me and offer comforting words, but I took his words to heart. I stopped worrying so much about the end goals and focused a bit on growing and living life. Following that short talk and subsequent graduation, I went out and tried to live as much as possible. I let that fuel my work and grow myself as a person, which I desperately needed.

I would reconnect with Doug every few years as I passed through Rochester or there was photo events in NYC. I would try and credit him for giving me such excellent guidance and giving me confidence, but he would just shrug it off like it was no big deal ... but he was a big deal. His guidance, instruction, friendship to us students, his love of fonts, and of course ... his hilarious smart ass words left a lasting impression ... on all of us. I would never have become the photographer I was, and subsequently, the life I have now, if it wasn't for him. I mean that wholeheartedly.

I'll be honest. Professor Manchee probably thought I was a bit out of my mind during my time at RIT ... haha and he was probably right ... I was a bit lost ... but he was immensely patient and wise and gave us

students what we needed. Admittedly, I wish I had a better photo with him than this obnoxious one from around 5 years back, but I love his smile here.

My love to the Manchees. To Barbara. To the RIT Family. I'm crying my eyes out over here.

### **Christopher John Porzio**

Good Man

### **Meghan Petersen**

I am at a loss for words. Not only at Doug's passing, but reading this page and seeing how many people he personally touched. How many people were on the brink, myself included, during a vulnerable and formative time in their lives, that he encouraged to keep moving forward. This industry is so contrary to the 9-5 jobs our parents told us to get, and when we were getting doubt and resistance from all sides, including ourselves, Doug was there. I visited his office regularly to discuss pictures I was making regardless of whether I was in his class, and not once did he make me feel like a burden (though he did encourage me to chill a bit ... he wasn't wrong 🤔). His patience, passion, and wit will be sorely missed. What an incredible impact his life has made on all of us.

### **Court Collins**

From his help as an adviser to Photohouse to having him as a teacher for Ad2 and Portfolio Development, Doug was always ready to say what needed to be said in a way that didn't tear you down. I took a long hiatus before finishing my degree and when I went back he was my faculty adviser and I'm not sure it would have went as smoothly without him. May his work live on where he cannot. Condolences to family, friends and students.

### **Joe Ferrucci**

Doug Manchee! I said his name out loud every time I saw him, because I was happy to see him every time. I loved his class. He had the most enjoyable and insightful critiques. He was so smooth at

dishing out criticism but still made you feel good, and understand how you could improve. “Not every picture you take is going to be good ... its ok.” Something I needed to hear at the time.... So True! He was hilarious! He had a repertoire of stories about all of us which were both glorifying and embarrassing, but I loved to hear them or hide when they were about me. He took the time to learn and know each of us, and that’s what made him incredible and why I will never forget him. I’m going to miss you Doug Manchee! DOUG MANCHEE!!

### **Joanna Buglione**

Doug was an amazing professor and mentor. I wouldn’t have graduated if it weren’t for him. He helped me through so much. RIT will never be the same.

### **Emily Naehring**

Summer program of 2007 is where I really got to know Doug. His incredible passion for RIT and photography was infectious. It was a wild, amazing, fun, creative ride.

### **Becks Ashley**

I’ve been thinking about what I want to say, and I realized I just don’t have the words to express how I feel. I had three classes with Doug during my academic career at RIT, in addition to his position as our program chair. He was the person you’d go to with a problem and he’d be the first one to jump in and say “let’s figure out how to solve this,” never “this can’t be solved.” He was one of the most genuinely good people I’ve ever met. He was the kind of person that always tried to build you up as a photographer, artist, and human being. There wasn’t a class with Doug that didn’t erupt in laughter at one point or another. He had a light that the world will miss.

### **Luke Copping**

Thinking back on Doug over the past few days reminded me of how instrumental he was in helping me during a few trying times when I was at RIT. Primarily while my father was going through a battle with cancer that required me to travel to home to Buffalo several



times a week and was making it difficult for me to complete projects. Doug was incredibly understanding and flexible and extended a lot of leeway to me to get projects completed in my own time during a very difficult time for me and my family. Doug also wasn't afraid to call me on bullshit when I was being pigheaded or stubborn in class—he helped me to break through my misconceptions about what I thought my work SHOULD be and to start to find my own voice in my photography. He was one of the biggest factors in turning my work away from still life work (which he could tell I didn't truly enjoy) and to start looking towards portraits both as a medium for my work but also help me with some of the social issues I had at the time, which ultimately helped me to be more vocal and outgoing both in and out of class.

### **Jonathan Rutherford**

Doug was an incredible mentor, teacher, and most importantly, a friend to me. I went to RIT as an “adult” student, and Doug really supported me through the process of reentering the educational environment. He was always an advocate for me at RIT. Doug and my late dog Rocco Rutherford had a special bond as well! (some may remember a print in his office). Rocco knew exactly where Doug's office was, and most importantly, where he kept the doggy treats. To quote Doug, “Best dog ever,” and if Rocco could have spoken, I guarantee he would have said, “Best professor ever!” Rest in peace Doug, I will miss you. May your next adventures be grand!

### **Inga Mucha-Putney**

I remember coming to Doug with a photo idea for my final portfolio, and was asking him whether I should abandon it all together because I wasn't sure if it was over ambitious. We talked about and he convinced me it wasn't too lofty and just to go for it.

He definitely was able to transfer his passion for photography onto his students. My only regret is that I didn't get to know Doug better.

Amazing Man all around. Gone too soon.

## **Barbie Pitts**

I remember my second year at RIT when I was having a mid-college crisis about my future in photography. I knew that I wasn't talented or passionate enough to pursue a career in advertising photo or in the creative industry. Before you can switch majors I was told I needed to talk to our department chair (I think?) for whatever reason I needed to have Doug sign off on some paperwork. I remember going to his office and he asked me, "why do you want to leave the program?" And we had a very lengthy discussion about my goals, my interests and my dreams. He was very honest with me, and told me "you're right, you won't survive or be happy in this field, but I don't think visual media is the place for you either. You need to think outside of the box, and stop trying to follow the path you decided on when you were in high school. Find what brings you joy and what you enjoy doing the MOST, and jump in head first regardless of whether or not you think you can do it." This was my first and last personal interaction with Doug, I ended up switching to visual media and then a year later switching into the photo tech program. I left his office feeling both terrified of the future but confident that I would be ok. I thought about our conversation often during my 2nd-3rd year at RIT before making the jump to photo tech, but I believe the value that conversation brought me is unmeasurable. After reading everyone's post it's obvious that it was twenty minutes out of his busy day that he would probably never think about again because it was so normal for him. I am forever grateful of the advice and his honesty. He was a wonderful human. ❤️

## **Mia Katz**

Doug was my mentor and confidante at RIT. I would have transferred after second year if it weren't for him. Doug convinced me that I could continue my degree in photography... even though I didn't want to shoot and I wanted to produce, which seemed completely irrelevant to the curriculum at the time. Doug helped me mold my major into something I could use. He had complete faith in me when I had essentially none at all. Without him I would not be doing what I am doing—he was the glue that held my experience at RIT photo together, and I will remember him so, so fondly, always.

## **Ryan Jenq**

When I heard the news I immediately thought of the last time we spoke in on the RIT Ad Trip in October; the promotion he was gearing for over the Summer and probably all the paperwork and unanswered emails he had to get through.

We chatted a bit about a project that I'd worked on (indirectly) with his son. He gave me kind compliments about my continually growing work. "Beautiful" he'd kept saying. It had been a struggle, for the most part I was in it on my own. "Good," cause it's not supposed to be easy; there's supposed to be a little pain.

"I don't blame you, you have the future to think about y'know." I joked as he was wrapping up to leave. I was referring to continuing generations of children, but wasn't as clear as I should have been.

"Well, you know I don't have much longer here,"

It was just a fact, with no foreshadowing. He's old. Just a sense that maybe something was unresolved, somewhere he wanted to go that didn't end up happening; I don't know anything about his life but it was in that kind of spirit. I don't think he realized how literal he was, or soon it was going to be.

I told him that nonetheless, that he will always be, and will become a part of the hundreds of careers and generations that follow suit no matter what. I think he liked hearing that.

We shook hands for a second too long, he thanked me for the continued support and the letter several of us wrote for his hopefully forthcoming promotion. Likewise, I thanked him for guiding me out of obscurity when I was nothing, no talent, no prospects, nothing and helping me fight forward. It was a mutual appreciation.

Secretly I'd hoped that I'd be able to keep moving my career forward for him to see what I could become, to be another success story to add onto the list. Maybe I sound selfish, but there's some element in that these relationships focus on the progression of the students' potential.

That said, I don't believe that our conversation had a lasting impression on him in the months that had followed, he probably wouldn't have remembered it as I have. And I was never particularly close to him, but it did to me.

And that's the beauty of what he did; this was another day, this was routine, and everybody was special in their own right.

Yes, he's not here anymore, but many roads were paved, and when I think about that it wipes away any kind of grief I may have.

### **Sarah Kelly**

One of the few people in the world who could staple/thumb tack/tape a piece of half eaten pizza from the trash onto an old doorstep and make a great photograph of it. You were such a champion for my success. I am forever grateful for all the things you made possible for me. Thank you for everything, Doug. ♥

### **Robbie Stilwell**

I started my time at RIT as a photojournalism major. Toward the end of my freshman year I realized that a career Photojournalism was something I wouldn't be cut out for. I was confused, and feeling incredibly defeated. But I knew I wanted to stay in the photo program, but didn't know where I should move to. After asking some friends and professors about the Ad program, someone pointed me in Doug's direction. I wish I had a better memory of what he said to me when we met in his office to talk about my potential (and eventual) switch to the Ad program. But I know that he managed to make me, who at the time was an anxiety-ridden eighteen year old feeling no sense of purpose, feel at ease and welcomed.

I never had Doug as an appointed professor. But he was instrumental in steering me, and countless others in the right direction. I see where many of his former students are now, and know that he had a lot to be proud of.

### **Christye Sisson**

Doug and I arrived in SPAS at the same time, and went up for tenure at the same time. We bonded over sharing these defining events in our careers and commiserated/did sanity checks together when the going got tough. I will always remember and miss Doug's generosity of spirit, honesty, dry wit, and encouragement that everything would be OK. Rest in Peace, Doug; we're better for you having been here.

**KT Kanazawich**

I didn't have many classes with Doug throughout my years at RIT but still his positivity and encouragement has left a lasting impact on myself, and so many other aspiring artists. The RIT photo family is strong and it feels like it's always there for you—especially our amazing teachers and mentors. I'm saddened to hear the news. You are surely missed Doug!!

**Jackie Allen**

Thank you so much Doug for your kind and encouraging words on my last day at RIT. Speaking with you gave me the confidence (and kick in the butt) to switch to Advertising in my first year, which set me on my current life path. You are dearly missed.

**Kyle Jackson**

Both inside and outside of the classroom, Doug was always available for advice. He had the most quick-witted feedback in any critique, a testament to his years of experience. He was extremely flexible as an advisor, helping tailor my education to my own personal goals, even when it meant breaking tradition by allowing me to take film classes outside of my program. After school, he wrote references for me and guided my career. RIT's undergraduate photography program was a life-changing experience and truly unique in its attention to detail, teamwork, and access to industry-pioneering resources. As a personal journey, it was where I struggled to learn who I was and flourished in seeing who I could be. Doug was instrumental in that development and for that I will be forever grateful.

**Emma Backer**

Doug was the reason I decided to transfer from Syracuse to RIT. I met with him when I was still debating what to do and was so touched by his encouragement that I couldn't imagine being anywhere else. Thank you Doug, you are the reason I chose RIT and I can't imagine it any other way.

## **Christine Blackburne-Kowal**

I am where I am today in large part due to Doug.

He was the best kind of teacher. He pushed us all do do our best, was kind and encouraging, but also didn't sugar coat his feedback. He prepared us for the real world of photography and, to this day, his pearls of wisdom are the ones I dispense most often to my young interns and assistants. Namely, learn everything you can in school and assisting, don't try to have a 'style' right out of school, you have a LONG career ahead of you to do that, don't pigeon hole who you are before you've had time to become that person or before you've explored the possibilities.

Thank you, Doug, for guiding me down the path to who I am as a photographer today. I could not have done it without you. I will deeply miss seeing you each year with the Ad kids when you and Dennis would come to my studio in NYC.

I'm devastated that we lost you so early. You are so loved. Thank you for all that you gave.

## **Taylor Marie**

Doug was the first professor to teach me at RIT. The impact he had after just one class found me in every class he taught between then and graduation, as well as an immediate switch from fine art to advertising.

Nothing shaped me more as a photographer than Doug telling me, "try it, do it, be weird, now weirder" or "buy it all at the dollar store and make it look like it costs a million bucks." My notebooks are filled with meticulous diagrams of his lighting demos and my grip kit is filled with everything imaginable in true Doug form down to the A clamps I won from him.

I called him my photo dad and he was. It didn't matter if it was personal, professional, or purely ridiculous he was always there with wisdom and someway to make you laugh at it all. From my first day on campus to my last he showed me kindness and gave me hope, always going above and beyond as an educator and a mentor.

Doug you will be so missed and so fiercely remembered.

## **Christina Wairegi**

Doug Manchee was my advisor in college but he was also my champion. I took on maybe more than I could have imagined, creating a dual degree for two rigorous programs in departments that did not coexist, and it meant I needed the word of really incredible educators just to make any case at all that I could do it. I needed my teachers to show the same confidence in my abilities that I claimed to have, and Doug did more than just get behind that dream I had. Doug went out of his way and added to his more than full enough plate my own personal mission and struggles.

His door was always open, actually always open, to not just me but all of us. He even stopped in the halls to walk with me, postponed meetings and allowed us so much leeway when we struggled to make it to class on time, perfect or complete assignments. He always asked what was going on in our lives and taught us to think critically about our art and in turn our perspective on the world.

He was my guide for five years in a place that was so foreign and overwhelming at 18. He shared stories of his years in Ohio with me, his college years, his hopes for us. Even when I graduated Doug made time to see me, invited me to speak to his students, bought me a drink, emailed and praised my success as I navigated NYC on a night like the one in this photo.

Doug Manchee is really about as good a mentor as anyone can ask for, as great an educator as you can hope for, and as sincere a human you could aspire to be. Thank you Doug for everything.

## **Carol Lee**

Doug, thank you for your constant wisdom and wit. You always pushed and encouraged me to be different. You were the first person I met at RIT when I visited as a high schooler and your words convinced me to attend. Every meeting I had with you, you talked to me as more than a student, but as a friend and that made all the difference. You have made an incredible and significant difference in my life, and it breaks my heart that I won't see you in NYC every spring doing the same for others.

### **Jessica Davis**

Words really don't express how amazing of a teacher/mentor Doug was to all of us. ... So lucky to have been in a countless number of his classes and beyond privileged to have had projects honestly, fairly and genuinely critiqued by him ... wouldn't be where I am today (both job and personal talent) without him. RIP, Doug

### **Catherine Sharp**

Doug was more than a teacher, he was a friend. The summer I came to RIT I had Doug as my first teacher, Doug gave me the courage to start talking to people and making friends. I have a life long friend Taylor thanks to him. Doug pushed me to do things I never thought I could do, like work for the cage, or still life photography. Black and white photography was super important to him. The first thing I remember hearing from one of his lectures was about Irving Penn. It was an intense talk about him, I will never forget it. He made all of us better photographers and better humans. There is not enough time to say all the good things about Doug. I have a missing piece now that he has left us.

### **Emily Bukowski**

The last time I spoke to Doug he referred me to a job just days after I had moved to NYC. I couldn't believe how perfect the timing was. Now I go to work everyday with a smile on my face and couldn't be more appreciative and thankful for him—he always went out of his way to help and was so encouraging. Thank you Doug for helping me start my career and making my move to NYC well worth it.

### **Louie Novak**

My heart goes out to Doug Manchee's family and friends. Doug, you've touched so many lives and made RIT an outstanding college to be at. I know I am a better person and photographer because of you. I will always remember our talks of Gwar concerts and death metal bands haha. I'll never forget our epic Ad Portfolio review at our house. Thank you for the laughs, and thank you for giving of yourself to so many, Rest in Peace.



### **K. Logan Runyon**

Doug was my New York father. I had a lot on my plate when I move to Rochester and he helped me through a lot of stuff. He understood my aesthetic taste and help me develop it to the fullest. His recommendation got me my first agency job. I owe a debt to Doug that can never be repaid. Doug, through your students you have impacted the world for the better. Thank you for everything.

Was going through my phone and found a personal project I was working on shortly before graduating. Tried creating South Park characters for all the teachers I had. This one was titled "Doug."



### **Alyssa Brdlik**

My heart broke this afternoon when I heard about Doug's passing. I knew Doug for three of the four years I was at RIT and I took so many classes with him. Portfolio with Doug my final semester at RIT was really what kept me going during a difficult time. A lot of professors in our department are good at tough love, but Doug knew I was hard enough on myself for the both of us. He kept me laughing through to graduation and convinced me that no matter what happened it would be okay, and I would be okay. It was everything I needed to hear and I'm still grateful for it today. I feel so incredibly lucky to have had him as not just a professor, but a mentor.

### **Julia Rabkin**

RIP Doug. You were an amazing teacher who greatly impacted my life and my art. I'm at a loss to put words to paper to express not only my sadness, but how wonderful you were as a human being. You will be missed. Thank you for everything you have done for me. Xox

### **Lainie Augensen**

DRAFT was the most defining project that I worked on while at RIT and it would not have been possible without Doug's hard work and humor. He was a wonderful teacher and advisor. I try to bring the same

positive attitude and humor to my teaching because his passion and joy impacted me so much. He will be missed.

**Seth Abel**

This man will be greatly missed. I knew Doug throughout all my years at RIT and had the pleasure on working one on one with him for a year. He always asked if I was available to just lend a hand or help other students. He always checked in to see how I was doing after graduation and kept the faith in me.

Glad I had the opportunity to meet you and also share a drink with ya on your last visit. RIP, sir.

**Jason Reimer**

Kind of reeling a bit at the news. I took an elective with Doug my last semester there, and his humor and encouragement helped lighten a very heavy semester. Great photographer, great teacher, but more importantly, a really great guy. You will be greatly missed, Doug!

**Lorrie Frear**

Doug was my first office mate at RIT and he was just a fantastic individual and a passionate teacher. I will miss him very much.

**Josh Lehrer**

I would not have a degree if it were not for Doug, it's just that simple. RIT will never be the same.

**Bill DuBois**

Doug was a leader, quiet, always added humor, and never said no. He was one of those friends in the faculty that would be there whenever asked. Be at PEACE, Doug.

**Bill Heiden**

Doug was a friend of mine for over forty years. Just found out this morning. I'm shocked.

## **Jack Hamm**

Doug was the professor that pushed me to pursue the path I took at RIT from the first visit I made to the school. I remember that meeting like it was yesterday, telling him I was thinking about minoring in photo— His response was something along the lines of don't waste your time with a minor, you have a better eye than some of my rising seniors and if you're going to study photography go all in, or go somewhere else. —I'm glad I listened—

## **Liza Savage-Katz**

How heartbreaking. What a loss to our community. Doug was one of my Professors in 1993. I loved his energy and enthusiasm. Some of my favorite work came out of that class while I was attending RIT. He will be missed. ❤️





Lushan Li