

Letters

An extraordinary life of strength, courage

I would like to thank Pam Belluck '85 for her extraordinarily sensitive and



COURTESY LYNN NADEAU

insightful article on the life and illness of Doug/Donna Nadeau '62 (feature, April 19), and PAW for publishing it.

Doug was a classmate, a fellow member of

Campus Club, and, if my hazy recollections do not fail me, we also shared a major. As such, we collaborated and socialized almost daily for over two years and, while we went our separate ways and never corresponded or met after graduation, Doug remains one of the few classmates whose name and image I have not forgotten.

Not a reunion-goer, I did not attend our 38th, when Donna first made herself known to her classmates. I do not know how I would have reacted to her, but I suspect I probably would have disappointed her — and myself even more, for I prefer to think of myself as open-minded and tolerant. Even after reading Ms. Belluck's article, I can only begin to imagine what an incredible daily challenge the combination of transgendered identity and the degen-

erative effects of illness must have had not only on Donna but also on her family.

I would like to express my utter admiration for Lynn, Doug's wife and Donna's partner, who could so understandably have left the relationship, but who not only chose to honor and respect the essence of the person she loved and married, but who also so courageously chose to reveal to us who Donna really was. Lynn could have just let her die and fade into an awkward and puzzling memory. Instead, she chose to trust the Princeton community of scholars, most of whom never knew Doug/Donna personally, with the intimate details of a profoundly challenged life. I thank her for that trust.

I also respect and appreciate the honesty and forthrightness of sons Greg and Ted '87, who chose to support their mother in this effort. Doug/Donna's life may have been confronted by unenviable rigors, but it appears to have been blessed by a wonderful family.

MICHAEL OLDS '62
Irvine, Calif.

Thank you for your article on my classmate, Doug Nadeau. I found it both enlightening and difficult to read of his struggle. He obviously had enormous courage. The other reaction I had was tremendous admiration for his wife, Lynn, who also demonstrated amazing courage and love. She indeed took seriously those marriage vows about "for

better or worse, in sickness and health."

JOHN TITUS '62
Stone Mountain, Ga.

Thank you for the moving article on Doug/Donna Nadeau. I am inspired by her story and triumphs, as well as those of her family. How difficult it is to be different in a society so insistent upon conformity and "same." How sad the ignorance, fear, and inability to learn from Donna's extraordinary life and lessons.

MARY W. FOULK '91
Portland, Ore.

The legacy of Wilson

Mark F. Bernstein '83's article praising Woodrow Wilson 1879 (cover story, April 19) contained a by-now outdated and unacceptable condescension: "Presidential scholarship has taken note of Wilson's racism; a son of the South, he failed to pursue racial justice."

He went on to quote approvingly a historian as saying, "Wilson was simply typical of his generation of Southerners in his attitude toward race."

If either Mr. Bernstein or the historian had read the 11th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1910-11), then they would have found racism in that most authoritative and celebrated of referenced works. Its entry for "Negro" stated, "Mentally the negro is inferior to the white." At the time, professors at Harvard and Yale were spewing out similar white supremacist drivel. The sad, awful truth is that racism was accepted throughout the whole of the United States, as well as of Europe. It was not limited to the American South. Racism at that time contaminated virtually all white Americans. Regrettably, in his attitude toward African-Americans President Wilson was a product of his age and country, not just of Dixie.

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