

Remembering DON DAVIES

Presentation and Feature at INET 2022

Don Davies died in 2019. Many colleagues bid him a sad farewell at the meeting of the European Research Network About Parents in Education (ERNAPE) in Gdansk, Poland, in September 2019. We planned our INET tribute for April 2020—the ill-fated INET meeting cancelled by COVID.

Tributes do not expire. Admiration and good memories do not expire. So, we remember Don today—knowing that there is nothing he would like more than to be here, too.

On the resource table in the Foyer, you will see comments from a few colleagues who worked closely with Don. If you knew Don, you are welcome to recall the work or travels you did together. We will send this collection to Don's daughters Druanne and Donna.

Some of you did not have the pleasure of meeting and working with Don, so here is a bit of history.

Don and I conducted our first international meeting (a precursor to INET) on family and community engagement in Faro, Portugal in the late 1980s with a small group of Don's former students from Portugal, a few other education leaders and researchers, and Joyce Davies—Don's wonderful wife who was a great INET supporter.

Based on the meeting in Faro, we created INET -- the International Network of Scholars on School, Family, and Community Partnerships to conduct roundtables in the U.S. at the time of AERA meetings. Our first meeting was in San Francisco with a small group—maybe 25 in all. Over time, INET has grown to include hundreds of researchers and many of their graduate students in more than 30 nations.

INET encouraged our “sister” organization—ERNAPE—to form and flourish. ERNAPE meets every other year (between INET meetings) in different countries to report new studies on partnerships and ways to apply research to improve policy and practice.

When INET was formed, AERA did not care much about family engagement. Yet our growing group knew that home, school, and community

partnerships are the heart and soul of education. Together, with many of you and many others, we grew and strengthened this field of study. Now, AERA supports the Family, School, Community Partnerships Special Interest Group (SIG)—a long-time cosponsor of INET meetings. And, at AERA, just about every division recognizes and presents new and advanced studies of family and community engagement.

Don loved INET and ERNAPE. And we all loved Don – a truly kind man, dedicated teacher, productive scholar, and insightful policy leader. Don was one of the first to know that research on family and community engagement can, should, and must find its way into educational policy and practice.

In the Research Center that Don and I co-directed from 1990 to 1996 (the Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children’s Learning), we set “how to” as our collective agenda with several other leading researchers from multiple universities—a truly wonderful group. While I tested ideas about district leadership in Baltimore, Don worked with schools in Boston and beyond in a project called *Schools Reaching Out*. We both reported clear evidence that schools could design and implement family engagement activities and, if they did, more and different families became involved, and more students did better in school.

Those studies identified new and more difficult questions that persist today. We continue to search for answers to two major questions. The always challenging KNOWLEDGE question: How will ever-more rigorous methods of research extend and improve what we know and what we need to know? And the very complex EQUITY question: How can we help educators apply research-based strategies to organize effective and equitable partnership programs—as directed by official policies—in all states, all districts, and all schools—with all families to support the learning and development of all students?

These are THE questions of our time.

These are THE challenges we must solve.

These are THE topics of your presentations today at INET.

The work we do to address these questions is a continuing tribute to the foundational studies and leadership of Don Davies.

🌀 Remembering Don Davies 🌀

Professor, Boston University and Northeastern University

**Founder, Institute for Responsive Education (IRE)
and *Schools Reaching Out***

**Co-Director: Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and
Children's Learning, 1990-1996**

**Co-Founder INET, 1991
and Friend**

🌀 *Adelina Villas-Boas* 🌀

When my advisor told me to show my master's dissertation to Professor Don Davies, I was far from realizing that that simple gesture would change my whole academic life.

He immediately involved me in his research activities, which he continued to do throughout the years. Two years later he invited me to participate in an about forty-member meeting which actually was the first conference of what became INET! His support was also germane to the organization of ERNAPE, the INET counterpart in Europe.

In 2013, at the 9th ERNAPE Conference in Lisbon, I invited him to give the final keynote address. First, he said "No." When I insisted, he agreed to speak for 5-10 minutes. Finally, he spoke about his favorite subject "Democracy and Schools" for 45 minutes to an enthusiastic audience, and answered questions for a time afterwards.

That's the Don Davies I wish to honor—an engaged, generous, and devoted man to his wife, to his causes, to his family, and to his friends!

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🌀 Remembering Don Davies 🌀

🌀 *Karen Mapp* 🌀

Teacher, advisor, mentor, friend. Don Davies was all of this and more to me and many others. Don, whom many of us refer to as the father of family and community engagement, lead the way, opened doors, and paved the path for this work. We stand on his shoulders and continue his legacy by fighting for and insisting on an education system that is responsive to and equitable for all children, families, and communities.

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🌀 *Anne Henderson* 🌀

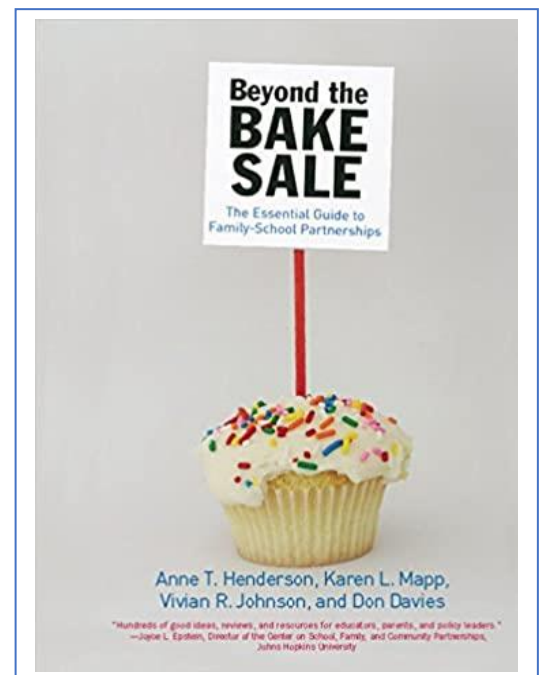
Don was a wise, kind, understanding (and sometimes stern!) mentor to me. After we first met in 1978, I sought his advice on all my projects. This led to our collaboration with Karen Mapp and Vivian Johnson on the 2007 edition of *Beyond the Bake Sale* and other projects. I consider him the Founding Father of the family and community engagement field.

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🌀 Remembering Don Davies 🌀

🌀 *Vivian Johnson* 🌀

Don Davies was my close colleague and deeply respected friend for nearly forty years. He will always be remembered as an outstanding architect of Family-School-Community partnerships to assist in closing persistent gaps between opportunities and outcomes in education.

His legacy of fairness and kindness in his struggle for equity and excellence in our society defined his work. He is greatly missed by all who knew him.

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🌀 *Janet Chrispeels* 🌀

Don Davies was a wonderful mentor and true friend. He launched my career in education by inviting me to contribute chapters on parent involvement for books he and his graduate students were writing in the late 1970s. This was a very exciting invitation for a parent volunteer in a local school and League of Women Voters in San Diego, California. One chapter was on pathbreaking work in a few states on public access to bargaining positions of boards and unions. Others focused on parents/citizens serving on district- and newly-established school site councils.

Don opened so many doors for a novice like me. He invited me to come to my first ever AERA meeting in New Orleans in 1984. That hooked me on the importance of educational research. Most precious to me was that he always valued the knowledge of those who were *working on the ground* to promote family engagement. He was a pioneer in this area and ahead of his time in so many ways. Only recently has AERA re-discovered that the connection between researchers and practitioners is essential if all our children are to be successfully educated.

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🌀 Remembering Don Davies 🌀

Don Davies has his day...in Portugal



There's no shortage of accomplished people in the town of Marblehead, Mass., many of whom have won all sorts of prestigious awards. But not one can boast a Portuguese Presidential Medal of Honor as Don Davies can.

For three decades, Davies worked to improve public education in Portugal, once advising an inexperienced yet promising educator who later became the country's Minister of Education.

It was that very same Minister of Education, Isabel Alcada, who presented the award to Davies at a ceremony on May 12 in Lisbon.

A professor of education emeritus at Boston University, Davies first began his work in Portugal back in 1983 when the university teamed up with World Bank to prepare new faculty members for the 19 new schools of education they were hoping to establish.

From 6-16-2011, *Marblehead Reporter*.