



Christopher Todd Duke

June 2, 1970 - January 6, 2019

Christopher Todd Duke passed away on Sunday, January 6, 2019 at the age of 48 after a long battle with cancer. He was the beloved son of Carolyn Cox Pratt and the late Lawrence Pratt.

Todd was a New Orleans guitarist who began honing his craft as a teenager at the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts. He formed his first band, Spontaneous Inventions, with his friends from Slidell while attending Slidell High School. Upon graduation in 1989, Todd moved to New Orleans and dedicated himself to the guitar. He learned to play the blues at Basin Street's Colt 38, and refined his expertise by taking on as many gigs as he could around the city. He quickly established himself as an indispensable part of the New Orleans music scene.

Todd was an unassuming and diligent craftsman who had a gift for making everyone he worked with sound their best. He developed a reputation as a musicians' musician known for his versatility in jazz, soul, blues, R&B, and traditional New Orleans idioms. He performed regularly with the greats of New Orleans, and while there are too many to list all of them here, they include: Bob French, George French, Leroy Jones, Wardell Quezzerque, Shannon Powell, Luther Kent, King Floyd, and The Ella and Louis Tribute Band.

A sensitive player who deftly wove together subtle harmonic tapestries and rhythmically infectious grooves, Todd became a magnet for vocalists, and worked extensively with the likes of John Boutte, Germaine Bazzle, Sharon Martin, Topsy Chapman, Wanda Rouzan, Jewell Brown, and many more.

Todd conceived of and led the New World Funk Ensemble which was inspired by the African tour he made as a US State Department Jazz Ambassador. He was an original and longtime member of the Hot Club of New Orleans band, and led his own trio often at Dos Jefes and the Bombay Club. He also performed for many years at the Windsor Court Grill Room as part of the Empire Trio. He played on the 2008 Grammy-nominated Michael Doucet album, *From Now On*, and in 2009 he was named a New Orleans Magazine Jazz

All-Star.

To be in Todd's presence was special. Fiercely funny and generous, he had a talent for making family, friends, and strangers alike feel loved and important. A gourmet cook, he loved to entertain and tell hilarious stories late into the night. He had an adventurous spirit, and he traveled extensively, sharing his music with the world and spreading joy to all who heard it. It was in this same spirit that Todd departed this world, surrounded by his family, unafraid, and headed to his next adventure.

He is survived by his mother, Carolyn Cox Pratt, and his siblings, Jessica Spring Romanos Pratt, Sarah Elizabeth Pratt, and Christopher Michael Pratt, as well many other treasured extended family members and friends.

A memorial and celebration of Todd's life will be held February 2, 2019 at 4pm at St. Paul's United Church of Christ, 600 Eleonore St, New Orleans, LA 70115.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations in memory of Todd to be made to the New Orleans Musicians Clinic, 3700 St. Charles Ave, New Orleans, LA 70115, neworleansmusiciansclinic.org.

Comments



“ We enjoyed meeting him few years ago
Such a talented musician
He will be missed but not forgotten
Hugs to all

Kathy & Andy Vodicka - 1 minute ago



“ I was blessed to have known this sweet & talented soul for over 11 yrs. A considerate person with a big heart, Todd was always able to touch so many with his melodic guitar playing. I will miss hearing him play and seeing his bright smile. My sympathy to all his family and friends. - C. Post

Carmen Post - January 14 at 01:44 AM