

Jeff Around Town – March 3rd, 2026

Jeff: This is Jeff Around Town, and I'm at the Mill on Leavenworth with Andra Roussel, who is the daughter of Eddith Buis, who passed away last year, and March 3rd would have been her birthday. Andra, thanks for being here.

Andra: You're very welcome.

Jeff: She passed away in February of 2025?

Andra: Yes, February 3rd, one month before her 85th birthday.

Jeff: Wow. If you are a creative in Omaha, you're an artist, it's hard to imagine that you either didn't know Eddith or didn't know of her. She touched the lives of so many as an educator and as an artist. Can you just tell us a little bit about maybe some of your memories of her?

Andra: Oh my goodness.

Jeff: Growing up with her?

Andra: I didn't realize because I was her daughter and it was just who my mom was, but I think the J. Doe Project really made me realize what a force she was in our community for so many. And then after that, I started attending more of her openings and understanding the pedestal that she sat upon. She was a force.

Jeff: So, for those who are maybe new-ish to Omaha, the J. Doe Project was a number of years ago. These sculptures were placed all over town. And do you recall anything specific about her particular J. Doe Project?

Andra: Well, she was kind of the mother of the project. She was the one who really pushed it forward.

Jeff: Oh, I didn't know that.

Andra: Yeah.

Jeff: Okay.

Andra: And she actually did three Does herself. I think that that project was such a loved event for so many all over the state. People would drive in from miles away to see if they could find every Doe and visit it and learn about it. And I think that that was a big project for her. She did the Benchmarks Project and so many art openings.

Jeff: A lot of public art.

Andra: A lot of public art.

Jeff: And her passion was not only for her own art but really to share with others and to inspire others. And if you could talk a little bit about that and maybe how she inspired you just as a person maybe.

Andra: I've always felt like her creativeness, her creative juices passed right through me to my two daughters. She really elevated and shared her love of art. She took them to piano lessons every week. She always had them enrolled in different courses at the Joslyn, expanding on their art love. And they're both very creative. My daughters, Pascal and Delphine. And, you know, I think that Eddith, her goal was, as you said, not only to create art but to help elevate art in the city of ours of Omaha and also to be an appreciator and help other people appreciate art.

Jeff: Yeah, there was nothing. Some artists have a competitive nature, and that's fine, but she wasn't that way. She truly wanted to celebrate others and would randomly, I remember once she randomly wanted to draw my portrait, you know, really celebrating creativity in Omaha.

Andra: You might have been a part of the portrait.

Jeff: I was.

Andra: She did like 40 portraits in a very short amount of time. It was incredible.

Jeff: Yeah.

Andra: At her stage in life to be able to take that on. But that was Eddith. She was, yeah.

Jeff: Very youthful spirit, and I think that taps into this idea that when you are doing something creative and you are pursuing and following your passions and your heart, what's in your heart, it keeps you youthful, don't you think?

Andra: Absolutely, yes.

Jeff: Did you hear any, were there any stories that other artists shared with you after her passing that maybe you didn't, hadn't known or that touched you in some way?

Andra: You know, there's, I don't know that I could pick out one specific, and the reason we reached out to each other was, I asked you initially to play a piece, a piano piece by Claude Debussy, "The Girl with the Flaxen Hair". And that, I think the strength of music and art combined, that's where I always take my, my mind goes when I think of Eddith. Her dad, my grandfather, who we were all very close to, would play that piece on request for Eddith on their little baby grand piano.

Jeff: I love that.

Andra: It was wonderful, it was wonderful. So, the combination of the music and the arts, she was definitely loved in the community.

Jeff: Andra Roussel, thank you so very much for chatting. I'm Jeff Around Town.

Andra: You're very welcome. It's been a pleasure.