

# Don Elliott, 57, Jazz Singer, Vibraphonist and Composer

Don Elliott, a jazz vibraphonist, singer and composer who was featured with George Shearing and Benny Goodman and had his own production company making television commercials for more than 20 years, died of cancer yesterday at his home in Weston, Conn. He was 57 years old.

Mr. Elliott, who was born in Somerville, N.J., was a versatile musician who, in addition to vibraphone, played trumpet, bongos, French horn and mellophone, an adaptation of the French horn that allows the performer to project directly at his audience instead of off to one side.

Mr. Elliott introduced the mellophone to jazz in 1953 and for the next seven years was a consistent winner of the annual poll conducted by the magazine *Down Beat* in the "miscellaneous instruments" category.

After World War II, in which he served as a B-29 gunner, he came to audiences' attention as a singer in the vocal quartet Hi, Lo, Jack and the Dame. In 1950, he joined the George Shearing Quintet and played vibraphone with Mr. Shearing for three years when the group was at the height of its popularity.

In 1954, he joined the Benny Goodman Sextet and the following year he was in the Teddy Wilson Quartet. In 1956, he started his own group, which included the pianist Bill Evans, a longtime friend from New Jersey.

Mr. Elliott formed a television commercials production company, Don Elliott Productions, and opened his own studio in New York in 1958, later moving it to his home in Weston.

He was skilled in electronics and could perform all the jobs in the production of commercials — running the console, directing, composing, playing various instruments and singing — often performing all the voices by overdubbing. Out of these talents and a wry sense of humor, he created a hit record, "The Nutty Squirrels," in 1959.

The following year he composed and arranged the score for the Broadway musical "A Thurber Carnival" and appeared on stage in it with his quartet.

In the 1960's and 1970's, he sang and played on the sound tracks of numerous films, including "The Pawnbroker" and "In the Heat of the Night." In those two decades, he rarely performed in public but in recent years he had been picking up his performing career again. His last appearance was on June 16 at Freddy's.

He is survived by his wife, Doris, a daughter, Doriane, and a son, Dean, all of Weston; his mother, Netty Friedman, and a brother, Herbert Helfman, both of Somerville. A memorial service will be held on Sunday at 3 P.M. at Temple Beth-El, Route 206, Bridgewater, N.J.

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## Nora Kramer, Writer, Editor And Children's-Book Expert

Nora Kramer, author, editor and authority on juvenile books, died on Wednesday at her home in Manhattan. She was 88 years old.

Mrs. Kramer wrote and edited more than 30 books, including "Nora Kramer's Storybook for Fives and Sixes" and "The Cozy Hours Storybook," in collaboration with Josette Frank. She was founder and director of the Book Plan, a personalized book selection service for young people, which she began under the name of Eleanor Brent.

Mrs. Kramer was a longtime member of the Children's Book Committee of the Child Study Association of America; she was editor in chief of the *Book Woman*, the publication of the Women's National Book Association, and she was chairman of Books Across the Sea of the English Speaking Union.

She is survived by her children, Karl of Plattsburg, N.Y.; Virginia Kramer Stein of Somerville, N.J., and Joan Stoliar of Manhattan.

The funeral will be private.