The legacy of Sir Patrick Stewart

A theater kid who captained the stars

By ANTHONY ANGELILLO
Copy Editor

Actor Patrick Stewart, who commanded the Enterprise as Captain Jean-Luc Picard on "Star Trek: The Next Generation" and played Professor Charles Xavier in the X-Men franchise, died Oct. 28 at his home in Los Angeles. He was 86.

His longtime spokesperson, Kelly Bush Novak, announced Oct. 29 that he died after a "brief and poignant journey" with Alzheimer's disease and Lewy body dementia.

The statement asked for donations to Alzheimer's research and caregiver support instead of flowers.

Stewart was born July 13, 1940, in Mirfield, a small town in West Yorkshire, England. The youngest of three boys who grew up in a house with no hot water. His family's outhouse was also his reading spot.

Inside that house, Stewart watched his father, a former regimental sergeant major, attack his mother for years. In a 2009 essay for The Guardian, he wrote that as a boy, he learned exactly when to step between them.

English teacher Cecil Dormand pointed him somewhere better when Stewart was 12, handing him a script for "The Merchant of Venice" and telling him to read the character Shylock.

Stewart credited Dormand with his career for the rest of his life.

Before acting paid a single bill, Stewart left school at 15 and spent about a year at the Dewsbury Reporter, as what he later called "a very junior newspaper reporter."

His editor grew tired of amateur theater cutting into the job, so Stewart walked away and earned a full scholarship to the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.

The Royal Shakespeare Company became his home in 1966, and Stewart appeared in more than 40 of its productions on his way to leads like "Shylock" and "Prospero."

He collected two Olivier Awards, a Tony nomination and was knighted in 2010 for his contributions to drama.

A producer developing a new "Star Trek" series caught one of his Shakespeare lectures in Los Angeles and talked him into auditioning. Taking the role in 1987 scared Stewart, who told NPR in 2022 that it meant shutting down a stage career that was finally taking off.

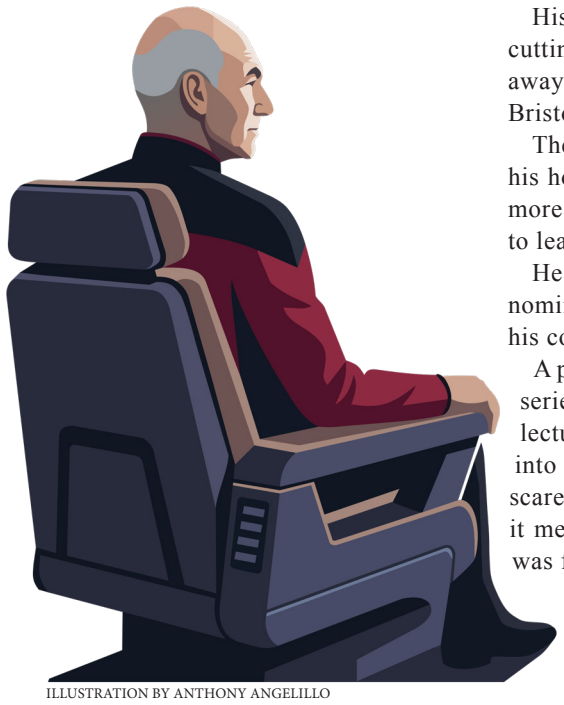

ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY ANGELILLO

Fellow actor Ian McKellen, who knew him from their Royal Shakespeare Company days, warned him about getting lost in Hollywood.

"Well, he took the risk and thank goodness for us all that he did," McKellen wrote after his death.

To the Los Angeles Times, Stewart was an "unknown British Shakespearean actor," a label he joked about for decades. Co-star Brent Spiner, who played the android Data, even turned the phrase into a sign on Stewart's trailer door.

Over seven seasons, the show won 18 Emmys and a Peabody Award, while "Make it so" became Picard's trademark order. Stewart played the captain in four movies and three seasons of "Star Trek: Picard."

A new generation met him in 2000 as Professor Charles Xavier in "X-Men," with McKellen playing Magneto, and Stewart stayed in the wheelchair through "Logan" in 2017.

The two grew so close that McKellen officiated Stewart's 2013 wedding to singer Sunny Ozell at a Mexican restaurant.

Picard rarely cracked a joke, but Stewart's goofy side showed up in 120 episodes of "American Dad!" as CIA deputy director Avery Bullock and his narration on "Ted."

Stewart kept the abuse he saw as a child private for years before he began speaking out. He became a patron of Refuge, a British charity that helps women and children escape domestic violence and supported Combat Stress, a mental health charity for military veterans, after learning his father's war trauma was never treated.

"I do it for my mother, because I couldn't help her back then," Stewart told AARP The Magazine in 2014.

The boy who quit school at 15 served as chancellor of the University of Huddersfield, near his hometown, from 2004 to 2015, and the school renamed its drama building in his honor in 2016.

McKellen wrote that the chancellor role was Stewart's proudest achievement, and the university's tribute told Stewart, "Your story will forever be part of ours."

The "Next Generation" crew posted goodbyes in the following days, including actress Marina Sirtis, who played Counselor Troi and said in an Instagram video that she could not imagine a world without him. Actress Whoopi Goldberg, who played Guinan, wrote, "See you on the next holodeck."

Actor William Shatner, the original Captain James T. Kirk, called it a heartbreaking week.

Two days before Stewart's death, actor Walter Koenig, who played Ensign Pavel Chekov on the original series, died at 90.

"X-Men" co-star Hugh Jackman, who played Wolverine, wrote that he learned so much from Stewart and would miss him for the rest of his life.

London's West End theaters announced they would dim their lights for two minutes Nov. 3, and Mirvish Productions planned the same for the marquee of Toronto's Royal Alexandra Theatre.

In his 2023 memoir, "Making It So," Stewart wrote that he still had "so many characters inside me that I need to let out."

He never got to all of them, but Professor X returns one last time Dec. 18 in "Avengers: Doomsday," a farewell performance McKellen reminded fans has yet to be seen.

How to celebrate a holiday that is underappreciated

By ZOELIS BAUZA
Contributing Writer

Now that Halloween has ended, The Today Show has published 57 ways you can celebrate Thanksgiving, a holiday that is often overlooked by people. They mention many activities from celebrating Thanksgiving the traditional way by gathering with family and friends and enjoying a feast to having a matching pajama party with your closest friends and enjoying the day.

Thanksgiving was made a national holiday in 1863 during the Civil War by former President Abraham Lincoln. It was created to improve relations between northern and southern states as well as the U.S. and tribal nations. This allowed them to become aligned and build a steady relationship. The Smithsonian Institution talks about how the "First Thanksgiving" is known to have been called a Local Harvest, where people would gather around and pray for a comfortable living and good food.

Today, Thanksgiving is traditionally celebrated through family gatherings, shared meals and celebrating what we're grateful for. However, the way people celebrate the holiday can vary from household to household. Throughout the years, these traditions have changed. According to Life Hope & Truth, an important reason why Thanksgiving is underappreciated is because people have forgotten how to appreciate others and to be thankful, sharing kindness and overall spreading love.

But in reality, there are so many ways to celebrate Thanksgiving, no matter if you are away at college or live in a different country, away from your relatives or if you simply choose to celebrate alone.

For those celebrating with family, making a handmade card is one way to show appreciation. A personalized message can be simple enough to add to a holiday gathering but can go a long way for someone.

For those who like to stay in and relax, the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade is an annual holiday tradition. First held in 1924, the parade takes place in New York City every Thanksgiving. If you want to get in the holiday spirit earlier on, you can watch the parade from years past. Millions of people watch from home or travel to Manhattan to watch it in person. The length of the parade is expected to be 2.5 miles, beginning at West 77th Street and Central Park West before heading south toward Columbus Circle. It then follows Central Park South and Sixth Avenue before turning onto 34th Street and finishing outside Macy's Herald Square. The parade has many different themed floats, marching bands, balloons and performers. This year they are celebrating the 100th Parade anniversary, which is expected to have 100 floats and amazing guests.

If you are planning to spend your Thanksgiving away from home, another tradition is Friendsgiving. Spending quality time with friends, cooking and baking Thanksgiving favorites, playing board games and watching holiday movies is a great way to celebrate.. Each person can bring a dish, whether it's homemade, store-bought or ordered from a restaurant. Meeting up with your closest friends and spending quality time with them is great for the holiday season, especially if you are a busy student or are always working.

Another way to participate in the Thanksgiving season is by volunteering at your local food bank. Food banks rely on volunteers to help prepare and give free food to families in need, proving it to be a wonderful way to give back to the people who need it. According to the Town of Hamden, Connecticut. A thanksgiving giveaway will occur Nov. 20, 2026. With no pre-registration needed, they work with Community Services every year to ensure Hamden families enjoy Thanksgiving without the worry of where their holiday meal will come from through generous donations.The Keefe Community Center is giving out a free package meal that can include a turkey, gravy, mash potatoes, stuffing and yams. The center is also open to accepting donations for canned foods or supplies. Their main mission has been to give back to the community, allowing people to do their volunteer hours and relying heavily on donations. This helps them give better assistance to families who don't have homes or proper meals.



ILLUSTRATION BY AVA STANGO

Although Thanksgiving is associated with family gatherings and traditional meals, there are several ways to participate in the holiday. From watching the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade to organizing a friendsgiving to volunteering at a local food bank, November offers different opportunities to celebrate the season.