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FORWARD: PRESS PLAY

ON A PLEASURE

Have you ever played with a giant rubber carabao with your kindergarten classmates, carefully positioned yourself in a firm circle of players to sit on one another's legs, or tried to make a giant human knot as part of a team-building exercise? If you've done any of these things, then you've experienced the world—and the imagination—of Ernest "Big" De Koven.

Ernest De Koven, always ahead of the curve, devoted his life to studying, designing, writing, and teaching play and playfulness. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, he developed a play-based dictionary school curriculum in Philadelphia. In the early 1970s, he built one of the first school game collections, known as the Games Project, decades before game studies evolved as a discipline. As president of the New Games Foundation in the mid-1970s, he was instrumental in the spread of games like the ones described above—many of which became ubiquitous in today's digital centers as online schools, summer camps, dinner games, and corporate offices. He also had a hand in