

Linda Wygal

Funeral Service

Saturday, September 27, 2014

Minister Graylin Ross' Introduction

On this beautiful autumn day, let us honor and celebrate the life of our beloved friend, Linda Wygal. We welcome Linda's daughter Kelli and grand-daughter Kayla and her partner Rafael; and we extend our thoughts to Linda's great grand-children, Anthony and Rafael.

The brightness of the sky may be eclipsed for a time, but never extinguished. A star climbing to its appointed height cannot be hidden by death. With divine guidance, Linda's spirit ascends above the mortal realm.

Let us stand and remember our friend Linda in silent presence.

(Silence)

Thank you, please be seated.

Each student forms a branch of our school's living tree, their being and their efforts, the leaves and the fruit. Each student raises the School, enriches our lives, while creating a true Self.

Our Teacher has said, 'Ascending souls complete their roles fully prepared, having received the presence allotted to them in this lifetime.'

Linda returns to the divine source; let her beauty light us along the same passage, as we too witness this great mystery of life.

Music: Bach/Gunoud Ave Maria, Marina & Coral

Reading: Julian Branston

When I consider every thing that grows
Holds in perfection but a little moment,
That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows
Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;
When I perceive that men as plants increase,
Cheered and checked even by the self-same sky,
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,
And wear their brave state out of memory;
Then the conceit of this inconstant stay
Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,
Where wasteful Time debateth with decay
To change your day of youth to sullied night,
 And all in war with Time for love of you,
 As he takes from you, I engraft you new.

William Shakespeare

Eulogy for Linda Wygal, Elaine Rice

There was a beauty about Linda, a special quality, her unmistakable honor. What she was externally was a reflection of what she was internally.

On March 9, 1942, Linda Geraldine McGonigle was born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. She spent thirty-one years having the full range of experiences from glorious to painful that had her arriving at her first and only prospective student meeting with what the teacher has said is required to meet the school- a correctly formed magnetic center and good luck. So on her thirty first birthday Linda joined

the school and her life truly began.

Linda was a very humble and private person, so it is a challenge to talk about her and extol her virtues without imagining her cringing at being the topic of conversation. However, she was a very practical person, as was her approach to the Work, so we will get on with it, as would she.

Family was a very integral part of Linda's play. In addition to her husband Kenneth she had a daughter, Kelli; a granddaughter, Kayla; and two great grandchildren Anthony and Raphael. They have lived with and around Linda in the Wygal compound off and on for many years. She was a true matriarch. She helped raise multiple generations in her home, while working full time-- sometimes in Marysville/Yuba City and sometimes for the school and while going through two years of chemotherapy, rarely complaining and always using the friction for creating her soul.

In December of 1975, Linda and Kenneth were married. This December would mark their thirty-ninth anniversary. Again, one of the great things about Linda's approach to the work was that it was always practical. Once, a friend was distressed about problems with her relationship and Linda's response was to tell her to employ the three month rule. The three month rule was based on the fact that the I's are not real. She went on to explain that when she was so annoyed with Kenneth that she had I's to walk away, she told herself that if the I's were still there in three months, then she could go. At that she chuckled and said obviously the I's never lasted that long.

All anyone had to do was see the way Linda looked at Kenneth or him at her to know that they had a great love and respect for each other. Kenneth recently declared that he was married to the most beautiful woman in the Fellowship. Linda lovingly referred to Kenneth, Kelli and the kids as "my people".

Loyalty was part of who and what she was. Once Linda had committed to the Work, there wasn't anything she wouldn't do for Robert or the school. In addition to working in the banking industry, she filled a number of roles over the years on salary from cook at the lodge, to executive secretary, to manager of the Bistro, to vice-president of the Fellowship and RVW. On top of all of that, she used to make a point of volunteering to wash dishes when she could or help at the meetings, or help to do something extra that was just, as she would say, from her.

Working with Linda was the easy way of getting to know her. Working in the kitchen together was the beginning of many of Linda's lifelong friendships. Later working in the office gave her the chance to make many new and very dear friends. One of these friends described her as supportive, consistent and precise. She was a strong and courageous woman and student. Linda was a model of using the Work and dedication to the school.

There's a quotation from Lincoln that speaks of Linda's character. He said: 'Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.' In any one of her roles and particularly as vice-president of the Fellowship and RVW, one thing you could be sure about Linda was if she made a decision, even if you didn't agree with it, even if you flat out thought she was wrong, you knew that she made it with the best interest of the school in mind. Her integrity was above reproach.

Many of us know Linda as a painter. We've had the privilege to view her paintings in her home, or at a showing at Apollo d'Oro, or in the Bistro, or at the office, or in our own homes. Kenneth made a great comment about Linda. He said, "Linda is an artist, who also happens to paint."

Linda had a talent for working with stained glass. In the 1970's when Robert purchased the Tiffany glass, Linda did the needed repairs on it.

For any of us who experienced Linda's skill in the kitchen, we know that she was an artist there as well- delicious meals, beautiful presentations.

A little secret about Linda is that she had an addiction. She couldn't resist opening restaurants. It may have started with cooking at the Lodge when she first joined the school. After that, she remodeled and owned a restaurant in Marysville called Lydia's, which is today the Brick House. She ran The Bistro once as La Cucina and then again as The Bistro. She was a regular part of the staff at the Galleria when Robert first started the breakfast octave. She would cook at Apollo d'Oro on special occasions. She often worked at the Galleria for the Mexican dinners and her chili relleños were famous. One of her friends would joke that he was going to sign her up for Restaurant Owners Anonymous because she was always planning her next restaurant.

One of the ways that Linda gave the most was with students who came to her for help. She was especially compassionate and kind, which was why so many students loved her so much. And because she was discreet, students trusted her. She helped many students make decisions that promoted their work in a profound way, offered from her own hard earned verifications and strong valuation for the three lines of work.

This quotation from a Bengali Brahmin is a poetic way to summarize over forty-one years of Linda's dedication to the school and to working on herself:

'I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy.'

Music: Bach, Where sheep may safely graze, Marina & Coral

Reading: Greg Holman

God is like a painter,
at work on the pictures of his creation.
Every moment
He writes what He will on the page of their thought,
and obliterates it.
He takes away anger
and puts contentment in its place.
He takes away meanness, and puts generosity in its place.
Morning and evening this process takes place.
You are being filled and emptied,
by His hands.

Rumi

Minister Ross' Conclusion:

A king of ancient times said, 'I am only a child, yet without ceasing, day and night, I act in harmony with heaven.' Linda is now part of that light that beckons above us; hers is a new succession in the celestial world, made lovelier still because she bore her part.

May Linda's devotion to her family and friends inspire us towards compassion and care for one another.

May her artistic nature help breathe new life into our efforts.

May her courage resolve us in the face of our own difficulties.

Dear Linda, we thank thee.

Candle ceremony

“Our body is a shell, our soul continues onward.”

Extinguish and light the candles.

The urn is lifted and others are motioned to stand. Urn-bearer leads procession.

At the Cemetery:

Minister Ross' Introduction

This is our sacred place, consecrated by those here present and those who lie here. Here we release Linda to her, and our, true home.

Minister

On the day I die, when I'm carried
toward the grave, don't weep. Don't say,
She's gone! She's gone! Death has nothing
to do with going away. The sun sets and
the moon sets, but they're not gone.
Death is a coming together. The tomb
looks like a prison, but it's really a
release into union. When the human seed goes
down in the ground, like a bucket into
Joseph's well, it grows and
comes up full of unimagined beauty.
Your mouth closes here
yet immediately
Opens with a shout of joy there.
Rumi

Minister

We return the ashes of Linda's physical form to the ground. The earth returns to the earth, even as we look toward eternal life.

Urn bearer puts urn in the grave.

Minister's Conclusion

Rabia said, 'Love comes from eternity, and returns into eternity'. A divine flame returns to its source. The great circle of life is complete.

Though we part, we will meet again.

Let us each bid a farewell, and then let us withdraw to the Festival Hall, to celebrate the gift of life yet allotted to each of us.

Rose-petals by the funeral party. Rose-petals offered to the assembly.