

John Stubbs

March 16, 1939 – October 22, 2019

Minister: Julian Branston

February 26, 2022

[Minister's Introduction]

Welcome friends, and a special welcome to friends and to family members who may be viewing remotely: John's wife Angelica, and John's daughters Carol and Wendy.

We are here today to honor the life of our beloved friend, John Stubbs.

We are here to hold John in our hearts for this brief period, and then release him, together transforming our sorrow into presence.

At the death of a friend, we can see their play as a perfect, complete, and realized destiny. Now we more clearly understand the payment and contribution that John made, and we are grateful for his active, cheerful support of his teacher and his fellow students, and his untiring efforts to share his understanding and love of the work with us all.

Let us stand and remember John in silent presence.

(Silence)

Thank you.

Four years ago, John wrote that the most meaningful aspect of his life in the Work were the signs given by Influence C. "They reveal the quality of presence in the moment," he said, "whether it is absent, or budding, or blossoming. These signs are a kind of feedback. The more present I am, the more I can recognize them around me, and the more easily I sense the component of love which is always included in them."

John has taken with him the presence that he has gained in this lifetime, and his connection with Influence C. Our teacher has said, "That is all we can take with us, but it is more than enough."

**[Reading: Rilke, *Sonnets to Orpheus I, Sonnet 1, trans. Edward Snow*]
(Reader: Conrad Cecil)**

Singing, as you teach it, is not desire, not the courting of some end to be attained.
Singing is Being. Easy, for a god.
But for us, when are we? And when does he

cast all the earth and stars upon our lives?
It's not, youth, when you're in love, even if then your voice forces open your
mouth,---

learn to forget those songs. They elapse.
True singing is a different breath.
A breath serving nothing. A gust in the god. A wind.

**[Music: Bach, *Flute Sonata in E Minor, 3rd movement*]
(Musician: Rustam Baibikov, flute; Justin Mckay, piano)**

[Eulogy: Melanie Stubbs]

John was born in March 1939 in a small village along the southwest coast of Wales, five months before the Second World War began. Although living in a remote place, far from London, meant that John did not experience the bombings, unfortunately the war did mean that his father would be drafted to serve in the British Royal Navy. His father was killed in August of 1944, which had a big impact on John, who was five years old at that time. Later in life, he realized that he had felt responsible for his father's death, which had a large influence on how his personality formed. It did, however, bring John emotional depth and led to him questioning the meaning of life.

As a child, John had a lot of freedom to enjoy himself: taking his bicycle apart and putting it back together again, playing the piano and swimming in the ocean. He told me that when it came time for his final exams for secondary school, he felt strongly that it was fate whether he passed or not. So he went swimming with his friends instead of studying. Then he realized that NOT studying for his exams was also part of the same fate, so he studied hard and passed.

After secondary school, John moved to Cardiff to study maths and physics at Cardiff University, where he experienced poverty, sometimes only having some chocolate to eat. He became interested in computers, and was recruited by an IT company in London even before he graduated. Moving to London, he met Stella, my mother, and married in 1964. Wanting to see more of the world, he accepted a job in The Netherlands four years later. He had three daughters: Carol, Wendy and me. I am the oldest of the three. He told me later he was relieved that he hadn't had a son. Because he had not spent much time with his father, he felt he would not have known how to raise a boy.

After a lot of moving around between The Netherlands and the UK, and spending a year in Germany, John bought a home in Gouda in 1977, where we lived many years. After having settled down, John began to feel more and more disillusioned with life. He found the workbooks, but was discouraged by Gurdjieff's comment that schools had ceased to exist in the West. He even became suicidal during that time. One day, as he contemplated the meaning of his life, an angel appeared to him. This gave him courage to continue searching.

During a family vacation in Wales, John suddenly left for London, which was very unusual and worried my mother and grandmother. Later I understood why he had gone to London: he had found an ad from a Fourth Way school in London, the Fellowship of Friends, stating that they were accepting new students. Although he feared not being good enough for a school, he went to the prospective student meetings. He learned then that the school had a center in The Netherlands. And so he joined the school in Amsterdam in May 1981. Now that he had finally found a point to life, his depression disappeared. A student who joined around the same time as John observed, "how very ready John was for the School!"

Students from Amsterdam remember John well: how positive and active he was in the center, right from his prospective student meetings; his delight in conversation after center meetings; how different he was from other male students, with a job and a family; and that he wore nice ties.

When I joined in Sydney in 1992, John was, of course, the first person I told. It was very emotional for him. Being together in the Fellowship deepened our friendship and appreciation for one another. I know that my search for a school was a lot simpler because my father had made a payment for both of us.

John was a great communicator of work ideas. He organized reading groups, and we'd read the *Theory of Celestial Influence* or *Beelzebub's Tales*. John explained work ideas with great patience for the benefit of many newer students. A student commented that John "brought considerable scale and intelligence to the great riddles."

After separating from his wife, my mother, a new phase of his life began. Without a home, he lived with various students in Amsterdam and in the teaching house for short periods. In that time, he directed the center. For as long as I can remember, he longed to move to Apollo, and this wish came true in 2000 when he was granted a religious worker visa and was finally able to move. In Apollo, he worked in Purchasing and at the Gatehouse.

John loved conversation and at Apollo, he was a founding member of "The Philosophers Table," a small group of students that met weekly over dinner at Apollo D'Oro. The group discussed work ideas with the aim of stimulating internal efforts – although it was understood that there was no true understanding without self-remembering. Many ideas that John presented he later developed in his books on the Fourth Way.

In February 2004, John could no longer stay on salary and moved to Istanbul, where he lived for a year. He enjoyed sipping coffee at cafés along the Bosphorus River, as Gurdjieff had done. Here he contemplated his ideas for a book, and it is in Istanbul where he began writing his first book, *Inner Connections*. Many students visited him in Istanbul, and he enjoyed sharing the experience of higher states at the Hagia Sofia with others.

In 2006, John spent time in the Athens center, an essence time. The day he arrived, students were working on a new teaching house. After staying in a hotel for a night, John moved to the teaching house and found that the only room to be finished was his bedroom, and a student commented that he smiled like a child. It was there that he completed *Inner Connections*.

After his time in Athens, John returned to Amsterdam for a short while, thinking about where to go next. He was asked to go to South America to support the centers there, and so he went to Buenos Aires, where he had met Angelica Spangenberg on an earlier trip. What began as a visit, became his home as he purchased an apartment in Buenos Aires which Angelica and he moved into. John was Regional Coordinator during that time and visited the centers in Chile and Brazil and supported open meetings in Peru and Ecuador. John and Angelica were married in May 2014, followed by a marriage ceremony in Apollo in September 2014.

John visited Apollo often whilst living in Buenos Aires. If it were up to John, he would have moved to Apollo for good. Unfortunately, this was not in his plan. We first found out that John had cancer in August 2017. The tumor was removed, and he was prescribed what the doctor called preventative chemo. John took the shock very seriously; he thought the cancer related to emotional friction he had not transformed. He completely changed his diet, lost weight, and concentrated on writing his third book of short stories.

He was able to visit Apollo one more time, in the spring of 2018. In the summer of 2018, the doctors found that the cancer had metastasized. In January 2019, John's doctor gave him another 6-9 months. Angelica took care of him until his last breath.

When I visited him in October 2019, there wasn't much left of his instinctive center, but it struck me how strong his essence and emotional center were. Robert called unexpectedly one evening and John was so excited, he couldn't stop talking. The next time Robert called, John controlled his emotional center and quietly listened. The day of my departure, John told me he was afraid of dying, but by the end of our conversation, he said C-Influence would be there for him. For him, the Teacher, the School, C-Influence, and his fellow students were the most valuable things in his life.

In his last week, John asked Corine Laurijsen and me to send messages to students that he loved. From the responses, it was clear how many people John had touched in his life. He was special to so many.

In the evening of 22nd October, John sent me a message saying that Robert said he looked very well psychologically. John died a few hours later in his sleep. His last words before going to sleep were 'that's perfect'.

[Minister's Conclusion:]

The death of a friend reminds us that we each inhabit a fragile and temporary vessel, through which presence emerges and connects us.

May John's delight in sharing his work and understanding with others encourage us to be generous with one another;

May his positive energy, expressing itself in untiring service for his school and his teacher, cheer us in our own efforts, and

May his alert receptivity and love toward Influence C inspire us to open ourselves more fully to divine influence.

The task of this lifetime has been fulfilled. The role of John Stubbs is complete, and the soul that played the role is released to continue its divine journey.

Dear John, we thank thee.

[Minister leads participants to the gravesite.]

[Minister:]

We return John's ashes to the ground: from earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. Words fade in the face of a great reality. We, too, arrive at this simplest of moments—our friend, John, showing us how.

Urn is placed in the grave.

Rumi wrote, “Uncover in silence your soul's own rose garden.” Let these rose petals remind us of the sweetness of our departed friend, and of the rose garden of his soul.

[Minister and participants scatter rose petals.]

The earth returns to the earth, and a divine spark returns to its divine source. The circle of life is complete. Let us join in raising a glass to John, and then depart, with a renewed and vivid appreciation for the gift of life allotted to each of us.

[Participants move to the table for the toast.]

[Toast: Thomas Fleisher]

John Stubbs reminds us that we are all positive third forces for each other to help keep and deepen divine presence. He lived this every day, which is just what helps us also share what we now have. Let us in this way celebrate our mutual conscious love together with John—even now.