

Funeral Service for Lucas Cambridge

Lucas Cambridge

October 20, 1927 – May 5, 2021

Funeral Service
Minister: Benjamin Yudin

May 22, 2021

Minister's Introduction

We are here today to honor the life of our beloved friend, Lucas Cambridge.

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

We welcome Lucas' family: his son Tom and wife Deborah, and his daughter Catherine and husband Paul, and their children Carolyn, Peter, and Ann. Also with us in spirit are his grandson Garrett and great-grand-children Bennett, Jillian and Corina Calpouzos.

At the death of a friend, we can see their play as a whole. We can see it as we cannot yet fully see our own: as a perfect, complete, and realized destiny. Now we more clearly understand the payment and contribution that Lucas made, and we are grateful for his practical mysticism, his unwavering, vigorous support of his teacher and his school, and his inner certainty of the reality of higher influence and divine presence.

Lucas was also admirable for his simplicity. In his conversations he reduced everything to presence. A verse from the Book of Proverbs reads: "Wisdom has built her house, and she calls out: 'Let the simple enter here.'"

Let us stand and remember Lucas in silent presence.

(Silence)

Thank you.

The physical body is designed to produce presence and being, and then to be laid aside. Walt Whitman said, "The best of me then, when no longer visible, for toward that I have been incessantly striving." Lucas takes 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: "Quicksand Years" by Walt Whitman]

(Reader: John Craig)

Quicksand years that whirl me I know not whither,
Your schemes, politics, fail, lines give way, substances mock and
elude me,
Only the theme I sing, the great and strong-possess'd soul, eludes
not,
One's-self must never give way—that is the final substance—
that out of all is sure,
Out of politics, triumphs, battles, life, what at last finally remains?
When shows break up what but One's-Self is sure?

[Music: "The Cambridge Waltz" by James Kowalick]

(Musician: James Kowalick, piano)

[Eulogy: Arthur Craigmill]

Dear friends and family, you have just heard the “Cambridge Waltz” composed and played by James Kowalick for Lucas and Gloria.

Lucas was so much a part of us, lived so vigorously among us for 93 years, that he was one of those people who you never thought could go away. How to begin to speak about his life? Once upon a time? It was a real fairy tale.

He was an only child, born in Detroit to Greek immigrant parents and raised in Manhattan, where his father owned and operated a Greek restaurant. Lucas’s parents would not let him work in the restaurant; they wanted a better career for him. (This explains why Lucas did not know how to cook or wash dishes.)

When he was 18 he was drafted into the army. After basic training he was encouraged to work in the Signal Corps, but he insisted on becoming a medic. This pivotal decision sent him to the Presidio in San Francisco instead of to Korea. It was there that a colleague first introduced him to books by Ouspensky and Gurdjieff. The seed had been planted.

After being discharged from the service he attended and graduated from Cornell University, where he met and married Gloria. He then attended graduate school at Harvard and studied plant pathology. During these years in college and graduate school, he continued to read books by Ouspensky, Gurdjieff and others related to the Fourth Way. He went to Cuba to do thesis research, where he picked up his short-lived cigar habit, much to the Gloria’s irritation. After earning his PhD, they moved to Puerto Rico for six years, where Lucas worked with the US Department of Agriculture and did research on bananas. He became fluent in Spanish at that time. In 1954 his son Tom was born, and four years later, his daughter, Catherine.

A favorite family story concerns their time in Puerto Rico. Their house had large French doors. When a hurricane was expected, Lucas would open them and drive the car into the living room to protect it. They also had a small “sailfish” sailboat there, a 14’ flat board, which he liked to sail out to the reefs to go snorkeling with the family.

In 1961 they went to Bristol, England, for a sabbatical leave, where Lucas continued his research on bananas, and also played a lot of tennis. Two years later they moved to Minnesota where Lucas worked again with the USDA and the University of Minnesota, where he became an associate professor, specializing in sugar beets and teaching graduate courses. There he got another sailboat for the lakes, and took up snow skiing along with Gloria, whom the family teased by saying that she looked like a muffin, she was so bundled up for the cold.

Lucas was appointed as department head of Plant and Soil Sciences at the University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho, in 1971. Later, during a business trip he found a bookmark for the Fellowship and quickly arranged to take the prospective student meetings. In his own words: “I had been reading Ouspensky for about 25 years. I had a lot of knowledge of the ideas. In 1970 I knew suddenly and instantly that that was enough reading – look for people. That eventually resulted in finding the Fellowship. But I didn’t really ‘find’ it, I was brought here.”

He joined the school in 1975, and Gloria joined a year later. “When I met Robert,” Lucas said in 2017, “I understood something very valuable—that I had met a being who knew much more about the meaning of life than I, or anyone else I had ever met, knew. I could not find this anywhere else.” They began placing Fellowship bookmarks in a local bookstore in Moscow. In 1977 they gave their first of many series of prospective student meetings to three local residents—two joined and are still members today.

Shortly after joining, the Teacher asked Lucas and Gloria to move to California to be closer to the Fellowship. He worked carefully to arrange this move, to be in good householder with his family and the school. In 1980 he and Gloria moved to Chico, where he had found a position at CSU as Dean of the College of Agriculture. Several years later they purchased land close to Apollo and built their home here. This home became, and still is, a hub for hosting visiting students, especially those from Spanish-speaking countries.

Lucas was integral to the development of the orchard and other agricultural areas of Apollo. He brought his expertise in agriculture and his people skills to the task. The results of his unheralded efforts can be seen throughout the property that surrounds us today. He served on the Apollo University Board and officiated at Lewis Carrol School graduations. He was a member of the Founding Board of Directors for the Yuba Environmental Sciences Charter Academy, which sprung from the Lewis Carrol School and which thrives today.

After he retired, Lucas and Gloria travelled to many foreign countries and centers as guest teachers, where their fluency in Spanish was very helpful. They worked directly with hundreds of students around the world who came to love them, and many came to stay with them when visiting Apollo.

What made Lucas, Lucas: Olives (Kalamata), chocolate (70% cocoa minimum), red wine, good coffee, lamb. Dancing, especially the tango with Gloria and the waltz (he taught many students to waltz and was a sought-after partner at the Fellowship balls). Fine clothing, fine shoes (for dancing), and Panama and Flat hats. Poetry, music, visual arts, performing arts, meaningful conversation (not chit chat). Above all, people.

Lucas had a stroke in April, 2014. During the stroke, he said he was approaching a bright white light and was ready to go, but was disappointed to be called back. The first responders who cared for him marveled at his response to it. Although he could not speak or walk, he was aware of everything going on around him and he showed no signs of negativity, fear or distress. He just beamed with awareness. In his own words, this is how it impacted his body and his work. "I was so lucky to have had my stroke. It was very positive. There was no more Lucas. Just gone. And no words. If you are not going to be on the planet, what are you going to do with your words, your name? There is knowing without understanding. Ideas do not exist and words do not exist. So that is certainly the most meaningful event in my life."

He was a teacher who encouraged everyone to work hard to learn more and be more. He loved and is loved deeply by his family, his teacher, and his friends. As he reached the end of his life, the being he had gathered over the years was an inspiration for all of us. "Dear friends," he told us, "be of good cheer. Keep working as we are urged to by the teacher, and it's never just the teacher. It's the whole stream of Higher Influence that the teacher is part of, and it is real. There are no questions and there are no answers; just presence. Don't spend time worrying about avoiding problems. Just be right there and breathe and stop thinking. Thinking is not really good for us. We have to do it on this plane, but you get a little higher and then thinking is not a good idea."

As long as he could, Lucas continued to attend the Teacher's meetings and dinners faithfully, always immaculately dressed and greeting his friends as he made his way to his chair, using first a cane, and then a walker. When he was 90 and recovering from heart surgery, he embraced his teacher and said, "I am still trying." He transformed his increasing age and infirmity with grace and humor. He taught and embodied what is best described by Walt Whitman: "The profound lesson of acceptance, neither preference nor denial."

[Music: “Liebeslied” by Fritz Kreisler
(Musicians: Noah Horstock, violin; Justin McKay, piano]

[Reading: “He Who Binds Himself to a Joy” by William Blake]
(Reader: Christopher King)

He who binds himself to a joy
Does the winged life destroy
He who kisses the joy as it flies
Lives in eternity's sunrise.

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 Lucas’ consistent and anonymous efforts to build our conscious community inspire us in our own efforts;
May the clarity of his verifications strengthen our valuation for the inner work we share;
May the dignity and cheerfulness with which he transformed old age and disability serve as an example as we strive to transform our own plays.

Dear Lucas, we thank thee.

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

Candle Ceremony

At the Cemetery

Minister's Introduction

Here in this sacred place, we gather to release Lucas to his, and our, true home.

**[Reading: Excerpts from “Song of the Rolling Earth” and “Birds of Passage” by Walt Whitman]
(Reader: Patrick Stuart)**

The Divine ship sails the Divine sea.
The soul's realization and determination still inheriting.
And no man understands any greatness or goodness but his own.

I swear I see what is better than to tell the best.
It is always to leave the best untold.

Facts, religions, improvements are as real as before,
But the soul is also real.
It is positive and direct, no reason, no proof has established it.
Undeniable growth has established it.

For it the mystic evolution.
Whoever you are!
Claim your own at any hazard!

Through birth, life, death, burial, the means are provided.
What you are picks its way.

Minister

We return Lucas'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. And Lucas is one of our friends who shows us how.

Urn bearer places the urn in the grave.

Minister's Conclusion

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

[Toast: Daniel Highland]