

Cemetery Service for Michelle Lafon

Michelle Lafon

Cemetery Service

Saturday, July 18, 2015

Minister James Keahey's Introduction

We are gathered here on this hallowed ground to celebrate the life of our beloved friend, Michelle Lafon. We give thanks for her dedication to the school, for her transformation and for her love of our Teacher.

Please rise and honor Michelle with your silent presence.

(30 second silence)

Thank-you.

From the moment we meet Higher Forces, the true significance of one's life is revealed: the transformation of a play, lovingly guided towards a divine purpose.

At the death of a student, we see their play as a whole. We see a miraculous destiny, guided by a higher hand. We see perfection. Michelle's play is complete, so that we can say, "Lord, let thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word."

Eulogy: Wayne Mott

A portrait of Michelle comes from many glimpses. Quiet hints of her being. The way a Rembrandt painting quietly becomes a revelation. It's her simplicity, her childlike quality. Her way of engaging with every moment; it was her way of saying "Thank-you" for this gift of life. When the payment of being alive could be, taken as a whole, a profound chapter of existence, she knew how to live beyond and above the threshold of life. She was quietly there, which is more than life. How simple, direct and quiet. That is what we find with Michelle.

Here are some of the glimpses:

Michelle at the Abbey of Chaalis, wide-eyed, a state of receiving wonder.

With fellow students at the chateau, late at night, candlelight in the beautiful grey formal dining room.

Her love of Robert, even in the way she said her Teacher's name.

Her love of Shakespeare, Whitman, Montaigne.

Her pleasure in detective novels and Mulla Nasrudin.

Her transformation: for others and for herself. Staying with a friend, in the midst of family chaos, quietly cleaning the coffee cups. Of her illness, long and difficult, so that she became a philosopher of hospital beds and waiting rooms. "The payment is high," she said, "but it is worth it." "When we can spend time together," she said, "it is a gift of the Gods." In her last days she said to a student, "We are learning patience."

She lived a full life in the school. She joined in 1981 and lived at Apollo for many years, working for RVW. She was center director in Paris from 2011 until her death. She was tenacious, had a stubborn trait. Which she learned to put it into her work. When she learned of her cancer, she determined to be as present as possible, and to live as long as possible. Her Doctor observed that he had never seen anyone live so long with terminal cancer, 12 years. She looked remarkable, because of this transformation. It was her tenacity that enabled her to make three month-long visits to Apollo to be with the Teacher in her last years.

Robert said of her, "Michelle was a master of the transformation of suffering." He called her, "Michelle – our belle" and gave her a little crystal bell from the Apollo auction, which she kept by her bedside.

Michelle said of Robert, "I think of Robert a lot. It helps me." She said, "His efforts make us simpler, and softer." When Robert said, "Everything is arranged by Influence C." Michelle said, "This warms my heart."

As a student confided recently, memories of Michelle are memories for oneself. We quietly find and accept these glimpses of her as she quietly accepted her life.

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Think of it: the sum of a life, all the moments that one created. All the moments one created for others.

This is her life. Her moments, and the moments she shared with us.

Music: Gabriel Faure's Requiem, Pie Jesu (Joanna Parks)

Reading: Walt Whitman (Linda Kaplan)

Yet, O my soul supreme!

Know'st thou the joys of pensive thought?

Joys of the free and lonesome heart—the tender, gloomy heart?

Joy of the solitary walk—the spirit bowed yet proud—the suffering and the struggle?

The agonistic throes, the extasies—joys of the solemn musings, day or night?

Joys of the thought of Death—the great spheres Time and Space?

Prophetic joys of better, loftier love's ideals—the Divine Wife—the sweet, eternal, perfect Comrade?

Joys all thine own, undying one—joys worthy thee, O Soul.

Minister

In remembering Michelle, let us remember our love for each other.

Let us remember her childlike energy, the purity of her essence, the face of an awakened child.

In essence, she is a child of the gods.

As we remember Michelle, let us return her mortal ashes to the ground.

Urn bearer moves to the grave. Eulogist gives the urn to the urn bearer.

As the earth returns to the earth, we look towards eternal life.

Urn bearer puts urn in the grave.

Minister's Conclusion:

We salute Michelle's divine spark as it returns to its divine source. "Love comes from eternity, and returns into eternity". The circle of life is complete. Dear Michelle, we thank thee.

Delphine offers rose petals. Funeral party put rose petals into the grave.

Let us each bid farewell, and then withdraw for a toast at the Gazebo, there to celebrate the gift of life yet allotted to each of us.

Attendees put rose petals into the grave.