

Diane Hill

*December 14, 1944 – August 17, 2025*

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Minister: Judith

September 6, 2025

**[Minister's Introduction]**

Dear friends,

We are here today to honor the life of our beloved friend, Diane Hill.

We are here to bear witness to the mortal woman who moved through this lifetime, playing the role of her name, and to the immortal soul which has transcended that role.

The teacher often sends a message to students in their last days: “Thank you for taking good care of your gift.” Diane held to her work through years of serious illness and disability—transforming her suffering, serving the school, and supporting her friends. She did indeed take care of her gift.

Let us stand and remember Diane 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.” Diane has taken with her the presence that she gained in this lifetime, and her connection with Influence C. Our teacher said, “That is all we can take with us, but it is more than enough.”

**[Opening Poem: “What Was Said to the Rose,” Rumi/Coleman Barks]**

*(Reader: Elizabeth)*

“What Was Said to the Rose”

What was said to the rose that made it open was said to me here in my chest.  
What was told to the cypress that made it strong and straight,  
what was whispered to the jasmine so it is what it is,  
whatever made sugarcane sweet ...  
whatever lets the pomegranate flower blush like a human face,  
that is being said to me now.

**[Eulogy: Corine]**

Robert has advised us, “Whatever you do, make it beautiful.” Diane took the advice to heart. She was particularly attuned to natural beauty, and her home was filled with flowers and plants. Her love of nature took her on frequent excursions to experience its beauty, and most of all she enjoyed sharing this love with her friends.

Diane was born in San Francisco on December 14, 1944, and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of California, Berkeley. In 1975, she joined the school in San Francisco. A year later, she was asked to move to Cincinnati to direct the center, and remained there until 1980 when it closed. She then moved to Apollo, which was her home for the next 45 years. There she met and married her husband.

Diane immersed herself in the life of Apollo while working full-time and commuting to Grass Valley. Her valuation for the school and for Robert was reflected in the third-line roles she played. In the early 2000s, she helped arrange formal “center dinners” in students’ homes, as well as fundraising dinners for the Lewis Carroll School. At the Galleria, she assisted with floral decorations and was for a time a crucial part of the events team. She was highly organized and graceful in her efficiency. Until Diane’s health failed her, she actively supported octaves at Apollo.

Beginning in the 1980s, Diane enjoyed welcoming new arrivals at Apollo, which resulted in enduring friendships. She was emotionally perceptive and understood the challenges students faced when first visiting or moving to Apollo. She would explain the ways of Apollo to them and take them on hikes to Yosemite Valley or Table Mountain.

Some of Diane’s friends whom Diane welcomed here express how she helped them:

“When I came first time to Apollo, it was an unknown environment. Diane was very friendly and warm. She helped me connect with the many aspects of this culture, from harvesting grapes to participating in a reception. She had a way of approaching people, as if you are part of the family for a long time. I feel grateful to have known her.”

“I met Diane when I was going through a difficult time and she immediately saw that I needed a friend. She was always very positive and able to create a special moment or celebration out of simple everyday things. I remember cooking together, trying many new recipes and asking her opinion. She was always sincere when it was not as good as I hoped, but encouraging at the same time. She supported and cared about everybody and everything around her.”

“Love and thankfulness for her golden friendship and the love she always showed to my husband and me when visiting Apollo. It was a real treat to be with her. I felt she had built a strong inner life through her work in the school.”

Diane enjoyed hosting friends in her beautiful home. A friend recalled her visits with Diane in the last year: “She often did not have a lot of energy, but when you went to her home for a visit, you were always made to feel so welcome into the peaceful, harmonious setting she had created. A cup of tea, a piece of fruit or cookie, and a good conversation. One left feeling refreshed.”

Having pets was a joy for Diane. She had dogs and cats at different times and enjoyed telling stories of their escapades. She also relished exploring local places with friends, making small events special. She liked going to the tulip garden at Ananda Village, picnicking and swimming at the Aurora Pond, feeding carrots and apples to the horse Benito at Apollo, going for ice cream at Collins Lake, having a spontaneous sunset dinner at the Gazebo. She especially enjoyed going to the Bald Mountain nursery to buy more plants.

A longtime friend notes: “Diane could be a demanding friend, yet it was always worthwhile being with her. As the years progressed and as her multiple health problems increased, she turned to nature for transformation. She enjoyed her home, the short local outings, and the company of friends. As Robert tells us, the payment for our gift of immortality is nine lifetimes. Witnessing Diane’s play over the years with its joys and sorrows, this reality resounds for me.”

Diane was given difficult plays to transform: her 20-year marriage ended when her husband suddenly left her, and over the years her illnesses increased in severity. She was able to cope with her suffering through a process of transformation, which filled her with gratitude.

Diane’s illness was quite prolonged, but she had brief periods of improvement, which allowed her to go to a meeting. A friend recalls seeing Diane one Sunday morning before the meeting at the Galleria: “I saw Diane moving about in the salon. I was happy to see her because it meant she was feeling well enough to attend. A few minutes later, I saw her speaking to a young visiting student and saying, ‘It’s this way, I will show you where it is.’ When Diane came back into the salon, I spoke to her and said, ‘Diane, I have a photograph to offer you.’ She looked at me a little warily and said, ‘What is it?’ I said, ‘You have been quite sick, and the first thing I see you do when you come back is that you are helping someone else.’ Diane thanked me and replied, ‘I’ll take a photograph like that any day!’ That is the essence of her being as a student.

On July first, Diane was taken to the emergency room at Rideout and had surgery that day, which was unsuccessful. Diane asked to be sent to a nursing facility to receive end-of-life hospice care. The night before she left the hospital to go to the facility, she told a friend that she knew that she was not her body, and that she was ready to let go.

During the five weeks she was in hospice, 18 friends took turns being by her side, bringing her flowers, sharing memories, reading poetry, and relaying messages from Robert and friends.

Two days before she died, Robert asked one of her friends to send his love to Diane that evening, because she could pass away that night. The friend called her, and a nurse held the phone so that Diane, who was sedated, could listen. Six times, her friend gently said, “Robert loves you,” and the sixth time, the nurse said Diane opened her eyes.

During her last days, as she passed in and out of consciousness, Diane repeated many times how thankful she was. The quote that she chose for her memorial plaque exemplifies her gratitude:

“For what are you grateful?”

[**Music:** “Recuerdos” by Eduardo Diaz]  
(Musician: Chris, guitar)

**[Minister's Conclusion:]**

The death of a friend reminds us that our bodies are fragile; our period on this earth temporary. Only the realm of uncreated light—which unites us and is us—is boundless and eternal.

Throughout her life Diane supported the school, her teacher, and her friends. In later years she navigated her physical limitations wisely, finding ways to share presence and joy in simple moments. She transformed the difficulties of her play into gratitude. May her love and valuation inspire us as we strive to transform the material of our own lives.

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

Dear Diane, we thank thee.

Now let us gather for a toast to our friend, and then depart, with gratitude for the gift of having known her, and with renewed love for one another.

**[Minister leads participants to the table for the toast.]**

**[Toast: Meredith]**